

# **Autism Friendly Raceday's at Pontefract**

Pontefract Racecourse is thrilled to announce that all race meetings at the West Yorkshire track in 2024 will be Autism Friendly race days, making it the first Racecourse in the country to host Autism in Racing Raceday's on every day.



Bobby Beevers (phot left) is Chair and Founder of Autism in Racing is delighted to get more Autism Friendly race days in the calendar and commented:

"I think it's absolutely amazing that Pontefract are making all their fixtures Autism-Friendly. Huge well done to Richard, Norman and the team for making it happen. Autism in Racing and Pontefract Racecourse have built a strong relationship and I'm really looking forward to working with the track for the season ahead." Hosting its first Autism in Racing race days in 2023, Pontefract has made huge steps in improving all aspects of accessibility at the Racecourse and recently carried out a major scheme to upgrade the accessible facilities throughout the site. Their 'Racing for Everyone' race meeting in June 2023 won the coveted 'Raceday Award' at the Racecourse Association Showcase Event in November.

Richard Hammill, Chief Operating Officer for Pontefract Racecourse said:

'Raising awareness of Autism and playing our part in enabling the Racing Industry to be more inclusive is hugely important to us all at Pontefract. The Racecourse has a long association of working with customers and racegoers who have additional needs, as well as with Autism in Racing and to be able to put something in place to make the Racecourse even more inclusive throughout the season is incredible.'

The Racecourse will be working in conjunction with their ticketing provider, Future Ticketing, who will provide valuable funding to enable the initiative to take place every day.

As part of their Autism Friendly race days, the Racecourse will provide designated quiet and safe spaces for autistic Racegoers, or those who may have additional needs, including complimentary soft drinks and biscuits. In addition, there will be a dedicated sensory room, provided by Immersive, at every race meeting. William Buick, champion jockey and Ambassador for Autism in Racing said:

"I congratulate Pontefract for their commitment to Autism Friendly race days. My family has first-hand experience of autism and as an Ambassador for Autism in Racing I welcome the way racecourses are embracing the concept."

Any racegoers wishing to apply for places at any Autism in Racing fixture should contact Autism in Racing on X at <https://twitter.com/autisminracing> (@autisminracing).

A brand-new Autism in Racing website will be developed over the coming months. In the meantime, to learn more about Autism in Racing please visit <https://twitter.com/autisminracing>

Editor's Note – Readers may recall that in issue 378 (just over a year ago) we included details of Bobby Beevers' interview with Brian Goodwill which touched upon this initiative so we are pleased to hear it has continued to thrive in the sport.

# HISTORY OF YORK RACES – PART 1

York is one of the premier tracks in Europe having recently won the flat racecourse of the year award – for the fourth year – and also came out on top in the Times newspaper survey of all of Britain's racecourses.

York traces a fascinating history back to Roman and Viking times . Horses raced at York during the days of Emperor Severus during Roman times. York corporation records show that the City first fully supported racing in 1530. In 1607, racing is known to have taken place on the frozen River Ouse between Micklegate Tower and Skeldergate Postern.

The first detailed records of a race meeting date from 1709 when using the course at Clifton Ings. However, this track was affected by flooding and in 1730 racing was moved to the current home of Knavesmire with the first meeting run in 1731. As the name implies it was a mire with a stream running through it and it required a lot of levelling and draining to create the horseshoe shaped course.



The first grandstand was designed and built by architect John Carr in 1754. This was financed by 250 people who each paid 5 guineas and were issued with a brass token bearing their name and an image of the stand – which was the forerunner to the 'County Stand Badge' we know today. The York Racecourse Committee still manages racing at York in the current year having been formed in 1842 to turn around a decline in the quality of racing at the course. By 1846, the committee had introduced the Gimcrack Stakes, which has since become one of York's most enduring races.

If we fast forward 178 years, York's richest race is now the prestigious (Group 1) Juddmonte International which is the highlight of the opening day of the Ebor Festival in August.

The original grandstand was expanded in 1890 (photo above of winners enclosure dated 1912) and then in 1965 a new five tier grandstand was opened. In 1989 the Melrose Stand was opened, quickly followed by the Knavesmire stand. In 2003 the Ebor Stand was opened and is used on race days by annual members.

The courses ever growing status is also recognised by the fact that it also hosted 'Royal Ascot' in 2005 (photo right) and the Ladbrokes St Leger in 2006.





# Go Racing In Yorkshire Update

## Go Racing In Yorkshire Season Ticket

We've been out and about on course talking to people about the fantastic value season ticket, if you've missed us, here's the lowdown;

Season Ticket Holders gain Grandstand & Paddock admission to **ALL** 182 scheduled fixtures across Yorkshire's nine racecourses, including York's Ebor meeting and St Leger Saturday at Doncaster.

With single and joint (two people living at the same address) options available, it really is the best value ticket in racing and runs from 1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025.

There are 65 weekend and bank holiday fixtures, plus 23 evening fixtures, reciprocals with Yorkshire County Cricket Club and free membership of the Northern and Midlands Racing Club.

Two current season ticket holders informed us that they had paid for their season ticket by St Leger day - which means for the next six months they were racing for free!

If you enjoy your racing, this really is the best way to get around the Yorkshire courses. Upgrades can be made if there is space on the day (there usually is) and it makes it very easy to go racing, just turn up with your ticket, if you're late or need to get away before the last it really doesn't matter.

## Yorkshire Beacon Activity

This year we are working with local NHS Trusts and the Bowel Cancer Screening Departments, as they share the message about the benefits of screening.

The bowel cancer screening programme is open to those aged 60 to 74 but the campaign is being extended to include those aged between 50 and 59. It's no surprise that this age group makes up a good number of racegoers and is therefore a great fit.

Look out for the teams as they visit the racecourses each month across the year.

## Middleham Open Day

The ever-popular ARC Middleham Open Day returns on Friday 29 March, giving the public the chance to go behind the scenes at some of North Yorkshire's finest horseracing yards.

Tickets for this family friendly event are on sale now, with seven trainers already confirmed to be opening their stables in the morning. Visitors will be able to meet their favourite equine athletes, chat to the trainers and dedicated staff who look after them before enjoying an afternoon of activities on Middleham's Low Moor.

The event is organised by Racing Welfare – the charity which provides a range of support services to people working in or retired from the racing industry, including help with accidents and injuries, mental health, money matters and even housing. It typically attracts up to 3,500 visitors year-on-year and raises vital funds for the charity, which all goes back into supporting the Middleham racing community which is such a big part of the local infrastructure.

Rob and Lindsey Burrow become patrons of The Good Racing Company as they receive a further two donations of £7,777

- To date Rob and Lindsey have received £185,554 for MND causes from The Good Racing Company
- These two cheques for £7,777 will be donated directly to The Rob Burrow 7 Discretionary Trust, which will make a significant improvement to Rob's quality of life

Rob and Lindsey Burrow announced on Sunday 28 January 2024 that they were becoming patrons of The Good Racing Company. The Good Racing Company was formed in October 2020 by entrepreneur and racing enthusiast Phil Hawthorne as an innovative way to fundraise for Rob Burrow after the former Leeds Rhinos star announced he was living with MND. To date it has raised over £185,554 for Rob and MND charities through selling memberships to the Rob Burrow Racing Club. At an event for Good Racing Company members at Craig Lidster's racing yard in Easingwold on Sunday, Rob and Lindsey were presented with two giant cheques each for the value of £7,777 in tribute to the number seven shirt Rob wore for Leeds Rhinos.

The Good Racing Company donation was generated through membership sales of The Rob Burrow Racing Club, whilst the second cheque from was from Black Sheep Brewery. Black Sheep, which is a Good Racing Company partner, launched a special Burrow's Blonde beer in 2023 which donated 10 pence from every pint or bottle to the Rob Burrow 7 Discretionary Trust and the Rob Burrow Racing Club. This is the first donation it has made.

Says Rob: "Lindsey and I are thrilled to become patrons of The Good Racing Company. We've spent many an afternoon at the races cheering on our horses alongside some of the people that have bought membership to the racing club. It's great to know we have so much support and are overwhelmed by the money raised over the past three years." The Good Racing Company now has nine racehorses in its stable, and in the coming months each will be assigned a charity cause that they will raise money and awareness for. Rob and Lindsey will be heavily involved in the process of considering causes and specific charities. Rob continues "We're really excited to be involved in the shaping of The Good Racing Company's future. The past few years have shown that there's a lot of support in racing for charity both from the horseracing community itself and from new people discovering the sport for the first time – just like Lindsey and I. The potential to get behind so many different causes is really exciting and we can't wait to get stuck in." Through their involvement in The Good Racing Company, Rob and Lindsey have developed a real passion for horse racing, and attend as many race days as they can. Rob's Grandfather used to love placing a bet on the horses, and it seems Rob has inherited the thrill for the sport. He says: "Nothing beats the thrill of the final furlong!"

The Good Racing Company has celebrated three winners and five places so far in 2024, including Rubellite on January 2<sup>nd</sup> at Wolverhampton, Basholo on 13<sup>th</sup> January at Wolverhampton, Alfa Kellenic on 17<sup>th</sup> January at Newcastle.

In August 2023 Paul Hanagan announced he was becoming The Good Racing Company's first Director of Racing. Paul was a hugely successful dual champion jockey riding over 2,000 winners.

Annual memberships to The Rob Burrow Racing Club can be purchased from [thegoodracing.co](https://thegoodracing.co). Members get regular racing updates, a smart membership pack which includes a bespoke metal members badge and lapel badge. They are also given the opportunity to attend stable experiences, race days and networking events.

Finally, in June Charlotte Russell (GRIY Manager) is taking part in the Macmillan Ride of Their Lives at York Racecourse, if you would like to sponsor her please click [here](#).



## RIPON GETS READY FOR 2024 SEASON BY JONATHAN MULLIN

On the fringe of the tiny, charming city of Ripon, preparations are under way for the upcoming 2024 season at Ripon Racecourse. Despite the harsh winter weather, the course is being carefully primed for the Season Opener on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April. Known as Yorkshire's Garden Racecourse, it is not just the course itself that the team of Groundsmen take great pride in preparing. Through spring and into summer the racecourse is a riot of colour with blooming flowerbeds, jockey silks and trees providing shade from the sun in the Parade Ring and beyond.



Ripon has now been hosting some of the most exciting, prestigious and enjoyable racing in the country for more than 350 years. The first recorded horse races in the Ripon area took place in 1664 on Bondgate Green, a stone's throw away from where the racecourse is now situated. Over the next 236 years, several other venues were used to stage race meetings. Indeed, during one meeting in 1723, Ripon race goers witnessed horse racing history, when they watched the first ever race exclusively for 'lady riders'.

However, none of the historic venues had long lasting success and it took the opening of the current course in 1900 on Boroughbridge Road to establish Ripon's reputation as an important, regular racing venue. The very first meeting at the modern course was held on the sixth of August 1900 and since that time the racecourse has developed much that it is now regarded as the sporting flagship of the picturesque medieval city.

The most valuable race day of the season features the William Hill Great St Wilfrid Handicap and takes place annually in mid-August (**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> in 2024**). With £100,000 in prize money up for grabs and the ITV

cameras in attendance, the big race attracts some of the country's top sprint handicappers and is William Hill's longest standing sports sponsorship!

*The Listed EBF Ripon Champion Two-Year-Old Trophy* on August Bank Holiday Monday sees some of the speediest juveniles do battle over the 6-furlong straight. In 2023 the race was won by the exciting Task Force, who went on to finish runner-up in the Group 1 Juddmonte Middle Park Stakes and looks to have a very exciting three-year-old campaign ahead of him.

From April to September there are a range of fixtures with families, groups and seasoned racegoers in mind. On family days there is plenty of free entertainment and activities for children in the Course Enclosure and most race meetings have musical entertainment on the traditional bandstand, located in the Paddock Enclosure. Ripon Racecourse impresses year on year with its outstanding backdrop, exciting, relaxed atmosphere and location in one of the country's smallest, most beautiful and historic cities.

## RACECOURSE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024

NMRC invited 31 courses from the Midlands to Scotland to send in details of their 2024 annual badges – here are details from the 13 courses that replied – all will be great value for the regular racegoer. These brief summaries cover the main benefits but there are often 'extra perks' available which are listed on the appropriate websites. Joint memberships must usually be at the same address although some courses do offer joint memberships at two different addresses - usually at a slightly higher price:

### CARLISLE - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:

**An annual membership costs £245pa** and covers 24 meetings at Carlisle plus 60 reciprocals each year. There is also a great initiative to purchase a 'season pass' for either jumps/flat meetings only at £125pa. Annual members are also allowed one free guest ticket at four meetings (dates TBC). Entry to a number of Haydock fixtures is also available at half-price. For further information visit: <https://www.thejockeyclub.co.uk/carlisle/membership-and-offers/annual/> or call 0344 597 3002.

### CARTMEL - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:

**The basic single membership costs £200pa** and gives access to all 9 meetings at Cartmel plus 50 other reciprocal meetings plus other perks such as free parking and free gazebo use. Premium joint memberships with reserved in course parking cost £550pa. For further information visit <https://cartmel-racecourse.co.uk/packages-2/#ANNUAL-MEMBERSHIP7170-dbdf> or phone 015395 36340.

### CATTERICK – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2023/2024:

Catterick prefers to call them 'annual cards' and unlike many other tracks there is a membership year starting on 1<sup>st</sup> November. The main package includes 27 days at Catterick and around 40 reciprocal meetings.

**Single membership costs £180 and a Joint Membership £320.**

Full details available at <https://www.catterickbridge.co.uk/Racing/Annual-Cards>

### HEXHAM - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:

Details of membership are as follows:- **Single Membership £155.00, Senior Single £130.00, Double Membership £250.00 Senior Double £210.00**, for 2024 we are providing members with 3 guest vouchers which can be redeemed on any weekday fixture. As well as access to the 14 meetings we host next year and the members room where free tea, coffee and biscuits are provided there is also reciprocal visits arranged to over 50 racecourses in Britain and Ireland.

For further details visit <https://hexham-racecourse.co.uk/page/racing-guide/annual-membership> or call 01434 606881

### **LEICESTER – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:**

Interestingly at Leicester, memberships can be obtained at any time of year as they run on a 12m rolling basis. Besides 29 meetings at Leicester they include ALL meetings at Stratford plus selected other reciprocals.

**Single membership £250, Joint memberships £450.**

Fuller details available at <https://www.leicester-racecourse.co.uk/racing/annual-badge-holders/>

### **NEWCASTLE - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:**

**Full membership costs £255pa** and includes all racing at Newcastle plus entry to other Arc courses plus a number of reciprocals. There is also an under 25's badge at £178 and a Jumps only badge at £160. Several other perks such as guest passes are also included. You can purchase online at <https://www.newcastle-racecourse.co.uk/raceday-experience/annual-membership> or call 0191 236 2020.

### **PONTEFRACT - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:**

In 2024, a **single membership costs £220 and a joint membership £305.**

There are 16 days racing at Pontefract and 48 reciprocal meetings included plus some other benefits.

For further details/purchases please call 01977 781307 or visit <https://www.pontefract-races.co.uk/annual-badge-holders/>

### **RIPON RACES – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:**

**Single membership costs £240pa; Joint membership £360 with a 'season ticket' available at £160pa.**

The season ticket offers 16 days racing whilst the annual memberships also include free race cards and a number of reciprocal meetings.

For further information visit <https://ripon-races.co.uk/annual-badges/>

### **SEDGEFIELD - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:**

**Full membership costs £210pa** and includes all racing at Sedgefield plus entry to other Arc courses plus a number of reciprocals. There is also an under 25's badge at £105pa. Several other perks such as guest passes are also included. You can purchase online at <https://www.sedgefield-racecourse.co.uk/sedgefield-racecourse/annual-membership> or call 01740 621 925.

### **STRATFORD – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:**

**Full memberships cost £185pa and Joint £350pa (slightly cheaper online).** Seniors/under 25's badges are £110 (£205 joint) although seniors are classed as over 75!

The badges also give access to JUMPS MEETINGS at Leicester plus various other reciprocal meetings.

For fuller details visit: <https://stratfordracecourse.net/membership/>

### **UTTOXETER - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024:**

If you're a regular racegoer, becoming an annual member is great value for money.

As well as getting entry to every Uttoxeter fixture, you'll also be able to attend 500+ fixtures across other Arena Racing Company tracks, including feature fixtures, festivals and Live After Racing concerts.



From Doncaster to Windsor, Newcastle to Brighton, you'll be able to visit 15 other racecourses located throughout the UK! Full details available at <https://www.uttoxeter-racecourse.co.uk/raceday-experience/annual-membership>

Annual Membership includes: Access to all Uttoxeter fixtures; Entry to 500+ fixtures across Arena Racing Company racecourses; Metal Membership Badge; £50 worth of discount vouchers to purchase food and drink across the racecourse and in the restaurant; Enrolment in to the ARC Racing Club with access to owners tickets; Free car parking; Four free guest passes.

**Full Membership - £330.00 Senior Membership (65+) - £300.00 Under 25 Membership - £165.00**

## **WETHERBY – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2023/2024:**

Wetherby memberships are on a seasonal basis rather than a calendar basis so you will probably need to hold fire before getting one ahead of the October seasonal renewal.

**Single membership £200, Joint Membership £310 & under 25's £90.**

Members also allocated reciprocal meetings and receive a free racecard.

For fuller details please visit: <https://www.wetherbyracing.co.uk/racing/annual-badge-holders/>

## **YORK – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024**

The basic package is 17 days racing at York plus other reciprocal days.

There are also several other useful benefits (e.g. free race cards & parking) and for fuller details please visit <https://www.yorkracecourse.co.uk/annual-badgeholders.html>

**A single membership costs £455pa with a joint membership £770pa. Junior memberships also available.**

Contact Debbie Shirt on 01904 683936 regarding membership queries.

# **OTHER CHELTENHAM PREVIEWS ACROSS OUR REGION**

Here are some selected events from 'Friends of NMRC' which members may like to attend:

**Cartmel – Cheltenham Festival Preview – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024: Arrival, 6 – 6:30pm bar open; Buffet served from 6:30pm; Panel starts at 7:00pm**

Our expert panel will be guiding you through the highlights of the four days at Cheltenham and this is your chance to ask any questions of the panel about Cheltenham, Aintree and maybe even Cartmel!

Our panel this year hosted by our race day presenter Craig Thomson plus Cartmel Champion trainer James Moffatt, Course specialist and in-form Jockey, Charlotte Jones & Racing TV expert Mark Howard

It's going to be a little different this year as we want to give you more time to ask questions on the panel on all things racing. It's priced at £25.00 per person and you can make your bookings [\*\*here\*\*](#) or phone 015395 36340

**Hexham – Cheltenham Festival Preview - Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Hosted by Gordon Brown with panel including Henry Brooke, Rebecca Menzies, Tim Reed & Andrew Thornton.**

At the Tynedale Function Suite, Hexham Mart, NE46 3SG. Starting at 7pm. Light refreshments at the interval and full bar facilities. Auction for the Injured Jockeys Fund.

Tickets can be purchased on this link [hexham-racecourse.co.uk/product/100198-cheltenham-festival-preview-night](https://hexham-racecourse.co.uk/product/100198-cheltenham-festival-preview-night) or by calling 01434 606881.

**Utttoxeter - Cheltenham Festival and Midlands Grand National Preview Evening**  
**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Hosted by Robert Cooper, panel includes Paddy Brennan, Fergal O'Brien, Johnny Dineen & Liam Harrison.**

For just £17.50pp your ticket includes entry, a pie & pea supper.

Come and join us for a fantastic night's entertainment and hopefully a few winners!

To book online visit <https://www.utttoxeter-racecourse.co.uk/whats-on/cheltenham-festival-and-midlands-grand-national-preview-eve>

## NMRC A.G.M. MINUTES NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Thanks to all who took part in this year's online AGM on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January. As we now have a more diverse regional membership this 'online' format is likely to stay in place for future years so that all of our members have an equal chance of joining in the meeting wherever they live.

Minutes of the meeting are now available online on the club website at <https://the-nrc.weebly.com> From the home page select 'more' from the menu and then 'AGM Minutes' where you can download the pdf document.

## N & M RACING CLUB COMMITTEE/OFFICIALS 2023/24

Phil Evans	Chairman & Satnaps	0161 973 5921	info@northernracingclub.com
Helen Goodwill	Membership & HH Comp	0161 928 0213	cheshirecherry@hotmail.co.uk
Ken Unsworth	Magazine printing	0151 526 9107	ken_unsworth@yahoo.co.uk
Dave Bates	Stable Visits	01925 574140	bates270@btinternet.com
Richard Mattinson	Treasurer	01772 322095	rmattinson@virginmedia.com
Michael Wheeler	Alex Bird Competition	07367 903903	mikewheater.nmrc@outlook.com
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Gordon Armistead	Racecourse Reporter	01257255782	gpa.shlab@btinternet.com
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Charles Rear			charlesworear@gmail.com

Kieran Rowbottom	Hon President	01606 46765	kieranrobot07@gmail.com
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*Next Racin' Deadline is Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March*