



Teddy Bear's Picnic in association with Harrogate Theatre

Exceptional Raceday Delivery <7,999



Proudly partnered by



Showcase & Awards 2025



Objectives



- To build on links already made with Harrogate Theatre in 2024 to develop the arts-sports relationship in the local area, which is currently almost non-existent. Last year we worked with Harrogate Theatre to help them promote their in-house pantomime and their comedy festival. In doing so we found out that they are actually a registered charity who need the support of local businesses, along with new and different ways to draw people to live events. We decided to use our family day on 4th August to bring the Arts and Sport together to promote both to new audiences, as a trailer for our big bank holiday family day on 25th Aug.
- To bring in more families who are typically more interested in the arts over local sporting events. Harrogate has a strong family base, as does Ripon Races, but these are typically not the same people, by working together we wanted to cross promote to both audiences, bringing something new to both, bringing in new and different family audiences and young people who are the future of racing. The objective for this family day was to bring new audiences to 4th August raceday, AND our next family day on bank holiday Monday 25th August for whom Ripon Races have then become more noticeable over the recent months through local and even possibly national press.
- To maintain interest in visiting the racecourse following our recent non-raceday event, hosting our first ever open-air theatre in the racecourse, a travelling production of Wind in the Willows. Ripon Races played host to Ilyria theatre's outdoor production in July, as part of the Ripon Theatre Festival, which we've supported financially for 3 years now. This was the 1st event of its kind at the racecourse and the first racecourse that Ilyria had performed in. Visiting families commented on the beauty of the course and a lovely family environment. We wanted to use the 4th August event to continue the interest from arts-interested families, to bring them back to the racecourse for sporting drama.
- To support Harrogate Theatre in their fundraising bid in their 125th Year anniversary. They aim to raise £125,000 this year to keep their doors open and ensure that the theatre can be properly maintained – our role was profile raising as opposed to physically raising funds for them.

Delivery

Many small strands to the project culminating in raceday

Delivery began in May with initial marketing and cross promotion – Harrogate Theatre promoting and sharing our family race days on social media, adverts for their panto and the theatre in general in racecard and on big screen at family race days in May. Two Harrogate Theatre race names on different days to maintain the profile of the theatre and to show the strengthened partnership.

Settled on a Teddy bears picnic theme and events as this fit with the type of children's theatre that Harrogate Theatre shows:

- Free activities for kids on the day – bear themed face painting, glitter tattoos and arts and crafts
- Teddy bear sticker for every child on entry
- Large (6ft) teddy bear mascot wandering around giving out sweets to children and having photos taken, accompanied by theatre and racecourse staff
- Punch and Judy shows throughout the day
- Teddy bear hunt – teddies hidden around the course enclosure with letters, rearrange the letters to make the name of a famous bear (Rupert), winner picked at random by Harrogate Theatre staff wins a giant cuddly teddy and is invited to pick it up at the next family day.
- Most loved teddy and cutest teddy – panto tickets prizes from Harrogate theatre
- The Harrogate Theatre 'It's Behind You' Panto horse race – not quite teddies, initially we were going to have teddies or mascots running, but we felt strongly that panto horses should be represented to embed the sports-arts link. Businesses could pay to take part with profits going into Harrogate Theatre's fundraising pot. This was to be the first race on the card, set up with starter, commentator and racetech coverage just like a real race.
- Social media content on both Harrogate Theatre and Ripon Races channels as well as local radio Your Harrogate Radio social media takeover for the day. Invited press down.
- **Despite a MET weather warning in the days before and high winds forecast we were able to run all elements of the day**
- NO increase to gate or pre-booked price ensuring that it remained as accessible as possible for all

Results



Attendance on 4th August (**despite storm weather warning and high winds forecast**): 2076

Attendance on Bank holiday family day: 7458 – 1190 of whom were children (2024: 7170 of whom 800 were children)

- All activities busy throughout the day.
- Over 200 entrants in the Teddy Bear Hunt and one very happy winner!
- Four large packets of Maoams devoured by children on the day – given out by our teddy mascot – who has now been adopted as the Ripon Races mascot for all future family days
- New families in the Course Enclosure with comments such as ‘we had no idea it would be like this – the kids are loving it’ and ‘its such a clever idea to have an event that supports theatre and sport together’.
- Panto horse race had 7 entrants, who paraded with pride in the parade ring, with names like ‘Press Up Percy’, ‘Hot Trotty’ and ‘Sticky Wicket’. Some brilliant commentary and excellent slow-motion replays for everyone at the racecourse to enjoy.
- Social media responses rate was huge on all three accounts (Ripon Races, Harrogate Theatre, Your Harrogate) and the final 5 metre dash to the line became a meme!
- Harrogate Theatre got huge amounts of exposure from the day, and returned the favour promoting Ripon Races in time for the bank holiday family day.
- We were featured in the Times print and digital and popular children’s magazine, The Week. Sky Sports also got involved, showing footage of the parade ring and the race itself with some excellent punditry from the studio team.
- Harrogate Theatre have had expressions of interest for next year’s Panto race already, where the field will be widened out to include all four-legged panto animals, and will hopefully become an annual fundraiser for them.
- 4.4k views of Ripon Races post made on facebook with video of Jo Mason picking the name of the giant teddy to be won
- **Total new purchasers**
- Increase of ‘car to course’ ticket sales – ticket sales more than doubled for 25th August and most car to course ticket purchasers are bringing their family/children with them
- Tripadvisor ratings for 4th August 100% 4 or 5 stars, 89% 5 star, 25th Aug 84% 4 or 5 stars, 63% 5 stars



TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC

FEATURING...
HARROGATE THEATRE'S PANTOMIME RACE!

ORDER OF THE DAY

- 12:10pm: Gates Open
- 12:50pm: Pantomime Race Participants enter the Parade Ring
- 1:10pm: Pantomime Race
- 2:10pm: First Race
- 2:40pm: Second Race
- 3:10pm: Third Race
- 3:40pm: Fourth Race
- 3:50pm: 'Cutest Teddy' & 'Most Loved Teddy' competitions at the Course Bar Entrance.
- 4:10pm: Fifth Race
- 4:40pm: Sixth Race



DON'T FORGET TO SAY HELLO TO OUR 'TEDDY BEAR MASCOT' OR TAKE PART IN THE 'TEDDY BEAR HUNT'!



Theatre's pantomime horse race

Harrogate Theatre's fundraising campaign trotted into action with its first ever "He's Behind You" race. On 4 August, Ripon racecourse in North Yorkshire welcomed some highly unusual competitors: six pantomime horses, each of them with two human runners crammed inside. The winner was Hot Trotty, beating rivals Sinbad's Delight, Sticky Wicket, Press Up Percy, Panto Professionals and Bring the Drama. The race was to help raise £125,000 for the theatre, which is celebrating its 125th birthday this year.



16 August 2025 • The Week Junior



TEDDY BEAR HUNT

HIDDEN AROUND THE COURSE ENCLOSURE ARE 6 OF
WILFRID'S TEDDY BEAR FRIENDS!
EACH FRIEND HAS A LETTER.

FIND ALL THE LETTERS AND
SPELL OUT THE NAME OF A VERY FAMOUS BEAR
FOR A CHANCE TO WIN **WILFRID HIMSELF!**

Please post your completed entry card into the box inside the Course Enclosure Bar

Contact details
Name: _____
Name of Parent/Guardian: _____
Email: _____

By providing your name and email address, you are consenting to receiving email communications from Ripon Races including promotions, special offers & newsletters.