



Showcase
& Awards
2023

Doncaster Racecourse

Best Non-raceday Event

St Leger Festival Community Day



THE
**ST LEGER
FESTIVAL**
— ESTD 1776 —

**RACING
TO SCHOOL**



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Objectives



For nearly 250 years, the city of Doncaster and the sport of horseracing have been closely intertwined. Town Moor, the home of Doncaster Racecourse has played host to the World's Oldest Classic since 1776. The modern four day St Leger Festival plays an integral role within the local economy, and is the cities biggest sporting and social event of the year.

In 2020, attendance at the St Leger Festival was cancelled after a day and in 2021, attendance restrictions were only lifted four weeks ahead of the meeting. In 2022, the fixture was abandoned and rescheduled following the death of Her Majesty The Queen, a St Leger and multiple Doncaster Cup winning owner, who had bestowed City Status on Doncaster earlier in the year as part of her Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Given the disruption to the St Leger Festival in recent years, and in celebration of the award of city status, the Doncaster Racecourse team wanted to work to re-establish the St Leger Festival within the heart of the community.

As such, #MadeInDoncaster was the central theme of all of the marketing of the Festival, celebrating the city's Roman, racing and locomotive heritage, with the new Sunday Leger Community Day in particular focused at delivering a family friendly experience.

Tied in with the wider marketing for the St Leger Festival was the idea to welcome local schoolchildren for a new, educational St Leger Community Day ahead of the start of racing, on Wednesday 13 September. The objectives of the event were to...

- Offer children the chance to learn more generally about the sport of horseracing.
 - Learn about life as a professional jockey.
- Engage directly with local school children to educate them as to the shared history of Doncaster and British horseracing.
 - Outline the significant history of the St Leger Festival specifically, looking forward to the upcoming renewal
 - Tie in to their regular curriculum to offer a fun, exciting and engaging day out of the classroom.
- Offer the chance to meet a real racehorse, and learn more about their care, as part of National Racehorse Week.

Delivery



Delivery Through Partnership

- Doncaster Racecourse and ARC were delighted to link with partner charity **Racing to School** to design a bespoke timetable, with elements based on their regular racecourse events.
- The Racing to School team lead engagement with Willow Primary School, based in Bessacar.
- The Doncaster Racecourse team worked with Racing to School to sign off all of the relevant health and safety permissions required before welcoming school children on to a busy site preparing for its biggest fixture of the year.
- The team at **Scott Dixon Racing** partnered with the day to bring a racehorse to Doncaster especially with the intention to meet the school children, tying the event was neatly into National Racehorse Week.
- Seven year old grey Rebel Redemption was chosen especially for his calm and patient demeanour with the children, none of whom had had the opportunity to meet a racehorse before.
- ARC Head Office assisted in the application for BHA permissions for the racecourse visit.
- Retired jockey **Page Fuller** agreed to partner with the St Leger Community Day to offer the school children a unique insight into the life of a professional jockey.
- Page joined with RtS' Carrie Ford and Toby Becton in offering the children some expert riding tips, giving them the chance to ride the equiciser like a real jockey, holding their hands, feet and body in the correct riding position and riding a finish like Frankie Dettori.
- **ARC Head Office** contributed in the development and development of an interactive 'History of the St Leger' presentation and quiz that would offer the children an understanding of the shared history and heritage of the St Leger and Doncaster.
- The children were able to learn more generally about horseracing and the St Leger Festival more specifically, including the importance of the five Classics, the Royal connections to the race (with excitement building around the potential of a win for the King in a few days time) and even cheer on Frankie Dettori in a replay of Logician's record breaking 2019 St Leger win.



Results

“It was awesome!”

- Over fifty children from Year 6 at Willow Primary School in Bessacar joined the Racecourse and Racing To School teams on Wednesday 13 September, for the St Leger Community Day.

- Each child received a voucher to return to the Racecourse with their parents on a future raceday, as well as their bespoke workbooks, stickers and pens.

- A small number of the children had been to the racecourse before with their parents, many for non racing events. Each child was able to meet a racehorse for the first time, meeting Rebel Redemption in a saddling box, giving him a pat and feeding him a polo mint or a carrot.

- The children split into four groups to allow them to enjoy each element of the day in a manner in which they would be able to engage with the lead of each activity, and ask plenty of questions, and ride a winner on the equiciser and in virtual reality.

- Feedback from the children and their teachers was overwhelmingly positive. Congratulations for Jenson for getting the highest marks on his quiz at the end of the day!

*“I loved it, I want to come again! This was an amazing experience for me, and I think all of the Y6 loved it too! Thank you for having us here” - **Chaitra***

*“I didn’t think I would meet a real jockey, and I had a really good time” - **Max***

*“It surprised mt that the racecourse has such a big and strong history. It is amazing and I hope to come again soon. I love that I got to learn many facts, such as I did not know The Queen had so many horses” - **Ava***

*“Great day! The children really enjoyed it. Important to learn about Doncaster’s’ heritage” - **Mr Parkinson***

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As part of National Racehorse Week, the course will welcome children on Thursday through the educational charity Racing to School.

Doncaster’s executive director Rachel Harwood said: “We are delighted to open our doors ahead of racing to welcome Racing to School and the children to come and learn more about our sport, and the St Leger Festival itself.

“National Racehorse Week is a fantastic series of events taking place across the country to engage the general public with the sport, which we are delighted to support in this way.

“Horseracing plays a prominent role in the rich history and sporting heritage of Doncaster, and we want to make sure that we can pass that message on to the next generation, whilst allowing them a fun and engaging educational day out of the classroom.”



September 13th, 2023

Times	Programme		
09.30	Welcome / Health and Safety Brief		
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
09.50	Weighing Room	Final Furlong	History of the St Leger
10.35	History of the St Leger	Weighing Room	Final Furlong
11.20	Break		
11.40	Final Furlong	History of the St Leger	Weighing Room
12.25	Lunch		
12.55	Quiz		
13.15	Meet a Racehorse	Equisicers & VR Headsets	
13.45	Equisicers & VR Headsets	Meet a Racehorse	
14.15	Plenary - Q & A – Prizes? – Evaluations		
14.45	Depart		

Please note activities and timings may change due to weather conditions.



