



The QIPCO Guineas Festival Coronation Weekend 2023 - Newmarket Racecourses

The Raceday Award

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Objectives



Newmarket Racecourses plays host to the annual QIPCO Guineas Festival, which took place on Friday 5 - Sunday 7 May earlier this year. The festival coincided with the Coronation of King Charles III and so as a racecourse, we orchestrated an exciting three-day event that seamlessly combined Group 1 racing, community engagement, coronation celebrations, and entertainment. The first day of the festival was dedicated to celebrating our community heroes, while the subsequent two days took centre stage, featuring Group 1 racing and Coronation celebrations.

The Garden Enclosure was transformed into a street party experience. There was a host of themed entertainment and roaming acts for all to enjoy. The festival gave us an opportunity to not only offer exceptional customer experience and a great day out but to grow our audience in enclosures that are more financially accessible.

Acknowledging the ongoing challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued cost-of-living pressures, we made a concerted effort to ensure the event was accessible to all. Consequently, we set budget-friendly pricing for adult tickets, specifically in the Grandstand and Paddock Enclosure on Friday and in the Garden Enclosure on Saturday and Sunday. All under 18s attended for free across the three days.

There were **five** key objectives of the festival:

1. Celebrate the local community, and provide a well-deserved day out for local charity groups and volunteers (5 May)
2. Offer adult tickets from £10 (G&P) for the Friday and £16 (Garden) for the Saturday and Sunday and grow attendances in these enclosures by 5% vs. 2022
3. Provide a hub in Newmarket where the public can enjoy watching the coronation followed by entertainment throughout the day
4. To mark the coronation of King Charles III and his longstanding dedication to the environment by planting a commemorative tree, rounding off the late Queens canopy project
5. To increase YoY growth of adult Garden Enclosure admission since 2019 by 10% (exc. 2020 and 2021 due to Covid)

Delivery



Each of the following were identified as **key** attributes to making this event a success:

Increase in capacity - To facilitate objectives 2 and 5, the capacity of the Garden Enclosure needed increasing. This was successfully carried out by means of a proposal to SAG, which was accepted ahead of the event. To ensure the best customer experience for our guests, there were additional food and drink outlets and amenities in place for the two days that the enclosure was open for.

Early opening of gates – On the 6th May, gates opened early to enable all guests who wished, to watch the coronation from the start, in its entirety. The coronation was played in two separate ‘coronation zones’, making it accessible for all, regardless of ticket type.

Customer experience and entertainment – Laura Wright performed the national anthem ahead of the first race, symbolising the end of the coronation procession, and the commencement of racing. Mike Vince provided commentary along side the coronation ceremony, and Brough Scott, who attended the late Queens coronation was present on the day for media activity. The Haverhill Silver band played coronation themed music prior to the racing starting, rounding off the celebrations in a memorable fashion. The British Champions Fan Zone hosted Barbers Shop, a retired racehorse who was originally owned by the late Queen during his racing career. Masterclasses with jockeys who have ridden in the royal silks brought the synonymous connection of racing and royalty to life. Themed puppet shows, photo opportunities, inflatables and side stall games were just a few of the family activities that guests enjoyed over the weekend.

Commemorative items – 10,000 metal pin badges and 3,000 hand waving flags were kindly provided by GBR to mark the day and provide a keepsake for our guests. Weatherby’s produced a coronation activity pack for children and the racecard featured the coronation logo, which was produced for official events taking place over the coronation weekend.

Community – Over 1200 community and charity groups and their volunteers were invited to come racing for the Friday. The invitation enabled volunteers to claim a free ticket, making the event accessible for all our community heroes.

Tree planting – An indigenous Acer Campestre was planted on coronation day by David Redvers. This rounded off The Jockey Club’s tree planting programme for the Queen’s Canopy Project, which took place during 2022, and further symbolised the Royal connection to the event.

Hospitality – Our Chez Roux hospitality customers were given metal union jack badges to commemorate this unique, one-off experience. There were royal touches to the Michelin star inspired menu making it a fantastic experience for all hospitality guests.

Site dressing – Red white and blue bunting and union jack poles and pennants were used to dress the site. Fifty picnic benches were hired for the Garden Enclosure in addition to a dedicated screen for the coronation zone in this area. The benches were arranged in rows, to mimic that of a typical British street party.

Results



Community – Over 1200 local community and charity groups were invited to attend the Friday for free, and we saw a positive 42% redemption rate on these tickets. Many from the local towns also attended on Saturday and Sunday. Volunteers that attended even included puppies in training from The Guide Dogs! A ‘Community Champion’ was selected, by means of nomination by their peers. The winner was announced on the day and received a magnum of Nyetimber and £1,000 charity bet, courtesy of book maker John Christie. A one-off photo opportunity in partnership with British Racing and Racing to School also marked the coronation and the significance of the event. Across Saturday and Sunday of the festival, **8,659** tickets were purchased by individuals living at addresses within East Anglia, an **increase from 2022**, proving our efforts at attracting more to come racing, from our local community.

Customer experience – We received positive feedback across the board with 29% of survey respondents reporting they’d had **an extremely good day out**. Families particularly appreciated the price point of the Garden Enclosure, reflected in positive ticket sales and the additional entertainment that was on offer. Additionally, on both Saturday and Sunday, a DJ set was enjoyed, post racing in the G&P enclosure.

Ticket prices and admission numbers –

On Friday, 1,142 customers purchased G&P tickets for just £10, a notable **29% increase** on the previous year (801 G&P tickets purchased in 2022).

There was a **22% growth** on the Saturday, and **27% growth** on the Sunday in comparison to adult admissions in 2022. Garden Enclosure guests were able to bring their own food and drink and all entertainment was free, making it an affordable, inclusive and desirable day out for many. Moreover, the affordable pricing enabled families of four to enjoy the Garden Enclosure for just £32 (individual adult £16, U18s free).

Summary - The results showed a **clear growth** in paid Friday G&P and Saturday and Sunday Garden Enclosure admission, a clear indication that the pricing was favourable for several customer groups. The YoY growth for paid Garden enclosure admission since 2019 has also significantly increased, by **24%**. Whilst this was a one-off celebratory event, there are many elements, such as the community day that will be continued for years to come.



Supporting Information

Ticket purchasers and location

Hyper local areas such as Cambridge (1,098), Newmarket (944) and Bury St Edmunds (1,007) had the highest number of ticket purchasers for the Saturday and Sunday. All of which were an increase from 2022, proving our efforts at attracting more to come racing, from our local community. The figures shown for London purchasers positively reflects our continued efforts and strategy to attract wider audiences and be more inclusive and diverse.

Customer feedback

'The QIPCO Guineas Festival represents good value and fun day out'

'Fun, safe and friendly place to spend quality time with friends and family, with exciting racing every half an hour'

'I always recommend friends and family because it such a great day and great atmosphere'

'Great day out for families and can be done on a budget, if necessary, by taking a picnic etc. great family entertainment, all the facilities you need'

Community Day

A wide variety of charities and groups were contacted:

- 158 Charities based in Suffolk
- 200 Charities based in Cambridgeshire
- 400 Sports Clubs in Cambridgeshire
- 398 Sports Clubs in Suffolk
- 93 Religious Groups in Suffolk
- 157 Religious Groups in Cambridgeshire
- 50 Museums in Cambridgeshire
- 58 Museums in Suffolk

Other supporting links:

1. [Racing Post](#)
2. [Racing Post](#)
3. [Racing TV](#)
4. [The Jockey Club](#)
5. [The Jockey Club](#)
6. [Suffolk News](#)

Top 20 Towns	Orders	Quantity sold	Top 20 Towns	Orders	Quantity sold
Chelmsford	38	85	Bury st edmunds	17	53
Huntingdon	57	92	King's Lynn	25	61
Bedford	33	99	Luton	7	62
Royston	61	110	Bishop's stortford	27	63
Sudbury	51	112	Saffron walden	25	64
Stowmarket	60	119	Sudbury	26	68
King's Lynn	66	127	Haverhill	27	72
Thetford	51	127	Northampton	9	75
Peterborough	60	137	Wellingborough	18	90
Saffron walden	48	138	Unknown	65	123
Haverhill	63	160	Colchester	41	137
Unknown	103	163	Peterborough	37	158
Colchester	62	174	Bedford	62	174
Ely	216	382	Ely	103	206
Ipswich	154	415	London	101	226
Norwich	167	477	Ipswich	104	271
London	249	492	Bury st. edmunds	140	348
Newmarket	311	592	Newmarket	147	352
Bury st. edmunds	325	606	Norwich	94	371
Cambridge	375	652	Cambridge	187	446
Total	2,550	5,259	Total	1,262	3,400

Saturday 6 May (left) and Sunday 7 May (right) 2023 figures

