



Showcase
& Awards
2025

Ascot Racecourse

Exceptional Raceday Delivery (> 8,000)

Howden Christmas Family Raceday



Proudly partnered by



Objectives

Christmas is all about traditions and the Howden Christmas Family Raceday is for many the traditional start of Christmas. Featuring the Grade 1 Howden Long Walk Hurdle, the raceday is Ascot's best attended Jumps meeting of the season and for the 2024 renewal we set out to make it better and more memorable than ever.

Delivering a truly magical Christmas racing experience for all was the focus of the raceday, with a renewed effort to engage racegoers, participants, sponsors and staff in all aspects of the experience from start to finish.

Specific objectives included:

- Grow attendance year-on-year with ambition of achieving a record crowd of more than 19,000.
- Engage racegoers in the racing more than ever with interactive sessions to inspire lifelong fans.
- Promote and showcase top-level racing, attracting star names – both equine and human - and telling their story.
- Encourage families and the local community to visit and engage in Ascot more regularly.
- Work closer with our headline Partner for the day, Howden, and attract new sponsors that will help cross-promote the raceday.



Delivery



Marketing: The Howden Christmas Family Raceday is one of four dedicated family racedays at Ascot across the year. Marketing the day in a more bespoke way than ever before with a dedicated campaign creative helped us to promote the day to target audiences.

Racing industry: Prize money for the Grade 1 Howden Long Walk Hurdle was boosted from £100,000 to £125,000, to ensure top-level staying hurdlers targeted the race. Christmas gifts were handed out to all stable staff and media to thank them for their efforts and support of Ascot. ROA members were provided with complimentary O&T badges for the day rather than King Edward VII Enclosure tickets. Pony Racing Awards were presented to rising stars of the weighing room before racing by jockey Olive Nicholls.

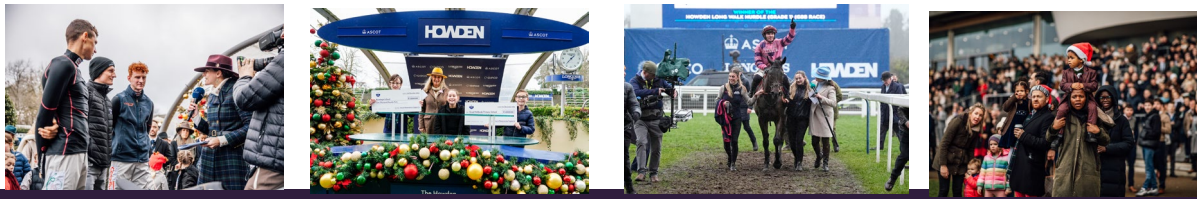
On course: Customer experience enhancements included FanCam, offering racegoers the chance to appear on the big screen in a fun and interactive way. For the first time on any British racecourse, we launched the Bet With Ascot Self-Service Betting Terminals. These were available in the Queen Anne Enclosure for racegoers to use, offering a modern, easy to use betting experience that mirrors many high-street retail offerings. Our new Live From The Parade Ring show invited racegoers into the parade ring for a jockey masterclass with Caoilin Quinn and Conor Ring as well as a Spin The Wheel game with prizes. Family-themed festive entertainment included carols after racing, the Father Christmas grotto and Mrs Christmas story telling, reindeer meet and greet and food making workshop, Christmas game stalls, racing-themed gingerbread decorating with the Colts and Fillies Club and face painting.

Sponsors: We worked with Howden to cross-promote their sponsorship of the upcoming Lions tour with an on-site rugby activation which allowed racegoers to learn more about what Howden do and their support for racing. Howden invited more than 4,000 of their own staff and families to enjoy a festive day out, introducing new audiences to the sport via their vast network. David Howden also launched his Thoroughbred Aftercare Programme on the day with an audience for industry and media guests.

Other initiatives included:

- Ascot staff members were offered surprise and delight gifts including gloves and festive baubles.
- Jockeycam made available to broadcasters to bring those at home closer to the action.
- Social content included 'Get to know the Jockeys' with quickfire questions and a Paisley Park icon piece.
- Community engagement included the Christmas Schools Photography Competition with entries showcased in the Grandstand and Millie Pilkington, Royal Photographer, the guest judge. Other CSR activity included the IJF having a stand.

Results



The Howden Christmas Family Raceday 2024 was hugely successful across multiple aspects of the event. 32.1% of guests that responded to the post-raceday service rated their day as 10/10 while nearly 80% rated it as 7 or higher. 83% said the atmosphere was good or excellent and 79% said the quality of the venue was good or excellent.

Set against the specific objectives, the results were:

- **Grow attendance** – The official attendance was 19,449 – a record for this day – increasing 4.3% on the 18,652 in 2023. Within those numbers, public ticket sales (i.e. ex Fine Dining and Boxes) increased by 26.7% from 7,707 to 9,762 highlighting strong public resonance, sales and revenue uplift.
- **Engage racegoers in the racing** – The new Live from the Parade Ring Show was hugely successful with more than 200 people entering the parade ring for the jockey masterclass. Several young racegoers were able to take part in the activation on a mechanical horse with Mike Cattermole commentating on a live 'race'. On course content and Q&As across Ascot TV with leading connections also helped showcase the raceday while betting turnover on course through Bet With Ascot increased by 4.9%, outperforming the attendance uplift. This was aided strongly by the SSBTs which took more than 350 bets with no operational issues.
- **Promote and showcase the top-level racing** – The Howden Long Walk Hurdle produced a field of 10, outperforming many Grade 1 races through the Jumps season and rewarding the increased investment in prize money. Through digital content we showcased memorable winners of the Long Walk Hurdle as well as short form content with jockeys including 'Battle of the Bowens' which got more than 10k views on TikTok and 12k on Instagram. Total views on social media content across the day exceeded 100k.
- **Engaging families** – Family-themed entertainment was available across the site, and the pre-racing Christmas Parade produced a full parade ring of racegoers watching the entertainers. The overall attendance figure included 1,807 young racegoers under the age 18, helping to introduce them to the sport and showcase racing to future generations.
- **Working closer with headline Partners/Sponsors** – Howden activation across the site meaningfully enhanced the experience for racegoers while their continued support of the day provides significant financial support to the racecourse to invest in racing.⁴

Supporting Information

Ed Chamberlin delivers the ITV Racing's opener from the Live at the Parade Ring show

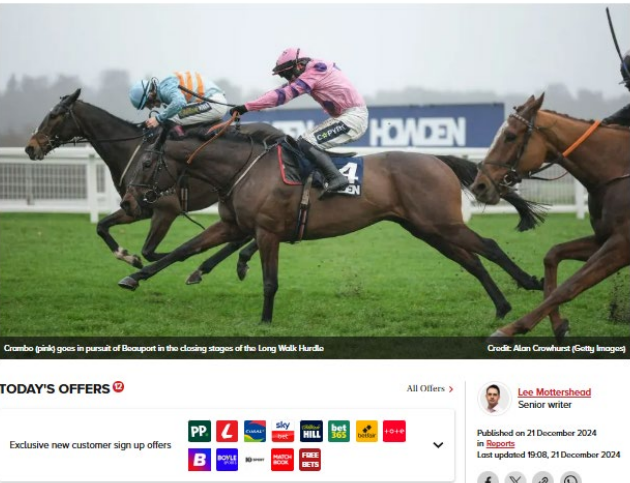


Racegoer feedback:

“Had a fabulous day. It was very festive and full of fun. We were in a group of 13 and all had a fab time - age range from 16 through to 56. Thank you.”

“Father and Mrs Christmas were just fabulous! You'd made such an effort to entertain the children, it was really noticeable how much the families were enjoying it all!”

National coverage of the Live at the Parade Ring show in the Sunday Telegraph, 22nd December



That will be good news to Ascot, as was the fact it welcomed a record 19,449 customers for its Christmas Saturday, prior to which racegoers were for the first time invited into the paddock to enjoy pre-racing entertainment.

Linked to an initiative with rehabilitation charity The Clink, those who then made it into the Ascot Authority room were served mince pies made by inmates at Brixton Prison. That was something to celebrate, as for favourite punters was [Victorino](#) becoming yet another major Saturday winner for [Venetia Williams](#) in the Howden Silver Cup.

Lee Mottershead comment piece in the Racing Post, Sunday 22nd December

