

Sports grounds

researched and written by Alan Kerr

This chapter includes:

- an **introduction**, including information which is the same for virtually all the venues described
- **detailed descriptions** of the various sports grounds, some of which are used for concerts and other events
- a **commentary** with suggestions about how things need to change and progress
- **contacts relating to participation** in sport

As the guide was largely put together during the London Olympics year, this provided the background to an extended description of London's various sports grounds.

We have visited all the main venues for cricket, football, rugby and tennis, and collected the basic information about 'access'. Some of it was provided by the venues themselves, as it wasn't possible for us to test absolutely everything during our relatively brief visits.

We have, however, attended many events at lots of different venues over the years, including many of those described here. We have also talked to many people who use the various services and who have provided realistic feedback. In this chapter, we have included the information available for hearing and/or visually impaired spectators, who have specific and clearly definable needs when attending events.

We unfortunately found that with a number of the venues, including several of the bigger ones, our phone calls and e-mails went unanswered. In many cases we had to be quite persistent before we managed to get through to someone who would really help with getting the information about access.

We have included a *Commentary*, AFTER the detailed write-ups

In this we assess some of the changes that are taking place, and make some suggestions for improving facilities in the future.

The organisation which is currently campaigning to improve attitudes and physical provisions at sports grounds, is:

Level playing field

The Meridian, 4 Copthall House, Station Square, Coventry, CV1 2FL

website: www.levelplayingfield.org.uk

Tel: 0845 230-6237 *e-mail:* info@levelplayingfield.org.uk

We hope that they will be able to take some of our comments and suggestions on board, and progress them in the future.

Information relating to nearly all the venues listed

Most of the grounds, particularly the football clubs, are located in built-up areas with residential streets all around, or they are in an industrial area. This makes coming by car and finding somewhere to park quite challenging at many of them.

Parking is slightly easier at places like Wembley, Twickenham and Wimbledon, though it is almost certainly wise to book a space in advance.

However you travel, you should arrive in very good time, possibly early enough to make use of the on-site food and drinks outlets, and the toilets. You may have to be patient after the event to wait until the bulk of the crowd has dispersed.

Much depends on whether you are a regular visitor who has found ways to ‘manage’ or if you’re going to a venue for the first time, possibly for a one-off event. Much also depends on whether the venue is going to be full. The big events like cup games and internationals and also some concerts, will attract capacity crowds. Some grounds are full or almost full for most events.

Several venues do NOT have nearby ‘accessible’ tube or rail links, so you are reliant on finding parking OR on using buses or taxis or, possibly, being dropped off by someone who will then go and find somewhere to park. We have tried to recognise this in our descriptions, and have included detailed bus information - which we haven’t done in the rest of the guide. Remember that if you plan to use a taxi at any stage, you will be paying for both distance travelled and the time taken. It is almost certainly worth getting there before the roads get clogged up, and getting out of the cab as soon as you’re close enough, because otherwise the cost will increase sharply !

OF COURSE not all the grounds/venues are sold out for every event, and for some things it is quite easy to get tickets, and to get/book BB parking nearby, and/or to travel without encountering massive crowds.

In this chapter we refer to **accessible toilets**, as they have not all been seen and measured. Nearly all would meet our criteria for being a **wheelchair toilet** although this is slightly dependent on when they were installed, as the design criteria have changed and improved over the years. Most big venues use the **NKS** (RADAR) key, which can often be borrowed from a steward if you don’t have your own. **You will almost certainly find it easier to have your own key** (see the section on Toilets under *Specialised information*). Where venues don’t use the NKS, the toilets are often occupied by people who can perfectly well use the conventional facilities, so having the special key works well.

Information which applies to almost every write-up

In connection with going to see some of the big events, the main hurdles are:

- getting tickets in the first place, and ensuring that the seats/space you are allocated is easily accessible for you. Note that most on-line booking systems don’t define ‘access’ in any meaningful way

- coping with the fact that there may be thousands of people wanting to arrive, and later to leave, all at about the same time. The roads around may be clogged up, with possible road closures, parking may be well-nigh impossible (unless booked in advance), and public transport is likely to be overloaded
- [All the wheelchair spaces and designated ambulant disabled person seats provided, have provision for a companion to sit alongside](#), or in a few cases, behind. Various price concessions are offered, and commonly, one person comes in free, as a necessary carer/assistant. We discuss some of the effects of this in the *Commentary* at the end. Disabled supporters of soccer teams normally have to ‘register’ to qualify for the concessionary prices (see below)
- generally, powered wheelchairs and scooters should not exceed 120cm in length (including footplates) or 70cm wide
- [nearly all spectators who want to come with an Assistance dog need to negotiate appropriate seating \(or arrangements\) by ringing in advance](#)
- the information about what might be described as ‘easy access’ seats for disabled walkers is generally very poor, and this subject is discussed in the *Commentary* near the end of this chapter. [Where a stadium has a lift or lifts, the possible choice of ‘easy access’ seats is greatly extended](#)
- Stewards are much more helpful and better trained than they used to be. Most will be disability aware to an extent - and unless greatly overstretched, stewards should be willing to assist with information, and possibly in getting refreshments where this is difficult
- Many more induction loops have been introduced at ticket offices and catering outlets etc, but as we had no facility for testing these, we have not generally mentioned them
- The shops and megastores at all the venues will tend to be very crowded when there’s a big match/event taking place

To ‘register’ as a disabled spectator at the football clubs, you generally need to be receiving:

- Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Mobility Allowance;
- be Registered Blind or Partially Sighted;
- or provide a personal letter relating to your disability from a doctor or hospital specialist.

Being a BB holder is not a sufficient qualification for registration.

One recent change in attitudes which is to be welcomed is that venue and event managers are becoming slightly more aware of the needs of disabled walkers (ambulant disabled people). These are people for whom distance can be an issue, and steps/stairs, especially where there is no handrail provided. Some need more leg-room, perhaps because of arthritic joints.

The change hasn’t yet got very far, and in our discussions and

correspondence with grounds there was little recognition of the fact that there are probably 5 to 10 times as many disabled walkers as there are wheelchair users. The number is principally because there are more elderly people in the population such as those with arthritis, with Parkinson's or with a number of other conditions affecting mobility.

Based on recent experience, both at Wembley and Arsenal, they are not taken into account at the planning permission stages of new developments.

We explore these issues further in the *Commentary* near the end of this chapter with some specific suggestions about what might be done.

Wembley Stadium

Wembley Stadium, Harrow, HA9 0WS

(Postal address) PO Box 1966, Wembley Stadium, SW1P 9EQ

Tel: 0844 980-8001 Fax: 020 8795 5050 Disability Tickets via main ticket office

website: www.wembleystadium.com

For access information go to: *The stadium*→*Stadium guide*→*Accessible info*

Stadium tours Tel: 0844 800 2755 or book via the website

Ground capacity 90,000

There are spaces for 310 wheelchair users, well distributed around the stadium, and 100 enhanced amenity seats for ambulant disabled spectators, and those with Assistance dogs.

There are lifts throughout the stadium.

Ground description

The new Wembley Stadium was built on the site of the 1923 'Wembley' and was opened in 2007. It is used for major football matches (of various kinds) as well as for concerts and other events. It is dominated by the magnificent Arch which can be seen from the London Eye some 20km away. The stadium is located in a mixed industrial and retail park area, and the main pedestrian approach is from Wembley Park station along the elevated Olympic Way, which is on a podium leading to the north side of the stadium.

The stadium is huge, with a circumference of something like 1km. You need to take this into account and allow plenty of time to find where you go in, and how exactly you get to your seat/s. Inside there are more than 20 lifts and 30 escalators.

There are plenty of stewards on event days, who will assist if required both inside and outside the stadium.

Travel

There are three nearby stations: Wembley Park (UG), Wembley Stadium (NR)

and Wembley Central (UG & O). All, now, are ‘accessible’.

There are also National Express Coaches that run services direct to the stadium from >20 major towns and cities across the UK. Check www.nationalexpress.com for further information and see write-up on coach travel in the *Getting around* chapter.

Wembley Park (Jubilee & Metropolitan) is some 600m from the stadium. There is step-free access between platforms and the street. On the Jubilee line you need to be in the back coach for step-free transfer if coming from the JLE end. You need the front coach if coming from Stanmore. Lifts provide access from the Ticket Hall to Olympic Way.

Wembley Stadium (NR, Chiltern Trains) is about 750m from the stadium. It is not normally staffed, and to ensure that the ramp is available *Tel: 08456 005-165* in advance.

Wembley Central (Bakerloo, *Overground* and NR) is about 1.5km from the stadium. There is now lift access to the Bakerloo and *Overground* platforms. There is an accessible shuttle bus service on some event days between Wembley Park Station and the Stadium which should be booked in advance by telephoning **020 8838-1353** or via www.brentct.org.uk.

Bus routes which go nearby include the:

18 from Sudbury to Harrow Road going along the A404 Harrow Road within 800m of the stadium

83 from Golders Green to Ealing Hospital going along Empire Way past Wembley Stadium station

92 from Brent Park Ikea to Ealing Hospital going along Empire Way and then Engineers Way with a stop by the Olympic Way <400m from the Stadium

182 from Hatch End to Brent Cross shopping centre going along Empire Way past Wembley Stadium station

206 from Kilburn Park to Brent (The Paddocks) going along part of Engineers Way with a stop by the Olympic Way <400m from the Stadium

223 from Harrow to Wembley Central station going along Empire Way past Wembley Stadium station

224 from Brent to Wembley Stadium station

297 from Ealing Broadway to Willesden bus garage going along Park Lane and Wembley Park Drive and past Wembley Park station, all just over 1km from the stadium

Parking

The stadium has two huge official CPs with good provision for BB holders at a discounted cost. Places can be booked in advance and going via the Stadium website, you reach the contractor CSP (Combined Service Provider) at www.gotocsp.com. You can only make advanced bookings on-line but we were told that there is usually adequate space, and it is possible to pay on arrival. The lack of a pre-booking phone line is of concern, as not everyone is ‘on-line’. From the BB spaces in the official CSP CP, there are lifts to take you up to the podium

level, though there may be long queues to use these.

As with other big venues holding events, there are a number of independently run CPs nearby. These include those run by www.stadiumcarparks.com Tel: 0845 834-0210 and www.waspparking.com, and there will be others. The CPs tend to open 3 hours before the event, and to close down an hour after it finishes. The WASP CP said that they don't have specific BB spaces, but have on many occasions accommodated customers needing space for wheelchairs and vehicle ramps.

For the big events, to get a space and also just to find your CP, get there early. From the motorway and from the North Circular Road, you are likely to have to follow a busy and crowded one-way system to get to the CP entrance. If you overshoot, it can be a long way round to get back in the queue, so go gently and don't rush when you're nearly there.

Tickets for disabled spectators

There are two types of ticket at Wembley, and these are for General Admission GA (with >70,000 seats) and Club Wembley (with 17,000 seats, including boxes), which are bought on a 10-year license basis.

GA tickets are distributed according to the policy of the event organiser (eg the Football Association, Football League, Rugby Football League, concert promoter etc). For inter-club football games, tickets will be handled by the participating clubs. You therefore need to contact your club's Disability Team or their ticket office, making your access needs such as step-free access to seating, extra leg-room or a wheelchair space, absolutely clear.

It is worth mentioning that if you have vertigo, some of the seating could be unacceptably high up, particularly at level 5.

For music events, the tickets will be sold by a variety of outside agencies. It is essential that you make your needs known when you book tickets. Many agencies have specialist teams that deal with disabled clients, but some will have less understanding or local knowledge.

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are 310 wheelchair spaces, all with a companion seat alongside. They are spread out around the stadium. Their location on levels 1, 2 and 5 is shown on the stadium plans on the website. Powered wheelchairs and scooters should not exceed 120cm in length (including footplates) or 70cm wide. There are no storage facilities.

Entrances for wheelchair users

The appropriate entrance will be shown on your ticket. They are well signed, and located near lifts that take you to the upper levels.

Ambulant disabled spectators

Wembley has 100 what it calls 'enhanced mobility seats' for people who are able to walk but have limited mobility or are visually impaired. There are spaces for people who bring an Assistance dog (with two dog "toilets" on the outside

concourse on the podium on Level 1). Being a brand new stadium, slightly more leg-room has been provided, and there are some seats which can be accessed via just +3 steps, with a handrail. You will need to ask for these specifically. Because there are some lifts, there will be a good number of ‘easy access’ seats, but these have not been properly recognised.

Visually impaired spectators

An event commentary is provided via headsets that can be booked in advance by e-mailing accessforall@wembleystadium.com. Football matches have a full commentary.

Hearing impaired spectators

All the information desks have induction loops.

Catering

There are 688 food and beverage service points. Each has a position for disabled customers.

Toilets

There are >2,500 toilets, including 147 **accessible toilets (NKS)**, on all levels.

Stadium store

The shop is located on Level B1 by the East Ticket Office and is reached via a flight of stairs in the north of the stadium in front of the main reception. The shop is accessible via the Olympic Way ramp or via lift 5 on non-event days. When there’s an event, there are alternative outlets within the stadium.

Stadium tours

These take place during the day when there are no major events taking place (see the website) and that they can easily be made step-free by the use of various lifts. The approximate distance involved from the ticket office is about 750m, and remember that you need to add the distance from the Green CP, or from Wembley Park station.

CRICKET

Lord's

Lord's Cricket Ground,

St John's Wood, NW8 8QN Tel: 020 7616-8500

website: www.lords.org

For access information go to: *Lord's*→*Visitors with disabilities*

e-mail: reception@mcc.org.uk

Ticket office Tel: 020 7432-1000 e-mail: ticketing@mcc.org.uk

Tours Tel: 020 7616-8595 e-mail: tours@mcc.org.uk

Ground capacity 28,800

There are dozens of wheelchair spaces, and lifts in the Grand Stand and Mound Stand.

Lord's is widely regarded as the home of cricket and is owned by the Marylebone Cricket Club. It is also the home of Middlesex County Cricket Club, the England and Wales Cricket Board, and the European Cricket Board.

It is also the base for the MCC Cricket Academy, The MCC Library and the MCC Museum that exhibits the Ashes Urn and the Wisden Trophy.

Ground description

The ground is in a residential area quite near Regent's Park. The area around is generally flat. The ground which has stands going all the way round, has been mostly rebuilt since 1987. Only the Pavilion and Allen Stands are older. During major matches the upper tier of the Allen Stand is treated as an extension of The Pavilion and is therefore open only to members.

There is a good plan of the ground on the website (under *Lord's*→*Lord's map*).

Travel

The nearest 'accessible' tube stations are KingsX/St Pancras, and Green Park, and both are about 4km away. The nearest station is St John's Wood in Wellington Road, just over 1km from the ground. However, access to the platforms is via escalators or about 100 steps.

The bus routes passing nearby include the:

6 from Willesden bus garage to Aldwych

13 from Golders Green to Aldwych

46 from Lancaster Gate to Farringdon

82 from North Finchley to Victoria

98 from Willesden bus garage to Holborn

113 from Edgware to Marble Arch

139 from West Hampstead to Waterloo (which is 'accessible' on both NR and the JLE)

189 from Brent Cross to Oxford Circus (and goes near Marylebone NR station)

274 from Lancaster Gate to the Angel Islington, and

414 from Maida Vale to Putney Bridge.

Parking

There is no parking available at the ground. Passes for setting down and picking up can be issued. Contact the MCC Club Facilities Department on *Tel: 020 7616-8653* for information about nearby car parking.

On major match days there is a park & ride scheme from a nearby CP, usually at Quintin Kynaston School, Marlborough Hill, NW8, but we haven't managed to establish whether the vehicles used are 'accessible'.

There is a UGCP in Kingsmill Terrace, NW8 6AA with 200 spaces, just over 1km from the ground. On match days there is a flat fee for entry. Height limit 2m.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Applications must be made through the MCC Ticket Office.

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are three areas/enclosures - in front of the Mound and Warner Stands, and in the rear of the (covered) lower Grand Stand. The front areas have movable seating, and are on the grass. The Grand Stand area has 'fixed/allocated' spaces with an adjacent seat for a companion.

Entrances for wheelchair users

For the Mound Stand use the East Gate. For the Warner and Grand Stands use the Grace Gate. Both are on St John's Wood Road. Using the North Gate in Wellington Place is another option.

Ambulant disabled spectators

Ambulant spectators should make their requirements known when booking. The Ticket Office has identified seats where there are few steps en route, and easy access to toilets.

Visually impaired spectators

A commentary is provided for every major match. Headsets are available from the Head Steward's Office at the back of the Mound Stand (*Tel: 020 7616-8592* to book).

Hearing impaired supporters

An induction loop in the Grand Stand links in to the Radio5 live commentary on matches.

Catering

The Extra Covers Food Area has level access and the Lord's Tavern Bar and Brassiere (by the Grace Gate) are reached via ramps. There are ramps to reach the bars in the Grand Stand. There are also various food outlets around the ground.

Toilets

There are six **accessible toilets (NKS)**, all on the GF at the:

Pavilion (by the North Door entrance); Mound Stand; Warner Stand; North Clock

Tower; Grand Stand East; and Grand Stand West.

Club shop

There is a large shop located to the right of the East Gate in St John's Wood Road. Step-free.

Ticket office

There are daily ticket outlets by the North Gate in Wellington Place and another one by the Grace Gate. Disabled spectators are recommended to get their tickets in advance to ensure that they are seated somewhere that meets their needs.

Tours

The stadium tours are accessible although they involve something like 1km distance. There is lift access in the Pavilion, The Media Centre and The Grand Stand, and, if it's not being used for a function, the famous *Long Room* is included in the tour.

The Oval

The (Kia) Oval

Surrey County Cricket Club, Kennington, SE11 5SS

Tel: 0844 375-1845 (& Ticket Office)

website: www.kiaoval.com e-mail: enquiries@surreycricket.com

For access information go to: *Tickets*→*Accessibility* (on the menu at the bottom)

DisEnq: 020 7820-5735 e-mail: dda@surreycricket.com

Tours Tel: 020 7820-5750 e-mail: enquiries@surreycricket.com

Ground Capacity 23,000

There are nearly 40 spaces for wheelchair users, and the following Stands have a lift: OCS, Bedser, Pavilion and Lock&Laker.

Ground description

The Oval has been a cricket ground since 1845. It is the home of Surrey County Cricket Club and is a regular Test Match venue. It is located near the Thames in a heavily built-up area which is generally flat. There has been an ongoing rebuilding plan since 2002.

It hosts a variety of matches and events, some of which are sold out a long time in advance.

Travel

The nearest 'accessible' station is Waterloo, with NR and the JLE, or Westminster on the District line. Both are nearly 2.5km away. The nearby Oval and Vauxhall stations both have a substantial number of steps.

The bus routes in the area include the:

3 from Crystal Palace to Oxford Circus;

59 from Streatham Hill to Kings Cross;

133 from Streatham to Liverpool Street;

159 from Streatham to Paddington Basin

all of which come up the Brixton Road and past Kennington within about 500m from the ground. The 59 also goes past Waterloo station while the 133 goes past London Bridge.

In addition, the **333** from Tooting Broadway to Elephant and Castle, comes up the Clapham Road, and past Kennington Park within about 300m of the ground.

Parking

There is some BB parking available for 'lesser' fixtures at the Oval if booked well in advance. Contact: DDA@surreycricket.com. Street parking is very restricted.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Applications should be made through the Ticket Office *Tel: 0844 375-1845*.

Spaces for wheelchair users

Due to the recent major rebuilding in the ground there are 39 spaces for chair users that are scattered all around. These include 28 in the uncovered enclosures in Blocks 1, 12, 13 and 20; covered balconies in the OCS Stand and some in the Pavilion Terrace for Members.

Entrances for wheelchair users

The entrances are clearly signposted all around the ground.

Ambulant disabled spectators

The Ticket Office has identified areas of the ground where there are limited steps and easy access to the toilets.

Visually impaired spectators

There is a commentary provided via Radio London Online. The public address system gives updates of key moments and scores from other matches.

Hearing impaired spectators

There are induction loops in a number of the stands. Check when booking.

Catering

There are a wide range of food outlets around the ground, many with lowered counters and induction loops. Staff are willing to help if necessary.

Toilets

There are a good number of **accessible toilets (NKS)** distributed throughout the ground. These include - the Lock & Laker Stand (GF); The Pavilion (GF front, 2nd & 3rd floors); Bedser Stand (GF & 1st floor); and more than ten in the OCS Stand on various floors, and off the Concourse.

Club shop

There is a large shop with onsite parking on non-match days via either the Hobbs or the Alec Stewart Gates.

Ticket office

The Ticket Office is located by the Hobbs Gate

Stadium tours

Stadium tours can be step-free, and involve a total distance of about 800m, starting from the Hobbs Gate.

FOOTBALL

All the grounds have an official website, but the presentation of information about access and about ticketing for people with disabilities is highly variable. This is partly because each is designed by a different web designer, with no particular understanding of, or focus on, the needs of disabled spectators. As with all venues, on major event days, get there early. For big matches, surrounding roads may be closed as much as an hour before kick off. They may remain closed until the bulk of the crowd has left.

Arsenal (in the Premiership in 2012/13)

Arsenal FC, Emirates Stadium, Highbury House, 75 Drayton Park, Islington, N5 1BU

Tel: 020 7619-5003 Ticket Office Tel: 020 7619-5000 Fax: 020 7704-4161

website: www.arsenal.com e-mail: contactafc@arsenal.com

For access information go to: *The club*→*Disabled supporters* and/or to:

Emirates stadium→*Disabled access on non-match days*

Disability Tickets (via main ticket office) 020 7619-5050

e-mail: disability@arsenal.co.uk Stadium Tours Tel: 020 7704-4504

Arsenal Museum Tel: 020 7704-4507

Ground Capacity 60,361

Space for 241 wheelchair users

There are lifts all around inside the ground.

Ground description

The Emirates Stadium opened in 2006. It was designed in the same way as the new Wembley, and disabled spectators are spread out around the ground with lift access to the upper levels. It is located on a former industrial estate and between two rail lines going north which merge just before Finsbury Park station. There are houses on all the other sides. It is only about 0.5km away from the old ground at Highbury.

The new stadium sits on a podium above ground level, with lift access to all the main areas. There are two long ramps for getting up on to the podium. One is to the right of *The Armoury* (Megastore) and the flight of 40 steps, by the

roundabout between Hornsey Road and Benwell Road. The other is from Drayton Park, near Martineau Road, via a bridge over the railway line. The other bridge from Drayton Park nearer Arsenal tube station involves ± 50 steps.

From ground level, there is lift access to the podium via the Media Entrance, which is to the left of *The Armoury*, mentioned above.

Travel

Apart from using buses and taxis, the Emirates Stadium is difficult to get to for those with mobility problems, although BB holders may be able to park nearby, if they're lucky (see below).

The nearest tube stations (Arsenal, Highbury & Islington and Finsbury Park) all involve between about 25 and 40 steps. Caledonian Road on the Piccadilly line is the nearest 'accessible' station. It is nearly 1.5km away. Upper Holloway on the *Overground* is around 2km and is also 'accessible'.

The website has particularly useful bus maps under *Tickets/Getting to Emirates*, with both a local and area map as separate pdfs.

Numbers **4**, **19** and **236** stop on Highbury Grove

The **4**, **153**, **271** and **393** all stop on Holloway Road by the junction with Liverpool Road.

The **29**, **253**, **254** and **259** all stop on the Seven Sisters Road.

Parking

There are 100 BB spaces within the stadium. Most are reserved for season ticket holders but it is worth asking the Disability Team in case there is an available space. Street parking is strictly controlled, but BB holders can park in residential and meter bays without time restriction IF they can find a space. There are a number of schools in the area that provide parking facilities without pre-booking. If you want to find/book somewhere, www.stadiumcarparks.com may be able to help, or possibly www.parkatmyhouse.com/uk though any CP is likely to be some way away. http://en.parkopedia.co.uk/parking/info/parking_by_emirates_stadium/ had helpful and realistic advice.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Disabled supporters must register with the Club to get tickets, and book through the Disability Team. The form filling and procedures take a little while. Away supporters must book through their own club.

Spaces for wheelchair users

The 241 wheelchair spaces are located on the Club/Lower/Upper Level Tiers. 12 spaces are for Away fans. All the Boxes are 'accessible' but for wheelchair users the view is poor, as they have to stay at the back.

According to the *Level Playing Field* website, there are about 70 wheelchair spaces available on a match by match basis.

Entrances for wheelchair users

There are accessible entrances all around the Stadium at Podium Level. There is a way in from street level via the Media Entrance to the left of the Ticket Office and

Armoury Shop. There are 8 lifts to take supporters to the Upper Tiers (including Club and Box Levels).

Ambulant disabled spectators

Disabled walkers can use either the standard turnstiles, or the designated ‘disabled persons’ entrances that are clearly signed. Ask a steward if you require assistance. If you are arriving at the ground from Drayton Park the first access point to the Podium Level has two flights of stairs, so go down further to the large concrete Arsenal sign opposite Martineau Road where there is step-free/ramped access.

Visually impaired spectators

There is a commentary during the matches for visually impaired supporters; contact the Disability Team for further details on how to access it. In addition Arsenal produces an audio copy of the match day programme which is available from the Disability Team.

The Emirates Stadium has a toilet for Assistance Dogs located near the Arsenal Museum at the northern end of the Podium Level.

Hearing impaired supporters

The Stadium has induction loops at various customer contact points such as the Ticket Office, shops, Museum and Receptions along with the conference areas and meeting rooms.

Catering

All bars and food outlets have lowered counters that are suitable for wheelchair users, staff will assist if necessary although this will be more problematic during busy periods such as just before kick - off and half time.

Toilets

There are 113 **accessible toilets (NKS)** spread around in the stadium. All have at least D90 and ST 75+. If you don't have a RADAR key, ask a steward.

Club shop

There are two Club Shops at the Stadium; *The Armoury* and the *All Arsenal Store* on Drayton Park. *The Armoury* is located on the Hornsey Road side of the Stadium and is the most accessible as it is all on one level unlike the *All Arsenal Store* where there is a platform lift down to the Supporters Support Centre where tickets for the museum can be booked.

Ticket office

The main ticket office by the Armoury is accessible with lowered counters and induction loops.

Tours

Arsenal offers both self-guided tours, with an audio guide - and what are called Legends Tours, where you are taken around by an ex-player, and possibly a very famous one. The tours and the museum are all step-free (some of it via internal lifts). The total distance involved is something over 1km if you include the museum. There are, however, places where you can sit and relax en route, and

you might give the museum a miss.

The Museum is in a building at the north end of the podium.

Note that if you come by car there may be quite a long walk/wheel to get to the tours entrance. The museum is in a separate building off the podium near the stepped footbridge to Drayton Park. The museum is accessed from the podium via a lift and has an **accessible toilet**. It is probably worth booking your tour in advance.

Brentford (in League One in 2012/13)

Brentford FC, Griffin Park, Braemar Road, Brentford, TW8 0NT

Tel: 0845 3456-442 Fax: 020 8568-9940 e-mail: enquiries@brentfordfc.co.uk

website: www.brentfordfc.co.uk e-mail: tickets@brentfordfc.co.uk

For access information go to: *Tickets*→*Disabled facilities*

Ground Capacity 12,763

There are 12 wheelchair spaces (which need to be booked in advance).

Note that on match days, general entry is by cash only, paid at the turnstiles.

Ground description

Brentford's stadium is located in a flat, residential area, and built on the site of a former brewery. It claims to be the only ground with a pub on every corner. The Braemar Road Stand has been renamed as the Bees United Stand, but is still referred to by its original name. None of the stands has a lift.

Travel

There are two 'accessible' stations which are relatively near: Brentford (NR, <1km), and Acton Town (District and Piccadilly), ~2km. Neither has a black cab rank, but both have minicab offices. The Brentford one is up on the bridge, some 400m away.

Nearby bus routes include the:

267 which goes from/to Hammersmith bus station, with good 'accessible' tube links.

65 from Ealing Broadway to Kingston, via Richmond, which is an 'accessible' station (NR and District line).

Both the **E2** and **E8** go within 500m, on the Boston Manor Road.

Parking

Street parking only. There's a pay and display CP off Layton Road. The surrounding roads aren't closed before or after matches.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Chair users should apply in advance, as there are only 12 spaces.

Spaces for wheelchair users

The spaces for both “home” and “away” supporters are in the SW corner of the Bees United Stand, level with the pitch, and close to the players’ tunnel.

Entrance for wheelchair users

The entry is clearly signed in Braemar Road.

Ambulant disabled spectators

Should contact the Ticket Office to discuss their access needs.

Visually impaired spectators

There are 14 seats in the Bees United Stand where a commentary is provided via headsets. Book in advance.

Hearing impaired spectators

There are no specific facilities for those with hearing impairment.

Catering

There are refreshment facilities in the concourse in the Bees United Stand behind the wheelchair spaces.

Toilets

There are two **accessible toilets** by the catering facilities in the Bees United (Braemar Road) Stand concourse.

Ticket office and Club shop

This is located in Braemar Road.

Charlton Athletic (in the Championship in 2012/13)

Charlton Athletic FC, The Valley, Floyd Road, Charlton, SE7 8BL

Tel: 020 8333-4000 Fax: 020 8333-4001 Textphone: 020 8333-4094

Ticket office Tel: 0871 226-1905 Textphone: 020 8333-4093

e-mail: tickets@cafc.co.uk

website: www.cafc.co.uk e-mail: disability@cafc.co.uk (though not for ticket enquiries)

For access information go to: *Fans*→*Disabled supporters*. The DLO is contacted via the main club number.

Ground capacity 27,111

Includes 96 wheelchair spaces (8 in the away end)

Ground description

The Valley is in a residential area, about 1km SW of the Thames Barrier. The area around the ground is, as the stadium name suggests, quite hilly. Floyd Road leading up to Charlton Church Road is particularly steep. Note that you cannot walk all around the ground, and there are pedestrian routes on only three sides. Three of the stands have a lift, the East, North and the West.

Travel

Charlton NR station is less than 500m away, and is ‘accessible’ with a lift on the London bound side, and step-free access to Troughton Road on the other. There’s an **accessible toilet NKS** on the platform with the lift. Southeastern Trains come from London Bridge.

North Greenwich tube station on the JLE is more than 3km away, but with good bus links. These include the **161, 472, 486**, all of which go along the Woolwich Road, to the north of the ground, and the **422** which goes along The Village, further to the south.

Other bus routes along the Woolwich Road include the **177**, and the **180**. The **380** goes close to the ground down Charlton Church Lane, while the **53**, the **54**, and the **486** all go to the south through The Village.

Parking

The Club has two CPs, with about 40 BB spaces. *Tel: 0871 226-1905* to see if there’s a spare space. 2 BB spaces are kept for Away fans. Additional spaces may be available at the Fossdene School, Victoria Way, SE7 7NQ nearly 1km away. Landsdowne Mews (off Charlton Lane) has a number of unreservable BB spaces. Parking in the streets around the stadium is strictly controlled. There are road closures on match days.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Booked through the Ticket Office. Away supporters must book through their own club.

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are spaces on top of the North Stand (level 4) in both the East and West corners, reached via lifts. Spaces are available at pitch-side on the West Stand, and at the back of the East Stand. There are 7 spaces in the away end, in the Jimmy Seed (South) Stand. All are under cover except for the pitch-side seating. The location of these spaces is shown in yellow on the Ground Plan on the website (which is well hidden under *Club→The Valley* where there’s a link right at the bottom of the page).

Entrances for wheelchair users

All are clearly signed, but you need to know which side of the ground you are going to. The entrance to the West Stand is at the southern end. To get into the East Stand, go via Landsdowne Mews, which is up a hill at the SE corner. This leads to a long ramp up to the spaces. The North Stand spaces are reached via lifts on the east and west corners, and the away end via a gate by the main turnstiles in Valley Grove, with step-free access to the mid-tier seating.

Ambulant disabled spectators

There are 12 seats in the West Stand for home supporters with further seating in rows A and C that are step-free in the lower tier. In the Jimmy Seed stand away supporters should ask for row P which is also step-free. The lifts in the North Stand should provide easy access to more rows of seats.

Visually impaired supporters

12 headsets with a commentary are available, and should be booked in advance.

Hearing impaired supporters

No facilities were noted.

Catering

There is a trolley service for the West Stand pitch-side spectators, but there'll be more choice in the concourse, reached via the Press Room by turnstile 22. Just go straight through. On both corners of the North Stand, a staff member will get drinks etc from the concourse on level 2.

Toilets

There are eight **accessible toilets (NKS)** - by the entrance to the West Stand (2), the top corner of the East Stand, next to the main toilets in the Jimmy Seed Stand, and by the lifts in both corners of the North Stand (2 each)

Club shop

The Charlton Superstore is by the NW corner, with D85 and step-free throughout.

Ticket office

Located in the West Stand to the left of the main entrance with 'accessible' windows.

Chelsea (in the Premiership in 2012/13)

Chelsea FC, Stamford Bridge, Fulham Road, SW6 1HS

Tel: 0871 984-1955 Ticket Office: 0871 984-1905

DisEnq: DLO 020 7915-1950 Fax: 020 7565-1462

e-mail: disability@chelseafc.com

website: www.chelseafc.com

For access information go to: *Tickets*→*Disabled tickets*→*Disabled supporters FAQ* which we were assured will tell you everything you need to know (Hmmm...!)

Ground capacity 41,841

There are 110 spaces for wheelchair users, including 10 for away fans.

Both the East and West Stands have a lift.

Ground description

The Stamford Bridge site has been completely redeveloped and includes a hotel, a museum and a music venue, as well as the rebuilt stadium. It is in a high density residential area, and although relatively flat, there are some quite steep short slopes that run along the East Stand towards the Museum entrance.

Travel

The nearest ‘accessible’ station is Fulham Broadway (District) about 500m away with a big step on/off the train. Earls Court (District and Piccadilly) is about 2km away. West Brompton on the *Overground* is just under 1.5km via the Brompton Cemetery, or nearer 2km via North End Road.

Buses which all go past the ground include the:

14 from Putney Heath to Warren Street, and via Green Park tube station

211 from Hammersmith bus station to Waterloo station (both with ‘accessible’ tube links)

414 from Putney Bridge to Maida Vale

Note that there are road closures near the ground, but our informant was reluctant to tell us what exactly is involved. We suspect that the Fulham Road will be closed outside the ground with traffic re-routed via King’s Road.

Parking

Parking is extremely difficult. There is limited parking at the stadium (*Tel: 020 7915-2981* to enquire about space) and very limited Pay&Display street parking.

Tickets for wheelchair users

It appears that tickets are issued only to registered disabled members. To apply for membership, contact the club by either an e-mail to disability@chelseafc.com or via *Tel: 020 7915-1950* requesting an application form. Proof of disability is required. There seem to be three schemes, Season tickets (with tickets for all the matches); Match Membership (applying to come to specific matches) and Rota Membership, whereby you are allocated tickets for matches on a rota basis. All these tickets are free, including those for a companion (see general comments in the introduction to the chapter).

Away supporters need to apply for a space through their own ticket office.

Spaces for wheelchair users

Most of the spaces are pitch-side in the West Stand but there are a couple of areas that are elevated in the corner of the East Stand.

Entrances for wheelchair users

These are clearly marked for both home and away supporters.

Ambulant disabled spectators

Chelsea have a similar registration procedure for ambulant disabled supporters as for wheelchair users. For those needing a PA to accompany them, and/or an Assistance dog, they must advise the Club when registering. People may also have specific needs like more leg-room, proximity to a toilet, and step-free or nearly step-free access.

Certain spectators will qualify for with them of any specific access needs to ensure that they are allocated suitable seats. There are some relatively easy access seats near the chair spaces. For disabled walkers applying for tickets through the Ticket Office, note that there are lifts in some of the stands, but you may need to ask for a lift pass. Then you can request a seat accessed by a minimum number of

steps, and/or near a toilet etc.

Visually impaired spectators

There are headsets available that supply commentaries, reserved using the *DisEng* contacts. They work all over the ground.

Hearing impaired spectators

There is an induction loop in the West Stand for announcements.

Catering

The main concourses all have refreshment concessions that are ‘accessible’.

Toilets

There are **five accessible toilets (NKS)**. 3 are in the West Stand concourse, 1 in the East Stand and 1 outside the Megastore. Make sure that you bring your own RADAR key.

Club shop

The Chelsea Megastore is on the SW corner of the stadium with a short walkway from the entrance to the site on the Fulham Road. It is step-free.

Ticket office

Located at the Shed End, to the right of the Megastore.

Crystal Palace (in the Championship in 2012/13)

Crystal Palace FC

Selhurst Park Stadium, Whitehorse Lane, Crystal Palace, SE25 6PU

Tel: 020 8768-6000 Fax: 020 8771-5311 Ticket Office: 0871 2000-071

website: www.cpfc.co.uk e-mail: boxoffice@cpfc.co.uk

For access information go to: *Tickets*→*Disabled information*

DisEng: 020 8768-6080 (for Special Needs Coordinator SNC)

Ground capacity 28,309

There are 56 wheelchair spaces.

None of the stands has a lift.

Ground description

The stadium is located in a residential area and has been partially updated with two newish stands. The area is hilly in places with a steepish slope, for example, on Whitehorse Lane.

Travel

The nearest ‘accessible’ station is East Croydon, just over 4km away. The nearer stations at Norwood Junction, Selhurst and Thornton Heath, all involve access difficulties. The Tramlink stops are all more than 2.5km away.

A number of bus routes that run close to the stadium including the:

50 from Croydon to Camberwell, via Whitehorse Lane, about 500m away

X68 from West Croydon to Russell Square (with limited stops). It stops some 250m away

75 from Croydon to Lewisham stops some 250m away

157 from Morden to Crystal Palace bus station via Park Road

196 from Elephant & Castle to Norwood Junction which is about 800m away

198 from Thornton Heath to Shrublands, with a stop some 500m away

312 from South Croydon bus garage to Norwood Junction (800m) , via East Croydon station

468 from Croydon to Elephant & Castle via Tramlink stops including Wellesley Road. It goes along Whitehorse Lane and stops some 250m away

Parking

Parking around the ground is difficult. There are some “pay and display” areas with a limit of up to 4 hours. Make sure that you check the parking regulations. There’s a CP for the Sainsbury’s in Whitehorse Lane with some BB spaces, but it gets filled up very quickly.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Book via the SNC *Tel: 020 8768-6080* or e-mail boxoffice@cpfc.co.uk.

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are 28 spaces for home supporters in the Holmesdale Road Stand and a further 28 for away supporters in the Arthur Wait Stand. Both areas are pitch-side and slightly elevated.

Entrances for wheelchair users

There is an entrance half way along the Holmesdale Road Stand at Gate 1. Away fans should head for Entrance 6 near the turnstiles at the corner of the Arthur Wait and Croydon Advertiser Stands.

Ambulant disabled spectators

Contact the SNC giving the necessary information about your needs (for example if you find steps difficult, or you need extra leg-room etc). This is important as both the Arthur Wait Stand and the Main Stand have wooden seats with little leg room. Another factor, particularly in the Arthur Wait Stand, is that it is not steeply banked so supporters tend to stand until ordered to sit down by officials and if you are at the back apparently the roof overhang obscures the view along with the occasional pillar.

Visually impaired spectators

There are 20 seats for visually impaired supporters with headsets providing a radio commentary.

Hearing impaired supporters

There is no induction loop but the SNC can assist with seating and advise on radio coverage.

Catering

The refreshment facilities are in the Holmesdale Road Stand. Getting there and back at half-time can be a major challenge !

Toilets

There are **four accessible toilets**, two by Gate 1 in the concourse of the Holmesdale Road Stand **and another two** behind the wheelchair spaces in the Arthur Wait Stand. None require a RADAR Key, so they tend to be used by non-disabled supporters, and are not strictly monitored by stewards.

Club shop

Located in the corner between the Croydon Advertiser and Main Stands. It has a ramp to bypass the -3 steps to get in.

Ticket office

This is situated by the club shop and is readily 'accessible'.

Fulham (in the Premiership in 2012/13)

Fulham FC

Craven Cottage, Stevenage Road, SW6 6HH

Tel: 0843 208-1222 Fax: 0870 442-0236 (Motspur Park)

Ticket Office: 0843 208-1234

website: www.fulhamfc.com e-mail: enquiries@fulhamfc.com

On the website the information for disabled visitors is quite difficult to find, and it is under *Tickets*→*Booking tickets FAQ*, and a long way down the page you find *Disabled fans*

DisEng: 020 8336-7477 for the DLO e-mail: disability@fulhamfc.com

Ground capacity: 26,600

There are 40 wheelchair spaces, 9 of which are for away supporters.

Ground description

Craven Cottage is located alongside the Thames and the original cottage (a royal hunting lodge with a 300-year history) has been incorporated into the ground. The area around is flat and is entirely residential. A riverside development is planned, to increase the ground capacity to 30,000, and this will include a lift and some more wheelchair spaces. The Club is unusual in that it has a 'neutrals' area at the Putney end, although this is without 'accessible' seats.

Travel

The nearest 'accessible' tube station at Hammersmith is just over 2km away. This has its 'accessible' bus station on top. It is on the District, Piccadilly and H&C lines, but there are big steps into and out of most of the trains. Fulham Broadway (District) is also 'accessible' and is about the same distance away. Putney Bridge station is the closest, but has >40 steps.

The buses which go down the Fulham Palace Road some 500m away, include the:

74 from Putney to Baker Street, past Earls Court station

220 from Wandsworth to Willesden Junction via Hammersmith bus station

430 from South Kensington to Roehampton

The **424** goes from Putney, across the bridge and around Fulham, past the Town Hall and along Lillie Road to the ground. It will stop a little way short on match days.

The **190**, **211** and the **295**, go along Lillie Road within about 1.2km from the ground.

Parking

Parking is strictly controlled on match days and there are road closures on match days.

The Club provides a limited amount of BB parking, booked in advance with the DLO. This is at the Fulham College Boys School, in Kingwood Road, SW6 6SN. There is a fully accessible shuttle bus to get to and fro on matchdays.

Tickets for wheelchair users

These are booked through the ticket office for ‘registered’ disabled supporters.

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are spaces at either end of the lower Johnny Haynes stand (11 in Block KL and 6 in Block AL). There are 14 spaces in Block S of the Riverside Stand, and 9 at the Putney End (Block P7) for away supporters. All are approached step-free from ground level.

Entrances for wheelchair users

For Block KL use the Cottage Main Gate, for Block AL use Gate 50 and for Block S use the Riverside Gate. Away supporters should head for Gate 1.

Ambulant disabled spectators

Block KL is the area that is best for ambulant disabled spectators as there is step-free access to the front, and an accessible toilet close by. There are other seats at the front which can be reached step-free.

Visually impaired spectators

Headsets are available with a match commentary. Book through the DLO.

Hearing impaired spectators

There is an induction loop in the main reception of Craven Cottage and at all the catering outlets. At the time of our visit there were two members of staff who could use BSL so ask a steward if you need to contact them. As with all organisations staff come and go, so check with the DLO to find out if they are still available.

Catering

There are fixed and mobile catering facilities around the stadium, some with accessible counters.

Toilets

There are **accessible toilets (NKS)** by all the disabled spectators' areas.

Club shop

The main club shop is at 959 Fulham Road, SW6 5HY, some distance from the ground and towards Putney. It has steps to get to both upper and lower levels. A second store at Craven Cottage also has steps to its lower level. On matchdays there are two mobile units which are more accessible.

Ticket office

Located by the Cottage.

Leyton Orient (in League One in 2012/13)

Leyton Orient FC, Matchroom Stadium, Brisbane Road, Leyton, E10 5NF

Tel: 0871 310-1881 Fax: 0871 310-1882 Ticket Office: 0871 310-1883

website: www.leytonorient.com

For access information go to: Fans→Disabled Supporters

Tel: the DLO via the main number (0871 310-1881), but as the club is quite small, this isn't always answered, so you may have to be persistent

e-mail: info@leytonorient.net

Ground capacity: 9,271

There are 61 wheelchair spaces. None of the stands has a lift.

Ground description

The Matchroom Stadium is located in a residential area with narrow surrounding streets with room for only one vehicle to pass when cars are parked on opposite sides of the road. Three sides of the ground have been rebuilt since 1999 leaving a modern compact stadium. The area around is fairly flat.

Travel

The nearest 'accessible' station is Stratford, about 2km away. This is the biggest accessible hub in London with step-free links between NR lines, the DLR, JLE and Central line. The nearest underground station is Leyton, but this involves nearly ±30 steps.

There are a number of bus links with stops less than 600m away. Two are from Stratford station:

The **97** and **158**, both go from Stratford bus station

The **69** goes from Canning Town to Walthamstow with nearby stops

The **308** goes from Clapton to Wanstead with a stop at Oliver Road

Parking

There are 3 BB spaces in Club's CP reservable in advance through the DLO.

There are 2 BB spaces in Brisbane Road near the junction with Windsor Road and at least two more in Windsor Road. Note that Buckingham Road which runs along the South Stand has no vehicular access.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Booked through the Ticket Office *Tel: 0871 310-1883* or by contacting the DLO

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are 23 spaces in the West Stand and 16 in the North Stand. The 22 spaces in the East Stand are generally for away supporters, but sometimes these spaces are shared

Entrances for wheelchair users

The gate in Brisbane Road by Turnstile A provides a step-free route to the East Stand concourse and to the North Stand. The other entry point is the ramped entrance in the SE corner of the ground.

Ambulant disabled spectators

There are a number of seats close to the wheelchair spaces that can be reached with a minimum number of steps, and you can ask to be allocated one of these when you book.

Visually impaired spectators

Guide Dogs are welcome but contact the DLO in advance so that arrangements can be made.

Hearing impaired spectators

There were no facilities at the time of our visit but we were told that they are planning to install an induction loop at one of the ticket office counters.

Catering

The facilities are quite close to the seating areas but do not have dedicated counters for disabled spectators. but stewards are willing to help if required.

Toilets

There are two **accessible toilets**.

Club shop

The club shop is part of the West Stand in Oliver Road has a ramped access.

Ticket office

Located in Oliver Road next to the Club Shop.

Millwall (in the Championship in 2012/13)

Millwall FC, The New Den, Zampa Road, SE16 3LN

Tel: 020 7232-1222 Ticket office: 020 7231-9999 Fax: 020 7231-3663

website: www.millwallfc.co.uk

For access information go to: Tickets→Disabled info

e-mail: tickets@millwallplc.com

DisEnq: 020 7740-0512 or e-mail: gray@millwallplc.com

Ground capacity 20,146

Space for 78 + 17 wheelchair users

There's a lift in both the East and West stands.

Ground description

The New Den was completed in 1993 so it is a modern stadium where disabled access has been considered during the building process. It is located between two railway lines that run to London Bridge. The area around is fairly flat.

Travel

The club is particularly difficult to get to using accessible transport. At the nearby stations like South Bermondsey and New Cross Gate there are steps. The nearest 'accessible' stations are Canada Water and New Cross, both 2 to 3km away, while London Bridge is even further.

The only bus to go past the ground is the P12 which goes from Surrey Quays Shopping Centre via Canada Water station to Peckham and Honor Oak Park

Other bus routes getting within 1.5km of the ground, include the:

21 goes from Lewisham, some 300m from New Cross station, and, later, via London Bridge station. It goes along the Old Kent Road about 750m from the ground,

47 from Shoreditch to Catford, going past London Bridge and Canada Water stations, and getting within just over 1km, at Surrey Quays station

53 from Whitehall to Plumstead, via Westminster

171 from Holborn to Bellingham, gets within 1.5km

172 from St Paul's to Brockley Rise, via Waterloo station

177 from Peckham to Thamesmead goes within 1.5km, past New Cross and Deptford DLR stations

188 from Russell Square to North Greenwich station, via Waterloo and Canada Water stations, and then through Greenwich

Parking

There are 10 BB spaces available disabled home supporters and 1 for an away supporter. Reserve in advance through the DLO.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Tickets should be booked in advance although it is often possible just to turn up on the day. Contact the DLO for further information.

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are 78 spaces for both home and away supporters in the West Stand, plus 17 spaces at pitch level for away supporters at the front of the lower North Stand. This area is not covered and you risk getting hit by wayward shots at goal !

Entrances for wheelchair users

There are two entrances at Gates W1 and W14. There is a lift available to the right of Gate W1, and to the left of Gate W14. Access to the lower North Stand is through Gate W1.

Ambulant disabled spectators

If you make your needs clear, you can be allocated 'easy/easier access' seats near where the lifts can take you.

Visually impaired spectators

If visually impaired supporters sit in the disabled area of the West Stand they can bring an assistant free of charge. There are no facilities for guide dogs at the time of writing. Millwall is experimenting with supporters using their own headsets to listen to the commentary running from the Club's website.

Hearing impaired spectators

There are induction loops at designated windows at the ticket office.

Catering

Refreshments are available through the concessions on the ground and upper tier concourses.

Toilets

There are **three accessible toilets**, at each end of the wheelchair platform in the West Stand, with the third one in the corner between the West and North Stands for supporters in the Lower North Stand.

Club shop

The shop is in Bolina Road, close to the West and North Stand. It has step-free access.

Ticket office

The Ticket Office has counters with induction loops and ones at a suitable height for wheelchair users.

QPR (in the Premiership 2012/13)

Queens Park Rangers FC, Loftus Road Stadium, South Africa Road,
W12 7PJ

Tel: 020 8743-0262 Ticket Office: 08444 777-007 Fax: 020 8749-0994
website: www.qpr.co.uk

For access information go to: *Tickets*→*Disabled tickets*

DLO contact e-mail: jond@qpr.co.uk

Ground capacity 18,682

There are 24 wheelchair spaces. None of the stands has a lift.

Ground description

The Loftus Road Stadium is small and compact, and located in a flat residential area. The advantage of such a small ground is the proximity to the pitch for all the fans which helps build 'atmosphere'. The stands are of traditional design with relatively few seats accessible without steps.

Travel

The nearest 'accessible' stations are at Wood Lane (H&C) and Shepherds Bush (*Overground*) 1 to 1.5km away. Hammersmith (District, Piccadilly and H&C) is just under 3km, while Willesden Junction (*Overground* and Bakerloo) is about

4km away. There are nearly 30 steps at the nearest station at White City. From Hammersmith you could take the H&C line to Wood Lane (which is just under 1km from the ground) or take one of several buses, or even take a taxi to close to the ground.

The new Westfield Shopping Centre which is a major bus terminus and has a large CP with multiple BB spaces, is about 1 to 1.5km away.

Nearby bus routes include those along the Uxbridge Road; along Wood Lane; and going to Westfield:

Two bus routes (the 228 and 283) go past the ground, but are diverted on match days. Many more go close, on the Uxbridge Road, or on Wood Lane.

72 from Roehampton to East Acton, via Hammersmith

95 from Southall to Shepherds Bush station, past White City station

207 from the Hayes bypass to White City, along the Uxbridge Road, to Loftus Road

220 from Wandsworth to Willesden Junction, via Hammersmith

228 from Maida Vale to the Central Middlesex Hospital, down Ladbrook Grove, and via Shepherds Bush station, down South Africa Road, past the stadium (see above comment)

237 from Hounslow to the White City bus station

260 from Golders Green to White City, via the Uxbridge Road, stopping at Loftus Road

272 from Chiswick to Shepherds Bush Green via White City station

283 from Barnes to East Acton via Hammersmith (see above comment)

C1 from Victoria to White City bus station

Parking

There may be some limited parking at the stadium with up to 6 BB spaces. Contact the DLO. Because the area is a CPZ and is almost entirely residential, parking nearby is difficult. The Westfield shopping centre is a possibility, though it is nearly 1.5m away.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Tickets should be booked through the ticket office. To 'register' and qualify for the concessionary rate, contact the DLO. Away supporters should apply through their own club.

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are 24 spaces in the Paddocks in the South Africa Road Stand, East (Block GL) and West (Block AL), as well as some in the Ellerslie Road Stand (Block X). 3 spaces in the Ellerslie Road Stand are allocated to away supporters.

Entrances for wheelchair users

These are clearly marked for both home and away supporters along the entrances in South Africa Road.

Ambulant disabled supporters

There are very few seats in the stadium that can be reached without going up

steps, and because of when most of the stands were built, the leg-room available in most of the seats is quite restricted. There is a row of step-free seats in the West Paddock (Row A), though they are very low down.

If you are in receipt of certain DWP benefits, and need someone to be with you to get in and out safely, then you may qualify for the same concessions as those available to wheelchair users.

Visually impaired supporters

There are 10 headsets providing a commentary, bookable in advance for use in the Ellerslie Road Stand

Hearing impaired supporters

There were no facilities noted at the time of our visit.

Catering

There are +4 steps from the Paddock areas to where refreshments can be purchased. In the Ellerslie Road Stand there is level access.

Toilets

There are two **accessible NKS toilets**, one in the South Africa Road concourse and the other in the Ellerslie Stand near the School End.

Club shop

The club shop is on South Africa Road near the School End. It is step-free.

Ticket office

The main office in the South Africa Road has +2 steps. On matchdays there are several windows accessed from the pavement, near the Club Shop.

Tottenham Hotspur commonly called Spurs (in the Premiership 2012/13)

Tottenham Hotspur FC, Bill Nicholson Way, 748 High Road, N17 0AP

Tel: 0844 499-5000 Fax: 020 8365-5005 Textphone: 0844 4777-462

Ticket Office: 0844 844-0102

website: www.tottenhamhotspur.com

For access information go to: *The stadium (on the bottom line menu)*→*Fans with disabilities DisEnq: 020 8365-5161*

e-mail: support@tottenhamhotspur.com

Ground capacity 36,240

There are 51 wheelchair spaces.

Only the North Upper Stand has lift access for spectators. Other lifts in the East and South Stand are only for the caterers, and the one in the West Stand goes only to the corporate areas.

Ground description

At the time of writing plans are in an advanced stage to build a new stadium with a capacity of around 56,000 on the site of the existing ground and on industrial land to the north. This would enable the club to improve its provisions for disabled spectators, particularly for disabled walkers. It is in a flat, largely residential area.

Spurs have a particularly well expressed policy relating to concessions for disabled spectators. It is “Supporters with disabilities, wheelchair user or ambulant, are required to pay the normal admission charges. Should they require the assistance of a PA, then the PA will be admitted free of charge”.

Travel

The nearest ‘accessible’ stations are **Tottenham Hale** on both NR and the Victoria line, which is about 2km away, and **Northumberland Park** (NR Greater Anglia Trains from Liverpool Street) which is just over 500m away.

White Hart Lane NR station which is some 400m away has $\pm >40$ steps to/from the elevated platforms.

The bus routes that go past the ground on the High Road are the number:

149 from London Bridge to Edmonton Green

259 from Kings Cross to Edmonton Green

279 Manor House station to Waltham Cross, and the

349 from Stamford Hill to Ponders End

Bus routes that go within about 600m of the ground are the:

123, 243 and **W4** which both go along Birch Grove

341 from Waterloo station to Glover Drive, and the

W3 Finsbury Park via Alexandra Park to Northumberland Park station.

Unfortunately the buses passing Tottenham Hale are the **123** and the **W4** which only go part way to the ground.

Parking

The Club has just 13 BB parking spaces in their Paxton Road and West Stand CPs, which cannot be reserved. The CPs are closed an hour before kickoff. In the residential streets around, there’s a CPZ preventing non-residents from parking on matchdays, although an exception is made for BB holders. It says on the club website that the CPZ finishes at 16.30 over weekends and bank holidays and at 20.30 on a weeknight, so it seems that the concession for BB holders for 3 hours parking should generally be sufficient. Check with the club if you’re in doubt, but we were told that people have had no problems with BB parking.

Tickets for wheelchair users

All registered disabled supporters are able to bring an assistant with them.

For home tickets contact the DLO *Tel:* **020 8365-5161**.

For away tickets, complete the online application form and email it to support@tottenhamhotspur.com.

Spaces for wheelchair users

The North Stand has 29 spaces in the lower tier, pitch-side and 6 in the upper tier. There are 16 spaces in the South Stand lower tier, of which away supporters have 5 spaces pitch-side.

Entrances for wheelchair users

The entrances are clearly marked from the Main Gate and around the stadium.

Ambulant disabled spectators

There are 8 designated seats in the North Stand lower tier for ambulant supporters, a further 10 in the South Stand and 17 in the West Stand lower tier. These areas provide step-free access using the same routes that chair users would follow ie bypassing the turnstiles and the steps, and see the note above on concessionary entry for a PA if needed.

Visually impaired spectators

The club provides a commentary via 22 headsets, booked in advance using *DisEnq*. Visually impaired supporters can sit anywhere, but would almost certainly prefer an 'easy access' seat.

Hearing impaired supporters

The ticket office has an induction loop and the club has a Textphone (see above).

Catering

The main concourses in the lower tiers of the North, South and West Stands all have 'accessible' refreshment concessions.

Toilets

There are six **accessible toilets (NKS)**. They are located close to the disabled seating areas. Four are in the North stand and two in the South Stand by the away end.

Club shop

The Megastore is fully accessible, as are the mobile units around the ground.

Ticket office

The Ticket Office located in Park Lane is 'accessible'.

West Ham (in the Championship in 2012/13)

West Ham United FC, The Boleyn Ground, Upton Park, Green Street,
E13 9AZ

Tel: 020 8548-2748 Disability Tickets via main ticket office

Tel: 0871 222 2700

Fax: 020 8548-2757 (Disabled supporters only)

website: www.whufc.com

For access information go to: *Tickets*→*Disabled and visually impaired supporters*

DisEnq: 0845 217-1332 (for the DLO)

e-mail: disabledinfo@westhamunited.co.uk

Ground capacity 35,303

Space for 111 wheelchair users. There are lifts in three stands, Alpari (which was called Dr Martens), Bobby Moore and Centenary.

Ground description

The current stadium is located in a residential area just off the A124 Barking Road. The club has been playing there for more than 100 years. It lies between East and West Ham in an area called Upton Park - which is fairly flat. It is not possible to walk all the way around the ground because Priory Court is next to the Centenary Stand.

The club seems to have the opportunity to move to the Olympic Stadium in 2016, but at the time of writing this may still be subject to legal challenge from other clubs.

Travel

The nearest 'accessible' tube station at East Ham is about 1.5km away where lifts bypass the ±28 steps. Canning Town is also 'accessible' but is just under 3km away, and is on both the JLE and DLR. West Ham is slightly further. The nearest tube station is Upton Park, some 500m away, but with ±30 steps.

There are bus links from both Canning Town and East Ham. From Canning Town you can take a **5, 147 or 330**. From East Ham you can take a **104 or 376**. There's also the **104** from Stratford which has 'accessible links' to NR trains, the Central line, JLE and DLR.

Parking

There are 13 BB spaces on match days, usually all taken by season ticket holders. Away supporters should contact the DLO. The alternative is street parking but watch for match day and resident's bays restrictions. There is a drop off point for disabled passengers by the Alpari Stand.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Contact the DLO to register. The process can take four weeks. Proof will be

required; a copy of the DWP letter confirming receipt of the high level of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance is acceptable.

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are 111 wheelchair spaces, located in most parts of the ground with the exception of East Stand. There is lift access to reach the upper levels in all three stands, and ramps for the lower levels. The 6 away spaces are in the upper Centenary Stand.

Entrances for wheelchair users

The entrance points are clearly signed with entry points on Castle Street for the Bobby Moore Stand and the adjacent Alpari Stand. To get to the other end of the Alpari Stand and the Centenary Stand head for the left hand turret on the Alpari Stand. For pitch-side seats in the Dr Martens Stand head for Turnstile 38 where there is an adjacent entrance.

Ambulant disabled spectators

There are some 400 seats provided for ambulant disabled supporters, these are situated in both the Alpari Stand upper and lower tiers and the Bobby Moore lower tier. Lift passes are available by emailing disabledinfo@westhamunited.co.uk or from the Ticket Office.

This is a far better provision than that at most other clubs !

Visually impaired spectators

A commentary is provided through 22 headsets that should be booked in advance by emailing disabledinfo@westhamunited.co.uk. The headsets can then be collected from the Main Ticket Office on match days. Guide dogs are welcome in the stadium but you need to contact the club first to make appropriate arrangements.

Hearing impaired spectators

As well as one at the main Ticket Office, there is an induction loop in the main stadium to broadcast emergency messages.

Catering

There are dedicated refreshment facilities in the concourse of all the Stands.

Toilets

There are **twelve accessible toilets (NKS)** by all the designated disabled areas. On the upper levels the toilets are near the lifts. In the Alpari Stand lower they are in entrance tunnels.

Club Shop

The Club Shop is in the Alpari Stand by the left hand tower. The shop is step-free and there is plenty of room to move around although on match days it does get very busy.

Ticket Office

The Ticket Office is to the left of the Club Shop and has designated windows with induction loops and one lower accessible counter.

RUGBY

Twickenham

Twickenham Stadium, Whitton Road, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW2 7BA

Run by: **Rugby Football Union**, Rugby House, Rugby Road, Twickenham, TW1 1DS

Tel: 020 8892-2000 Fax: 020 8892-9818

website: www.rfu.com/TwickenhamStadium

For access information go to: *Home page*→*Disabled access*

and via: *Tickets*→*Disabled ticketing (which includes booking BB parking)*

DisEnq: Tel: 0871 222-2017 (option 4) e-mail: disabledaccess@therfu.com

There's a variety of ways of obtaining tickets for different events. Some accessible spaces/seats are booked via Ticketmaster 0844 847-2492, others are obtained in ballots

Ground capacity 82,000

There are 336 wheelchair spaces, 272 at pitch-side and 64 in upper covered terraces

Membership of the England Rugby Supporters Club or of a rugby club should increase your chances of getting tickets for international matches

Ground description

The stadium is in a residential area in an outer London suburb just off the A316. It was rebuilt between 1991 and 2005 and is an enormous structure with 7 lifts, 6 sets of escalators and 6,400 steps. It is used for international rugby matches and big football games, as well as for concerts and other events.

On non-match days visitors gain access through to the Stadium via Gate F by the Ticket Office on the SE corner in Rugby Road.

Travel

Since the parking provisions are good (see below) many disabled spectators come by road.

Twickenham station (NR) is some 900m away. The nearest 'accessible' station at Richmond (NR and District line) some 3km away. On matchdays there's an 'accessible' bus link to the ground.

There are National Express Coaches that run services direct to the stadium from >20 towns and cities across the UK. Check www.nationalexpress.com for further information, and see our write-up on coach travel in the *Getting around* chapter.

Buses that pass near the ground (within about 500m) include the:

267 Hammersmith (an 'accessible' station) to Fulwell

281 Hounslow to Tolworth

481 West Middlesex Hospital to Kingston

681 Hounslow to Teddington

Other bus routes pass through Twickenham centre, more than 1km away.

Note that the description of Twickenham on the National Rail Station Search website has been misleading and inaccurate for several months.

It said “Twickenham is fully accessible to wheelchair users. Access to platforms 4 and 5 is via a staff-operated stair lift. Please ask a member of staff for assistance. Access to platform 3 (for stopping services to London Waterloo and all Waterloo bound services on match days) is via the car park - please approach staff at the main entrance who will be happy to assist you.”

The CP is in fact the other side of Platform 2, and the only access to any of the platforms is via about 25 steps.

When we rang NR Enquiries, they got through directly to the station, and we were told that access to and from platforms 2/3 was (for a wheelchair user) by using a Scalomobile-type tracked machine. It needs to be charged and operated by a trained member of staff. There is no direct access from the CP.

Parking

Parking is inevitably strictly controlled when there are big events, but there are a substantial number of BB spaces which can be reserved in advance. The North and West CPs are in the stadium grounds, and the Tesco CP is only 100m from the NW corner of the stadium.

Reservations can be made via the RFU eTicketing website, or by going to the RFU website and downloading a “Disabled Car Parking Form”. If you have a problem, contact carparking@therfu.com. Even if you have a reserved spot, you’re advised to get there early, as otherwise you may finish up further away, and using an unsigned and slightly uncertain route (a comment based on experience !).

Tickets for wheelchair users

The booking system varies, depending on the type of event. For International rugby matches the tickets are largely allocated via ballots for rugby club and England Rugby Supporters Club members. Each successful applicant for a wheelchair space will receive two tickets plus a CP place. For other rugby matches go to the Stadium’s website where Wheelchair and Non-Wheelchair (Easy Access) booking forms can be downloaded.

For concerts and other events, the Stadium uses Ticketmaster to organise bookings.

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are a total of 336 spaces available with 272 at pitch-side and a further 64 in covered terraces.

Entrances for wheelchair users

There are clearly signed level entrances all round the stadium with lifts to the upper levels.

Ambulant disabled spectators

There are some 7,000 easy access seats for people who find stairs difficult to manage. They can be booked through the stadium for rugby matches, and via Ticketmaster for other events. This includes seats which can be reached step-free, some that can be reached via steps that have a handrail and some that have more leg room.

This sounds like the very best such facility that we have come across at any ground.

Visually impaired spectators

Visitors to events who wish to bring Guide Dogs must advise the stadium in advance using the *DisEnq* contacts.

Hearing impaired spectators

There are 100 seats that are linked to the hearing loop system for commentaries. Headsets can be booked in advance by emailing disabledaccess@therfu.com.

Catering

There are dedicated bars for disabled people at all the corners of the stadium with lowered counters; they tend to get crowded as they also are by the thoroughfares to reach the concessions outside which tend to be in portable, caravan style, outlets. Those concessions generally offer very little in the way of access but the staff are usually helpful and will come out to help pass food/drink etc.

Toilets

There are 13 **accessible toilets (NKS)**, including 2 in both the SE and NW corners, 1 each in the SW and NE, 3 in each of the corner terraces and 1 in the West terrace.

Rugby Store

The shop is located on the SW corner of the Stadium, and is step-free. It has a small CP with BB spaces approached from Whitton Road, and the main West CP is nearby. You buy tickets there for the Stadium Tour and for the Museum.

Stadium tours

The tours start at the Rugby Store, and end by the Museum. They involve a total distance of approaching 1km (including getting back to the store).

Museum

The Rugby Museum is in the East Stand, with lift access. Tickets are purchased in the Rugby Store. The Museum is split over two floors, with lift access. It has an **accessible toilet** on the upper level.

Ticket Office

The Ticket Office is located on the SE corner of the Stadium, and has lowered counters and an induction loop.

TENNIS

Wimbledon

The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club

Church Road, Wimbledon SW19 5AE

Tel: 020 8946-2244 for ticket information, 020 8971-2473 for ticket enquiries and 020 8944-1066 for other business

website: www.wimbledon.org

The Ground Capacity is enormous, and play takes place on about twenty courts. Spectators can also view the Big Screen from the hill. There are four 'show' courts with more than 30,000 seats - on Centre (15,000), No 1 (10,000), No 2 (4,000) and No 3 (2000).

There are 28 wheelchair spaces on Centre Court, Court 1 has 40 spaces, No 2 has 20 and No 3 has 10.

The world's most famous tennis tournament takes place here for two weeks towards the end of June, and there are other smaller events on the site during the year.

An unusual feature at Wimbledon is that some of the seats on the show courts are sold 'on the day', and people queue, often overnight, to have a chance of buying these tickets. See the notes below about the availability of wheelchair spaces, and the procedures for anyone who is mobility impaired, as the normal route from the overnight camping area and for day entry tickets is via a bridge over the road, with approximately ± 30 steps.

The nearest 'accessible' stations are Southfields (District line, 1.5km) and Wimbledon just over 2km away, which is a junction for NR trains, the District line, and Tramlink. Getting on and off the NR and District line trains involves a big step, but Tramlink is accessible - see the chapter on *Getting around*. There's an 'accessible' bus service to and from Southfields. If you have a problem walking long distances, it's probably worth taking a taxi, and getting dropped off outside one of the gates - and using a cab to get back afterwards. A good pick-up point for getting home is the rank just to the left of Gate 13 as you come out. Car parking in the area around the club is inevitably strictly controlled. Many local people rent out their front gardens for parking during the tournament fortnight. There is a drop-off point by gate 19 next to CP4 behind Court 1 and at the top of the hill.

There is no on-site parking, but BB spaces are available in CP8 opposite Gate 4 on Church Road. There are also spaces in CP6 a little further on. You almost certainly need to reserve a space in advance. The parking is in the grounds of the local Golf Club, so the paths and surfaces are roughish. If you don't have a BB

space by the entrance, there are golf buggies to help disabled walkers to get back to near the road, if you ask.

There are nine parking bays for electric scooters by the debenture lounge at Centre court, and scooters must enter the grounds through gate 4 off Church Road.

The grounds are triangular in shape, and measure over 700m down two of the sides and nearly 200m across the base, so it's quite large. Along the Church Road side, the ground is only very gently sloping, but **there's a substantial hill**, as you go past No 1 Court up towards the Aorangi Terrace picnic area. This is better known to some as Henman Hill or more recently (2011) as Murray Mound. During the tournament, the whole Terrace gets very busy with tens of thousands of fans watching matches on the big screen, generating huge amounts of movement.

No 1 Court nestles into the hillside, and there is step-free (though sloped) access around the Aorangi Terrace side, but some steps as you go towards the Church Road side. To get to and from the lower parts of the site there's a sloped path between courts 18 and 19, and going downwards, a chair user would need to follow the North Concourse and then go past Fred Perry's statue to get to the flatter part of the site. There are ± 32 steps at the end of St Mary's Walk at one corner of Centre Court if you were to go straight ahead.

To illustrate the steepness of the hill, from the top of the sloped path between courts 18 and 19, if you go straight ahead up the other part of St Mary's Path, there are $+16+16+16+7$ steps - so it's quite a climb and that's after the ± 32 mentioned earlier !

The part of the grounds where Nos 2 and 3 Courts have been built and past the outside courts to the South Concourse is nearly flat, as are the paths past the Museum and around the lower parts of Court No 1 on the Church Road side.

There are a small number of 'show' courts which will host the most prestigious matches. On all of these you have to book in advance to get a place. Only Centre Court has a potential cover/roof in the event of rain. Early on in the tournament, many of the matches are played on courts 4 to 19, and it's possible to get really close to the action, although you'll almost certainly have to be patient waiting for a slot or a spot from which you can get a good view. You can see matches between Juniors, and between Veterans on these outside courts, and sometimes these are exciting and closely fought.

The site is very 'open' so roaming around and taking in the atmosphere - possibly stopping to have some strawberries and cream, can be as much a part of the day out as watching tennis.

There's a good plan/map available which show the step-free routes around the site, and you would do well to get hold of one of these in advance. The standard *Easy access guide* has a small plan, but a double size one (which is much clearer) is available if you ask. This guide covers most of the basic information you need,

and is very well put together. It does not, however, explain the topography of the site, and the effects of No 1 court “nestling into the hillside” as we have described it. Although the site is quite large and confusing, particularly when there are thousands of people there, there is a small army of well trained people wandering around with a sign over their heads saying ‘information’. We found that they were both helpful and knowledgeable.

The provisions for disabled spectators are fairly minimal. The number of chair users who can get tickets is tiny. Even on the brand new No 1 court there are only forty spaces for disabled people amongst some 10,000 spectators. As there is little or no provision for disabled walkers (for example to enable them to book the more easily accessible seats) the 40 seems fairly minimal, and there are only 28 spaces on the Centre Court whose capacity is 15,000. We understand that there are some difficult compromises to be made, and that there are commercial considerations affecting policy. However the official guidelines for new stadia being built suggest a minimum of 100 spaces for chair users in a 10,000 seater stadium - and **there seem to be NO proper guidelines yet covering provisions for disabled walkers**. Nearly all the seats involve stepped access, and generally there are quite a lot of steps. Little thought has been given to allocating those seats which do not involve many steps to disabled walkers. If you’re successful in the ballot (see below) you can request seating reached by a minimum number of steps, and, possibly in an aisle seat if getting past other people (and their bags etc) might be difficult. Be specific if steps are a challenge, but don’t imply that you’re a ‘Health and Safety’ risk !

[If you do manage to come, you’ll be well looked after.](#)

Getting hold of tickets is a chancy process. Many go to corporate entertainers, others are distributed through tennis clubs, and finally, there is an annual ballot for seats on the show courts. There is a separate ballot for the chair spaces. To apply, write to the Ticket Department, POB 98, Church Road, Wimbledon SW19 5AE by the previous December marking both the letter and envelope ‘Wheelchair’. You first have to write in to get an Application Form, and this must be done before December 15th. The closing date for applications using these forms is December 31st. Even if you don’t have a ticket, chair users and other disabled people can join the *Queue* ‘on the day’ in Wimbledon Park, across the road from the main Club grounds. If anyone has difficulty getting from the *Queue* to the Search Tent prior to ground entry, then one of the Stewards will take them by buggy. There are some ground entry tickets, and in the earlier parts of the tournament, there is a small allocation of wheelchair spaces for people in the *Queue*. there are unreserved chair spaces on courts 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19, but most of these courts will not feature the ‘big name’ players, though you may well get to see some interesting tennis, including veterans matches and mixed doubles. You may have to queue for several hours – but you’ll catch

something of the atmosphere, even if you only go and watch the big video screen on Henman Hill, and have some strawberries !

There is a reduced entry charge after 5pm.

There are unreserved viewing areas on courts 6 (grass sloped area), 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19. All are courtside and are accessed step-free. There is also a step-free route to courts 3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10. The main area of the **Aorangi Picnic Hill** has steep ramped access at its north end near to gate 19.

Tickets for wheelchair users

Getting hold of tickets is a chancy process, explained above. [There is a separate ballot for the wheelchair spaces](#). To apply, write to the Ticket Department, POB 98, Church Road, Wimbledon SW19 5AE, marking both the letter and envelope 'Wheelchair'.

You first have to get an Application Form, and this needs to be done before December 15th. The closing date for applications using these forms is December 31st.

Even if you don't have a ticket, chair users and other disabled spectators can join the *Queue* 'on the day'.

It is impossible to prebook tickets since almost all show court tickets are issued by ballot. If it were possible, best seats would be: Centre: Row Z step free, back row B use lift by gate 5 for chair users area (see earlier); Court One: 4 to row J at SW corner (if chair users access is used), +10 to row R (public staircases).

Spaces for wheelchair users

There are 28 on Centre Court, 20 of which are at the top level (so you get something of a birdseye view), 5 are courtside NE and 3 are courtside SE.

No 1 Court has 40 spaces, has 20 in the East and 20 in the West.

No 2 court has 20 spaces in the South, and No 3 has 10 spaces in the West.

Entrances for wheelchair users

All are fairly clearly defined and marked. There's a lift up to the top level on Centre Court.

Ambulant disabled spectators

Very few provisions have been made for disabled walkers. About the only thing that you can do is to request an appropriate seat allocation (saying clearly what you need, and why) if you are successful in the Ballot.

Visually impaired spectators

No special provisions have been made, although Assistance Dogs are welcome, provided they stay with their owners and do not block evacuation routes.

Hearing impaired spectators

No special provisions have been made. On court there's a visual display on the scoreboard.

Catering

There is a wide variety of catering facilities all around the site which as far as we could see were all sensibly accessible. At certain times, particularly when a match ends on one of the big courts, they can become very crowded.

Toilets

There are a good number of **accessible toilets and cubicles (NKS)** around the site. All are clearly marked on maps and operate with RADAR keys, and several are around No 1 court. Those that we saw were all D70+ ST70+.

Museum

The museum is on two levels with lift access. It is step-free throughout. There are also site tours lasting about an hour and a half, which should almost certainly be pre-booked. Entrance through Gate 4. Significant admission charge.

During the Championships entry to the Museum is from inside the grounds.

Ticket Office

This is approached from Gate 3 if you have queued up to purchase tickets on the day - having joined *The Queue*.

Commentary

‘Access’ is a question of design and of physical provision, AND it involves the ticketing process, which is increasingly inflexible with the growth of computerisation. When you ring, **it is becoming more and more difficult to speak to a person**, and even more difficult to find (and get through to) a person who will understand what you are needing. Most of the sports grounds described here have a *Disability enquiry* telephone line, so that detailed issues can be tackled. However, too often this means leaving a voicemail message, which may or may not be replied to. The allocated staff member may be working only part-time on access issues.

Very few of the stadia offer the service of a *Textphone* number, which is particularly disappointing.

The design of stands and stadia

Football (and other spectator) stadia are nearly all built with so-called Stands on four sides of the pitch, court or track, where the action takes place. To enable a lot of spectators to have a good view, the seats can be quite steeply raked, and the steepness often increases as you get further away from the pitch/area of action. This was very noticeable at the Olympic venues, as it is at the Dome/O2 Arena. The easiest place to provide wheelchair spaces and access for ambulant disabled people, is at ground level - but the view is not very good, as it's so low down. At football matches you're at increased risk of having a ball flying very fast in your direction ! In some stands, even quite new ones, there can be problems with sightlines from upper levels - particularly if other spectators stand up, thus blocking the view of anyone who cannot stand, and usually at crucial stages of the game.

The conventional design has always been to provide access into the lower parts of a Stand by providing a flight of stairs taking spectators into a middle level (often about a third of the way up), so that to find their seats from there, people either have to go down some more steps, or to go up. The initial stairs will almost certainly have handrails, whereas the steps leading to the rows of seats probably have no further supports.

Where there are two or even three levels in a single Stand (like the North Bank at the Manchester United ground), the same principle applies to the upper levels. At the highest level there are nearly 200 steps before you reach the middle of the section where you may be seated !

Because of this methodology, which has been, and still is, widely used, the number of seats that can be reached via a limited number of steps (say <5), is very small indeed. It depends on whether there are access routes at ground level to the front (lowest levels) of the Stands OR on whether there is a lift giving step-free access to intermediate levels.

Virtually no grounds clarify such issues on their websites, nor even in the comments and information we have managed to glean from discussing our write-ups with the DLOs at grounds. We found when making enquiries that even the Ticket Office does not always have details of the lifts.

Wheelchair users

The provisions for wheelchair users have undoubtedly improved, even though many spaces at football grounds are uncovered at pitch-side, with a somewhat restricted view. More needs to be done, especially when new stadia or stands are built. This is tending to happen, as with the new Arsenal stadium, at Wembley, and with the riverside stand planned at Fulham.

Disabled walkers

What seems to be almost completely lacking is an understanding of the needs of the substantial number of disabled walkers, and a way of identifying and codifying their requirements.

[The number of \(generally older\) spectators who have difficulties is growing.](#) They may have a hassle with:

- walking long distances
- steps (especially when there is no handrail or support)
- lack of leg-room (particularly for those with arthritis)
- getting along a row of seats to get to a seat some distance along it, as there is no support

They may also need an aisle seat so that they can more easily slip out to go to the toilet.

These are NOT people who 'need' a companion, who have an Assistance dog, or who are in receipt of DWP benefits. Many, however, might have a BB, although not all. [ALL however have genuine needs relating to their disability.](#)

The concept of 'Easy access' seats

Seats, for example aisle seats, and the one alongside, which have <5 steps from

the level reached using the standard stairs with handrails, or a lift, might be designated as ‘easy access’ seats. These might then be sold only to those on the ‘easy access’ register.

The stands which have a lift can potentially offer a much wider range of ‘easy access’ seats, and in our enquiries that was one of our questions.

To their credit, some stadia have thought about this, and the possibility of asking for an ‘easy access’ seat already exists, for example at Twickenham and at West Ham FC where the choice available to disabled walkers seems to be particularly good.

Note what happened at the Olympics

We were pleased to see in the Ticketing Application for the Olympics and Paralympics that when applying for a standard seat, it was possible to register additional accessibility requirements such as:

- seats close to the action, for visually impaired people;
- seats with a direct view of a video screen for people who are deaf or have impaired hearing;
- seats for people who cannot manage many steps, at the back or the front of a stand;
- seats for people who need to be on the end of a row.

What the Olympics Ticketing office said was that “If your application for tickets is successful, we will do all we can to ensure you and your party are allocated seats which suit your needs.”

This is a great potential advance for disabled walkers, as more Stands have lifts, and as those in the ticket office take note of their additional needs. We hope that our proposals included here to enable disabled walkers to register their need for an ‘easy access’ seat will be taken forward and acted on.

Provisions at stadia for disabled people so far

Virtually all the football clubs require disabled spectators to ‘Register’ as Disabled Supporters, for the concessionary facilities available (including wheelchair spaces and seats for ambulant disabled people who need a companion or Assistance dog).

What they say is something like

“The Club reserves the right to check a person’s eligibility under the DDA .

“The Club will use a system of concessionary ticket prices tailored to its disabled supporters. “Concessions are not based on impairment type but recognise that some disabled supporters have a restricted choice of viewing in the stadium and/ or could not attend a match without personal support.”

The whole thrust of the approach adopted by clubs to providing facilities for disabled spectators is dominated by the need to:

- satisfy the requirements of the DDA, and
- to protect themselves against misuse of the concessions offered to disabled

supporters, both those who use a wheelchair and disabled walkers.

What the approach does NOT do is to facilitate people who are not in receipt of Attendance Allowance, or similar DWP support, in being able to book, pay full price for, and get to the most appropriate seats or spaces.

It doesn't seem/appear to be friendly to the occasional disabled visitor - for example, what if I have a friend from Canada staying who is a wheelchair user, and we might want to buy tickets without worrying too much about the free carer/companion concession ?

I might have some difficulty in booking a space.

Similarly there are a huge number of people who may have difficulty getting to the ground, and who might use a wheelchair to make the journey possible - but while they don't need a wheelchair space they DO need access to a seat with a minimum number of steps en route, and they may need a storage place for their chair.

There can be a MAJOR distortion in the 'market', because of the well meaning provision of concessionary, or even free places. Having taken advantage of such provisions for many years, those getting them may be very reluctant to share things around.

It seems to us that the principle should simply be that IF someone needs a PA/companion to enable them to get there and get in, then the PA should get in free. Others with real 'access' needs should be able to get appropriate seats, but without any price concession.

Price concessions are a great and well intentioned gesture, but are quite likely to result in maximum benefit to a small group of people - who will get in quickly when applications open AND, when consulted, will vote for continuing the scheme

We queried the relatively small number of 'easy access' seats provided at the new Wembley Stadium where there are 310 wheelchair spaces but only 100 enhanced amenity seats for disabled walkers.

When asked about the fact that there are probably to 10 times as many disabled walkers in the population as wheelchair users, the Wembley management said that "at the time of the 2002 planning permission, the numbers of facilities were thought to meet the needs of disabled spectators".

Participation

One of the hoped-for outcomes from the Paralympics, was a growth in opportunities for participation. If you want to join in some sporting activities, you need to look first at what is available nearby, probably in your borough.

[We provide here a few points of contact to help your search.](#)

English Federation Of Disability Sport,

SportPark, Loughborough University, 3 Oakwood Drive, Loughborough, LE11 3QF
 Tel: 01509-227-750 Fax: 01509-227-777
 website: www.efds.co.uk

Interactive is an organisation promoting inclusion in sport “*To create a society where being active is an intrinsic part of a disabled person’s life, and disabled people are at the heart of sport in London.*”

Unit 2B07, London South Bank University, Technopark, 90 London Road, SE1 6LN
 Tel: 020 7717-1699
 website: www.interactive.uk.net e-mail: info@interactive.uk.net

There is also **Get active London** who have an extensive web-based resource, but no address or phone number. They present a wide range of links, though many are for able-bodied people rather than those with disabilities.

website: www.getactivelondon.com e-mail: info@getactivelondon.com

The resource is based around five **Pro-active London Partnerships** which work to increase participation in sport and physical activity in different areas.

You can find out more at www.pro-activelondon.org.

Special Needs Kids is a nationwide online information and guidance resource, see: www.special-needs-kids.co.uk/Disabled-Sports.htm
 e-mail: enquiries@special-needs-kids.co.uk

For those with a learning disability, see:

www.enabledlondon.com/default/52.healthLiving/gym and there’s **The UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability (UKSA)**

12 City Forum, 250 City Road, EC1V 2PU

Tel: 020 7490-3057 Fax: 020 7251-8861

website: www.uksportsassociation.org e-mail: info@uksportsassociation.org

Access Sport was founded in 2004 to give more children, particularly in disadvantaged areas, access to a wide range of quality local sport.

3 Durham Yard, Teesdale Street, E2 6QF Tel: 020 7993-9883

website: www.accesssport.org.uk e-mail: info@accesssport.co.uk

It launched its Disability Legacy Project in 2011, helping to ensure that there is a lasting positive effect from the London 2012 Games. The aim of the project is to have equipped five mainstream sports clubs with the skills and resources to be inclusive of more disabled young people.

If you want to take a sport very seriously, then there’s the

British Paralympic Association

Room 514, Impact House, 2 Eldridge Road, Croydon CR9 1JP

website: www.paralympics.org.uk