



ITFC Away Guide 2019/20

An Introduction to the 23 League One Grounds

Produced on 20th June 2019 (when the fixtures were published), and based on information available at that date

Prepared by the ITFC Supporter Liaison Officer, with added input from other ITFC staff

About this guide

- Many of the grounds we are visiting in the 2019/20 season will be new to most Town fans.
- This introductory guide is produced by people who have visited all of the grounds in recent years.
- The idea is to help you to plan your away trips – in some cases, to choose which are the grounds / places you most want to go to.
- Detailed away guides are produced a few weeks before each match, published on the ITFC website, and available for review at the SLO Hub in the Fanzone at ITFC.
 - Note that up-to-date information on rail engineering works (+ replacement buses) and road closures will be included in the detailed match guides.
- In compiling this guide, we have mostly relied on our own knowledge and memories, but we have used several additional resources, including opposition Clubs' websites, www.greateranglia.co.uk and www.google.co.uk/maps.
- In particular, though, we have used the website www.footballgroundguide.com, for stadium information, capacities, away ends, fanzones and parking. We do recommend you take a look at this website as you plan your games.

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Away ticket sale priorities

Away games are sold on a priority basis, as follows:

- Ultimate members, then Gold members, then Season Ticket holders, then Silver members, then general sale.
- Note that some games have restrictions on general sale, based on having a prior purchase history.
- Note also that an extra level of priority may be applied for those matches with a limited allocation; this priority would be based on the number of previous away games attended during the course of the season.

2019/20 season - Where will we be playing

- Accrington Stanley
- AFC Wimbledon
- Blackpool
- Bolton Wanderers
- Bristol Rovers
- Burton Albion
- Bury
- Coventry City
- Doncaster Rovers
- Fleetwood Town
- Gillingham
- Lincoln City
- MK Dons
- Oxford United
- Peterborough United
- Portsmouth
- Rochdale
- Rotherham United
- Shrewsbury
- Southend United
- Sunderland
- Tranmere Rovers
- Wycombe Wanderers

Detailed away guides will be available at www.itfc.co.uk and in the FanZone from approximately two weeks before each game

Accrington Stanley

Where is it?

In the North-West, north of Manchester, about halfway between Blackburn and Burnley.

Address:

The Wham Stadium
Livingstone Road, Accrington, BB5 5BX

Website: www.accringtonstanley.co.uk

By road:

Around 5 hours, usual route is A14 / A1 / M62 / M66 / A56 / A680. Another option is A14 / M6 / M65 / A678 / A680. Official coaches are likely to leave 8 hours before kick off and arrive back 6 hours after the end of the game. Street parking or limited paid stadium parking.

By rail:

Via London Liverpool St / Euston / Preston or Manchester, or cross-country via Peterborough / York or Leeds. Trains from Manchester go from Victoria station. Ground is a 20 min walk from the station.

How to fill in time on matchday:

There are several pubs which were enjoyed by Town fans last season, including The Crown on Whalley St (near the stadium). Accrington is generally away-friendly, so you should be ok in most pubs.

The Oaklea fish & chip shop is on Whalley Road, opposite the Grey Horse pub, and is pretty good!

What's the ground like?

It's a proper lower-league ground, capacity just 5,450, but there is plenty of room for away fans, most of whom will be standing on a shallow, open terrace.

Away fans are welcome in the club bar, Redz, which, last season, had beer at £2 a pint up to 2pm. After the game, their Fanzone has even cheaper beer – if they've won!

Away allocation:

1,800 standing (Coppice Terrace) plus up to 500 seats (Eric Whalley Stand).

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Most Town fans spending more time in the area are likely to gravitate to one of the major cities en route, typically Manchester or Leeds, both of which have everything for a fabulous night out, great shopping and an array of museums, galleries, theatres and restaurants.

Hebden Bridge (on the Leeds line) is highly rated, as a pretty town with great pubs.

AFC Wimbledon

Where is it?

In South-West London, easily accessible by train, but not in Wimbledon itself – though the club is moving back home in a couple of years.

Address:

The Cherry Red Records Stadium
Jack Goodchild Way, 422a Kingston Road, Kingston Upon Thames,
Surrey, KT1 3PB

Website: www.afcwimbledon.co.uk

By road:

Around 3 hours, as it's nestled into the London conurbation. From Ipswich, you'd likely go A12 / M25 / M3 /A2043. Train is probably easier. There is very limited parking at the ground, otherwise street parking, which may well involve a bit of a walk.

By rail:

Via London Liverpool St / Waterloo to Norbiton (on the Kingston line, zone 5). Trains run every 15 mins and take 25 mins. Ground is a 10-15 min walk from the station. It's an evening game, but you should still be able to get back to Ipswich afterwards.

How to fill in time on matchday:

Pub options near the ground are limited nowadays, due to closures, though it may be worth trying the Bricklayers Arms on Hawks Road. There is a large supporters' bar at the ground that normally allows away fans, and has real ale. Otherwise, there are many decent pubs in New Malden (25 min walk or a short bus ride) and Kingston (also a short bus ride).

What's the ground like?

It's not hard to imagine the ground as a decent non-league facility, which is what it has been for most of its life. The away allocation is very small, and is very likely to sell out, even though it is an evening game. AFC Wimbledon have enough home support to fill the rest of the stadium so don't count on getting a ticket in the home end.

AFC Wimbledon have sold the stadium to Chelsea, who will be using it for their Womens team plus (once Wimbledon move out, their youth teams). In a couple of years, AFC Wimbledon will move back home, to an impressive new ground almost next door to their old haunt, Plough Lane, a short walk from Wimbledon station.

Away allocation:

725 standing at one end of the RyGas Stand plus 94 seats in the John Green Stand.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

There is all of London to explore of course, but you might want to consider spending a bit of time in Kingston Upon Thames, which has great retail, restaurants and pubs, some with river views. There are a number of hotels there too, which makes this one of the best matchdays for an extended stay.

Blackpool

Where is it?

In the North-West, on the coast, one of the great, traditional British seaside experiences.

Address:

Seasiders Way, Blackpool, FY1 6JJ

Website: www.blackpoolfc.co.uk

By road:

Around 5 hours, usual route is A14 / A1 / M62 / M61 / M6 / M58
Another option is A14 / M6 / M58. Official coaches are likely to leave at least 8 hours before kick off and arrive back no earlier than 6 hours after the end of the game. There are vast pay-and-display car parks near the ground, but free street parking is very limited.

By rail:

Via London Liverpool St / Euston / Preston. There are very occasional direct trains out of Euston to Blackpool; these may be seasonal.

How to fill in time on matchday:

It's Blackpool! The ground is a short walk to the beach, there are so many pubs, bars, fish & chip shops, traditional seaside stores – you're spoiled for choice. Most pubs are away-friendly, so if you find one that isn't, simply move on and you'll find a welcome within a few minutes. Real ale connoisseurs are less well off, though there's a massive, seriously impressive new Wetherspoons, the Velvet Coaster, on the seafront, about 20 minutes from the ground.

What's the ground like?

It's one of the larger League One grounds, and pretty modern, with a capacity of 17,338. The away stand is still the "temporary" East Stand, which features plenty of annoying pillars that seem designed to block as much of your view as possible.

Catering facilities offer usual ground fare, and alcohol is normally available to away fans.

Away allocation:

2,500, which should be plenty, even though it is one of the more attractive away fixtures.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

It's Blackpool! The Pleasure Beach is world-renowned for its rides, but the whole town is geared to mass tourism and is mostly inexpensive. There are hotels and guest houses along every street, it seems. There's a wonderful tramway that runs the length of the seafront all the way to Fleetwood. Blackpool Tower is a mini-Eiffel Tower of a destination in its own right. And if you're desperate for a great real ale, hit The Taps in Lytham for one of the country's most renowned pubs.

Bolton Wanderers

Where is it?

In the North-West, in Horwich, just of Junction 6 of the M61.

Address:

University of Bolton Stadium, Burnden Way, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 6JW

Website: www.bwfc.co.uk

By road:

Around 4 hours 30 minutes, usual route is A14 / A1 / M62 / M61. Another option is A14 / M6 / M62 / M60 / M61 but is likely to take longer. Official coaches are likely to leave at least 7 and a half hours before kick off and arrive back no earlier than 5 and a half hours after the end of the game. Parking is available at the ground and also in the industrial estates around the stadium (Lostock Lane).

By rail:

Via London Liverpool St / Euston / Manchester Piccadilly. From Manchester Piccadilly you take a train to Horwich Parkway which is 200 metres from the stadium. Post-match there's a queuing system, which may segregate home and away fans, so you may not be able to get on the first train out.

How to fill in time on matchday:

The Middlebrook Retail Park next to the stadium has numerous food outlets, shops and other activities. You can't park there for the match, and some outlets (selling alcohol) don't allow away fans.

The Beehive pub on Chorley New Road is the main away pub. The Barnstormers pub on Lostock Lane also allows away fans.

What's the ground like?

It's modern and iconic – and holds fond memories for Town fans who remember our successful play-off campaign in 2000.

Catering facilities are as you would expect (though, in our experience, they manage to cook a Hollands pie far better than most), and alcohol is normally available to away fans.

Away allocation:

Huge – up to 5,000. If we sell this one out, then we will be having an amazing season!

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Quite a few Town fans will overnight before or after the game (or both). There are a couple of Premier Inns very near the ground which are popular, and good nearby pubs for non-matchday socialising. There is also Whites hotel, which is built into the stadium, with some rooms offering a great view of the pitch (NB matchday restrictions on occupancy and alcohol!). Other Town fans will take advantage of being so close to Manchester, so will overnight there instead.

Bristol Rovers

Where is it?

On the north-east side of Bristol, a city that is well worth spending a day or two exploring.

Address:

Filton Avenue, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 0BF

Website: <https://www.bristolrovers.co.uk/>

By road:

A12 / M25 / M4 / M32 . B4469 (at least 4 hours) or A14 / M6 / M42 / M5 / A38 (up to 5 hours). There is a car park at the ground, and there is also street parking, especially around the Wellington pub.

By rail:

Change at Liverpool St and Paddington. Paddington to Bristol Temple Meads is around one-and three-quarter hours. There are regular buses from the station (and city centre) in the direction of the ground, though it is 4 miles out, and around a half hour journey.

How to fill in time on matchday:

First of all – make sure you allow enough time to get to the ground, as it is 4 miles away from the city centre! It may be best to have your last few beers either at the away-friendly club bar or one of several decent pubs near the ground. (The detailed matchday away guide will point you to those which are away-friendly and which to avoid!). Town's South-West Supporters Club are likely to organise a pre-match social, so look out for information.

What's the ground like?

Odd. It used to be the home of Bristol Rugby Club, and it still feels more like a rugby ground. It only holds 12,300 – this seems inadequate, given that Rovers took 32,000 to Wembley for a Play-Off Final a few years ago!

Away allocation:

There is a shallow open terrace along the East side, which holds 1,100. In addition, some seats will be available in the south stand. We tend to take a largish support to Bristol, so this is a match that is likely to sell out quickly.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

There is a huge amount to do in and around Bristol. Not just some of the best pubs and bars in the whole country, and within a reasonable walk of each other. But also famous sights from Bristol's maritime history, including the SS Great Britain (probably the best museum of its type in the UK if not in the world), the record-breaking Matthew and the MV Balmoral. Plus Clifton Suspension Bridge and the huge urban park that is Clifton Downs. Decent shopping too. And nearby seaside, at Weston Super Mare, kind of Bristol's answer to Felixstowe, in all the right ways.

Burton Albion

Where is it?

Between the Midlands and the North, in the middle. Not far from lots of places, including Derby and Tamworth, but not too close either.

Address: Pirelli Stadium, Princess Way, Burton-on-Trent, DE13 0AR

Website: www.burtonalbionfc.co.uk

By road:

A14 / M1 / A511 / A5121, taking about 3 hours. There is a car park at the ground, but most fans use the unofficial car parks in nearby industrial estates. Official coaches will leave Ipswich around 6 hours before kick off, and arrive back around 4 hours after the game.

By rail:

It isn't the easiest by rail from Ipswich. Reckon on at least a 4 hour journey, with changes at Liverpool St / Euston / Tamworth, or cross-country with changes at Ely and Nottingham.

How to fill in time on matchday:

It's Burton – some call it the brewing capital of the world, and certainly it once had a real claim to that title. The town centre is full of memories of the town's great brewing heritage, including the National Brewery Centre and museum (which also has a pretty good bar and shop). Otherwise, you have a choice of a huge number of varied and interesting pubs, most of which are entirely away-friendly. A day is not enough to explore all the decent pubs in town.

What's the ground like?

Small. The capacity is just under 7,000, with only just over 2000 seats. It's modern and compact, and only about a mile from the town centre.

Away allocation:

1,400 standing on the East Terrace, giving a real chance to create a good atmosphere, plus 400 seats in the corner of the Main Stand. All the stands are fairly shallow, as you'd expect. It's the first game of the season, so could well sell out.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

As the "matchday" section across the page suggests, there are enough fascinating pubs to keep you interested for a few days. The tour around the Brewery Centre is worthwhile, (the Marstons tour is also worth exploring). There's a good choice of hotels in town, but we'd also recommend the Hilton at St Georges Park, just a 10-15 minute drive away – it's the Football Association's centre for training and development, and is where the England team meet up and train before many of their matches – it also hosts overseas teams and England Women and many of the youth teams. Many footballers use the facilities for rehab from injury, so you're always likely to bump into a familiar face. Rooms are decorated with England heroes, so you might share a room with Beckham – or Terry Butcher!

Bury

Where is it?

North Manchester – a tram ride from central Manchester and beyond, so it's really easy to get to. This is the hidden gem trip of the season, in our opinion.

Address: Gigg Lane, Bury, BL9 9HR

Website: www.buryfc.co.uk

By road:

A14 / A1 / M62 / M60 / M66 / A56. It will take at least 4 hours, and likely quite a bit longer. There is street parking around the ground but beware of some residents-only restrictions.

By rail:

Head for Manchester – change at Liverpool St and Euston. You'll arrive into Manchester Piccadilly – stroll down into the city centre and pick up a tram to Bury (around 30 minutes). The ground is a 20 minute walk from Bury town centre.

How to fill in time on matchday:

Bury has a massive, famous indoor market, covering a huge site right in the middle of town. It includes a stall that only sells black pudding – and fine black pudding it is too. There is a very good choice of pubs around the town, and a few along the Manchester Road on the walk to the ground. They also normally allow some away fans into the club bar at the ground.

What's the ground like?

It's a neat, modern oblong affair, but it feels much older - the kind of ground that you would expect to find in this part of the world, and none the worse for that. It holds 11,840 (all seated), but feels bigger.

Away allocation:

Just under 2,000 in the Ratio Law Stand at one end. It's not a bad view, though there are some pillars.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Bury is on the East Lancs Railway, a heritage steam line that runs from Heywood via Bury to Ramsbottom and Rawtenstall, market towns that are also well worth exploring for little shops, pubs and with an enviable reputation for good restaurants. There's a great little transport museum in Bury, too.

Many Town fans are likely to take the opportunity to spend some time in Manchester, where there is a huge choice of pubs, bars and nightclubs and a burgeoning craft ale scene. Also a fabulous choice of restaurants, with a credible Chinatown and Rusholme's famous "curry mile". Plus the National Football Museum. Depending on when our game is, you might even be able to take in another match during your trip – some Sundays, Manchester City Women play at City's new Academy stadium, opposite the Etihad.

Coventry City - NB these notes are based on the ground as used for Birmingham City's home games – some details may differ when Coventry are using the stadium. These will be made clear in our detailed matchday guide, issued a few weeks before the game

Where is it?

Coventry is just off the M6 on your way to Birmingham, but, sadly, the football club are not playing in their own city this season. Instead, make your way to Birmingham City FC.

Address: St Andrew's Trillion Trophy Stadium, Cattell Road, Birmingham, B9 4RL

Website: www.ccfc.co.uk

By road:

A14 / M6 / A38 / Inner Ring Road, a journey of around 3 hours. There is no car parking at the ground for away fans (other than disabled, by arrangement), but there is street parking nearby. Away coaches park next to the away end. Roads past the ground close for an hour pre- and post-match.

By rail:

Either via Liverpool St and Euston (or Marylebone, for cheaper but slower trains), or cross-country via Peterborough &/or Cambridge / Ely. It's a 30 minute walk from New Street station to the ground.

How to fill in time on matchday:

Birmingham has a pretty impressive central district, with a vast array of shops all in a fairly compact area. A lot has been spent here in recent years, and it shows. There is a great choice of pubs too, though note the Wetherspoons nearest the station (the Briar Rose) no longer allows football fans at all. There is a retail park next to the stadium, with a supermarket often used by Town fans for a cheap pre-match lunch.

What's the ground like?

It's relatively modern, but feels older, and has a capacity of just under 30,000. Away fans are housed in the Gil Merrick Stand.

Away allocation:

The normal allocation is 3,000, which we would not normally fill. It is even possible that we could get a higher allocation if needed, as Coventry are unlikely to attract as many fans as Birmingham City. The away end can be configured for a cup allocation of 4,500.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

There is a vast amount to do in and around Birmingham, and a very wide choice of pubs, bars, restaurants and hotels. There may well be an event or concert at what we still know as the NEC. Also there's the Symphony Hall, as well as the National Indoor Arena and Town Hall, as well as many smaller music venues. A little further afield, there's the whole of the Black Country to explore, with its great industrial heritage. Famously, Birmingham is said to have more canals than Venice – it's easier to get to and cheaper too, so that has to worth investigating!

Doncaster Rovers

Where is it?

Yorkshire, but the easy bit to get to, as it's just off the A1.

Address: Keepmoat Stadium, Stadium Way, Doncaster, DN4 5JW

Website: www.doncasterroversfc.co.uk

By road:

A14 / A1 / M18 / A6182. It takes around 3 hours (so, coaches will leave Ipswich around 6 hours before kick off, and arrive back around 4 hours after the game). There is stadium parking, and also various unofficial options around the ground.

By rail:

The easiest route is with a single change at Peterborough, taking around three-and-a-half hours. It's a bit slower to go via Liverpool St and Kings Cross, but it's worth checking the cost of both options. The stadium is two miles out of town, so most will opt for a taxi or a bus from the nearby main bus station. We've walked it back after a game several times and it didn't feel too far...

How to fill in time on matchday:

There are plenty enough decent pubs in the town centre, most a short walk from the station, to keep most visiting fans happy. Given that the ground is outside of town and on a retail park, pub options in the vicinity are limited, though they are reportedly away-friendly. You may be able to get into the stadium bar too. The retail park has plenty of options to while away an hour or so!

What's the ground like?

It is a smallish modern ground, but in a setting that is almost spectacular, next to a lake. Capacity is 15,231, all seated.

Away allocation:

Around 3,300 in the North Stand, with a low roof that gives a chance to create a bit of noise. Catering is as you'd expect (can anyone confirm whether they still offer the excellent "Yorkshire Pudding Wrap", which was a generous helping of roast beef and gravy, wrapped not in a tortilla but in a Yorkshire pudding – delicious!).

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Most Town fans will treat this one as a daytrip, but Doncaster is only half an hour from Sheffield, and not a lot further to York, if you are looking for traditional tourist pursuits, theatre, great shopping or a wider range of amazing pubs and ales.

Fleetwood Town

Where is it?

Just up beyond Blackpool, on the coast. A fishing port, you may well hear the term “Cod Army!”.

Address: Highbury Stadium, Park Avenue, Fleetwood, FY7 6TX. It is named after the adjacent road, not as a homage to a bigger club from down south.

Website: www.fleetwoodtownfc.com

By road:

A14 / A1 / M62 / M61 / M6 / M55 / A585. Or A14 / M6 / M55 / A585. It's a long way – around 5 hours by car, with coaches likely to leave Ipswich at least 8 hours before the game, getting back around 6 hours after the game.

By rail:

Change at Liverpool St / Euston / Preston / Blackpool North. You can then get a bus to Fleetwood, but you won't do that. Instead, you'll stroll up to the seafront and get a tram. The tram takes you to within a short walk of the ground.

How to fill in time on matchday:

It's worth giving Blackpool a miss if you have never been to Fleetwood. So, get the train up to the end of the line and explore the town, lifeboat station, and maybe hit a fish & chip shop. There aren't so many pub options near the ground, but there are, of course, many pubs to choose from in the town, and they're likely to be away-friendly. The club bar also admits away fans.

What's the ground like?

Modern but small, with a capacity of just over 5,300. The club has risen quickly out of non-league, but the stadium is smart.

Away allocation:

This could be a problem. The maximum away allocation is just over 1,100, of which 600 are on an covered standing terrace. Alcohol is not available at the terrace end. Given this is a new ground for most Town fans, and the attractive location for many, this game is likely to sell out.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

There are hotel and B&B options in Fleetwood itself, though most fans are likely to head into Blackpool, where there are options to suit just about any budget. Blackpool offers a huge range of family-friendly (and adult-oriented) activities, including the fabulous Pleasure Beach, at the south end of the town. If you're wanting a quite unusual experience, you could try booking a Pleasure-Beach-Beach-facing room at the family-friendly Big Blue Hotel, and have the experience of the old wooden rollercoaster rushing past your window ever few minutes! For a more genteel experience, try the resort of Lytham, a few miles up the road, which has a fabulous pub (The Taps) and some pretty good restaurants.

Gillingham

Where is it?

It's a Medway town, in Kent, so a shortish trip over the Dartford Bridge and turn then left.

Address: MEMS Priestfield Stadium, Redfern Avenue, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 4DD

Website: www.gillinghamfootballclub.com

By road:

A12 / M25 / M2 / A278. Remember to pay the Dartford Bridge / Tunnel tolls in each direction – easiest done online (there are no toll booths, and it is too easy to forget). If you are a SatNav addict, please make sure you end up in Gillingham, Kent and not Gillingham, Dorset.

By rail:

This trip has become easier with the opening of the Ashford high speed line. Change at Stratford for Stratford International, from where it's just over half an hour to Gillingham. The station is about a 10-minute walk from the football ground. So, you can do the trip in a couple of hours, with a bit of luck.

How to fill in time on matchday:

Gillingham isn't a major city, and the vast majority of Town fans will treat it as an in-and-out game, stopping maybe just for a few beers pre-match. When it comes to pubs, Gillingham is better than you might expect, even with a dedicated away pub, the Fleur-de-Lys, 10 minutes walk from the ground on the Gillingham Road. There are several town centre options, and a reasonable choice for real and craft ale fans.

What's the ground like?

It holds just over 11,500, and, seen from the away end, it's a neat, tidy, all-seater- and all-covered stadium. The away end, though, is still the big uncovered temporary seated terrace, fine on a nice day but grim when it's cold, wet and windy.

Away allocation:

The away seated terrace, in the Brian Moore Stand (named after the famous ITV commentator who was a Gills fan), holds 1,500. There are also 200 additional seats in the Gordon Road Stand. For fans who have only been to Gillingham for pre-season games, this comes as a bit of a change. Access to the away end is down a narrow passageway, which permits segregation when required.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

You probably won't be spending a lot of time in or around Gillingham, but it is certainly worthwhile checking out the Historic Dockyard, with some great old warships and a dockyard museum at nearby Chatham (just a mile or so up the road) or the impressive Rochester Castle (3-4 miles away). Shopping addicts might want to stop off at the Bluewater Shopping Centre, which is the Kent side of the Dartford Crossing.

Lincoln City

Where is it?

Lincolnshire – but a part that is very, very hilly. If you turn right off the A1 at Newark, you'd be there pretty soon.

Address: Sincil Bank, Lincoln LN5 8LD

Website: www.redimps.co.uk

By road:

A14 / A1 / A17 from just north of Grantham (or, A46 from Newark). It should take just under 3 hours, making it a relatively short trip. There is no official away fans parking, but street parking worked well last time we were there.

By rail:

The match takes place on Sunday 29th December – although timetables are not available yet, please be aware that train options are going to be very limited, both outbound and return. You can expect to change at least at Peterborough and Newark North Gate. On the return you may also have to change at Newark Castle (and walk to North Gate) and Cambridge too! There is also the risk of disruption from engineering works. If you do manage to get there by train, the ground is a 15 minute walk from the station.

How to fill in time on matchday:

Lincoln is a fine, historic and beautiful city, with an imposing cathedral. It also has a very good choice of pubs, bars and eateries, so offers plenty for the visiting football fan. There is a small Fanzone at the ground, open to home and away fans, and the club also has a bar open to all.

What's the ground like?

Many Town fans will remember all too well what this ground is like – and not for the fondest of reasons! The stadium is newer than it looks – the eye is always drawn to the tall side stand that seems to stretch only a few yards either side of the halfway line. Capacity is a bit over 10,000.

Away allocation:

The usual away allocation is just 1,000, on one side of the Stacey West Stand behind the goal. So this is a game that runs the risk of being a sell-out to Town fans

If you're spending a bit more time there:

It is a really good city to spend an extra day, with excellent shopping and sightseeing, especially the cathedral, which is even more impressive at night-time, as it towers over the city. Lincoln Castle is also well worth a look.

Mk Dons

Where is it?

Just off the M1 in Buckinghamshire, about half an hour north of the M25.

Address: Stadium MK, Denbigh, Milton Keynes, Stadium Way, MK1 1ST

Website: www.mkdons.com

By road:

A14 / A428 / A1 / A421. It can be done in just a couple of hours, so is one of our closest games. There is parking at the stadium, though many fans street park on nearby industrial estates or use the various unofficial car parks that open matchdays. Don't park in the adjacent retail park – you'll get a fine.

By rail:

Change at Liverpool St and Euston, journey time around 2-and-a-half to three hours. But note that the stadium is nowhere near a useful station, so you'll rely on buses, taxis or a long walk (to Bletchley is 2 miles). Milton Keynes Central is 4 miles away. Given that it's an evening game, you won't be able to connect back to Ipswich after the game.

How to fill in time on matchday:

Well, there is that retail park, right next to the ground, with lots of shops and chain restaurants. Otherwise, there are a number of pubs in nearby Fenny Stratford (about a mile from the ground – it has a railway station too, but it's on the Bletchley – Bedford branch line).

What's the ground like?

It's big – the capacity is over 30,000 – and quite impressive. Of course, MK Dons don't get anywhere near filling the stadium for their league matches. The ground has been built to a high standard – comfy seats and very good facilities. If you like decent loos, then this is the League One ground to go to!

Away allocation:

The away end is the north-east corner, upper tier, with an allocation of 3,000. There is a possibility of increasing this allocation if there is enough demand, so you shouldn't struggle to get a ticket.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

The stadium has its own hotel, a decent Hilton Doubletree, which is incredibly convenient for overnighting fans. There are cheaper options, of the Travelodge / Premier Inn type, fairly close by too. Milton Keynes has decent shopping and also boasts an indoor ski slope (Snozone) and a nearby indoor skydiving facility too. Just out of town is the concert hall known as The Stables, set up by Cleo Laine and Johnny Dankworth as a rehearsal and performance space – there are great acts on there throughout the year.

Oxford United

Where is it?

Just off the M40, about 50 miles out of London

Address: Kassam Stadium, Grenoble Road, Oxford, OX4 4XP

Website: www.oufc.co.uk

By road:

A12 / M25 / M40 (J7)/ A329 / B480. Google Maps reckons it takes 2 hours 20 minutes, which suggests they're not worried about points on their licence. We reckon it will take up to 3 hours. There is a large car park at the stadium, though it fills early. Other car parks are available nearby, as well as some street parking.

By rail:

Change at Liverpool St and Paddington, journey time up to 3-and-a-half hours. You also have the option to change at Marylebone. It's worth checking costs. Some Paddington services add a change at Reading, which is worth avoiding. The ground is 4 miles out of town, so it's a bus or taxi. Buses are frequent but pretty indirect, taking at least half an hour, so allow plenty of time to get there. And back.

How to fill in time on matchday:

The nearby bowling alley, Ozone, has a couple of restaurants but the choice of pubs near the ground is quite limited, as you might expect. You're likely to have to walk at least a mile, and so most fans will opt to have a few beers in town before getting the bus to the stadium. Luckily, the city centre has some excellent drinking and eating options.

What's the ground like?

It hasn't changed since our last visit, a pre-season game back in 2004, which resulted in a 5-1 win, with goals from Tommy Miller (2), Darren Bent, Pablo Counago and Jim Magilton, playing against his ex-club. The ground still holds 12,500, and it still has only three sides.

Away allocation:

The away end is in the North Stand, a sideways view, towards the open end. So you will be able to see if the ball has hit your car parked behind that end. The away allocation is as many as 5,000, so we are not expecting to sell out.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Don't be scared by the apparent murder rate in the Oxford area – Inspector Morse was fiction. Oxford is a great, historic university city, attracting huge numbers of tourists each year. If you like wonderful historic buildings, can tolerate the thousands of tourists, and avoid all the souvenir shops you ever feared existed, then Oxford's your place. It is great for pubs and restaurants too.

Peterborough

Where is it?

35 miles the other side of Cambridge, but still in East Anglia.

Address: The Weston Homes Stadium, London Road, Peterborough, PE2 8AL

Website: www.theposh.com

By road:

A14 / A1 / A1139 / A1260. The ground is just outside the city centre, so if you follow Yaxley from the A1 and then City Centre, you'll soon be there. There is no parking at the ground for away fans, but there's a large pay & display just past the ground on the left. There is some street parking, but it is more restricted than it used to be.

By rail:

Direct train from Ipswich. It's not often we can say that. The downside? Trains are tiny – a maximum of three carriages – and only every couple of hours, taking 1 hour 40 mins. Otherwise change at Cambridge, and add up to an hour to the journey time.

How to fill in time on matchday:

Peterborough has a huge shopping centre, conveniently taking up most of the space between the railway station and the football ground. It also is renowned for really good pubs, and the good news is that the pub scene continues to improve, as the craft beer and micropub phenomena take hold. There are plenty of places to eat out too. For culture, the cathedral is near the ground – and is pretty impressive.

What's the ground like?

It's the kind of ground you expect to find in League One, with one large, impressive stand and three much smaller, shallower stands. Capacity is around 15,000.

Away allocation:

The away end is no longer behind the goal. Instead, it is on the left-side of the Main Stand (which is the little one opposite the big one). The allocation is 1,800, and, traditionally, we have taken a huge support to this fixture, so you should expect it to be a sell-out. Catering facilities are cramped, and no alcohol is served.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

You are probably not going to do a huge amount of shopping pre-match, so we would expect at least some fans to extend their stay to take in the shops. It's worth noting that Peterborough is at one end of the excellent Nene Valley Railway, a heritage steam line that is well worth a visit. And anyone interested in their beer, especially real ale, will never be able to do justice to all Peterborough's pubs in just one day – so why not stay over, rather than crowd onto a packed train post-match.

Portsmouth

Where is it?

On the south coast, east of Southampton, and close to the Isle of Wight.

Address: Fratton Park, Frogmore Road, Portsmouth, PO4 8RA

Website: www.portsmouthfc.co.uk

By road:

A12 / M25 / A3 / M27 / A27 / A2030. In theory it is about a 3 hour trip, but you'll need to allow for delays, especially around the M25. The stadium car park is the opposite end to the away end, so not ideal. There are unofficial car parks nearby, but many fans street park.

By rail:

Change at Liverpool St and Waterloo, with an expected journey time of just under 4 hours. The nearest station to the ground is Fratton, about a 10 minute walk. Otherwise, Portsmouth & Southsea station is around a 30 minute walk (or a short train ride to Fratton + a 10 minute walk!)

How to fill in time on matchday:

There are a number of decent pubs within a half-mile or so of the ground; it may be that the first one you find is home fans only, but don't worry, you'll soon find one where you're welcome. There is a wider choice of pubs in the city centre, including a couple of Wetherspoons. If you are very early into Portsmouth, then it's a great idea to hit the naval history offering, described at the end of this page.

What's the ground like?

It is a proper old-fashioned ground, with a great atmosphere and loud home support. The ground holds 21,000, so it is one of the larger League One grounds we'll visit. We have heard that the old floodlight pylons are coming down, which would be a great shame – the ground is currently visible from a long way out to sea!

Away allocation:

The away end is one half of the Milton End, and the usual allocation is 1,400, though on occasion a higher allocation can be agreed. We expect this to be a very popular game, so there's a real chance that the lower end of the allocation could sell out.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Of course there's shopping and pubs, but the real glory of Portsmouth is its naval history. Head down to the harbour to see the National Museum of the Royal Navy, HMS Victory, the Mary Rose and HMS Warrior. You can also catch a ferry over to the Isle of Wight, and enjoy their own kind of heritage railway, which uses old Metropolitan Line tube stock! We were surprised to learn that there is still a hovercraft service to the Isle of Wight too – that has to be worth doing, if only to show the kids how some of us used to cross the Channel to France!

Rochdale

Where is it?

East of Manchester, not far from the M62.

Address: Crown Oil Arena, Sandy Lane, Rochdale, OL11 5DR

Website: www.rochdaleafc.co.uk

By road:

A14 / A1 / M62 / A627(M) / A664. It's about a 4 hour drive. There is no away parking at the stadium – there are some unofficial local car parks, and there's plenty of street parking (but not immediately around the stadium).

By rail:

It will take 5-6 hours, as Rochdale isn't on a mainline. Options include changing at (a) Peterborough / (maybe also York) / Leeds, (b) Liverpool St / Euston / Manchester Piccadilly / Manchester Victoria, and (c) Peterborough / York / Manchester Victoria. Rochdale station is about a 40 minute walk to the ground – you can halve that by taking the tram partway. The tram is also an option from Manchester, but is considerably slower than the train services.

How to fill in time on matchday:

Rochdale is a friendly club, with two bars at the stadium which welcome away fans. The one we used previously had a dedicated area for away fans, which worked well. Many fans speak well of the nearby fish & chip shop near the away end. There are a few other pubs within a reasonable walk of the ground, most noteworthy of which is the iconic and beautiful Cemetery Hotel, with a good range of real ales and a reputation forged over many decades.

What's the ground like?

It's a smallish and traditional-looking ground, capacity just over 10,000 though it somehow feels a bit bigger.

Away allocation:

The normal allocation is 1,500, but this can be increased if there is obvious extra demand. Away fans are in the Willbutts Lane stand, giving a decent, side view of the match. It isn't hard to make a decent atmosphere there.

Generally, away fans rate their trip to Rochdale very highly, so it looks like one to look forward to.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Fans who want to spend more time in the area are most likely to base themselves in Manchester (15 mins by train) or Leeds (75 minutes by train – it's a slow line). Both cities have huge amounts to recommend. Leeds has more decent pubs within a 5-minute walk of the railway station than anywhere we have ever been to, and there's plenty more to the city too, including great shopping. Manchester has a fabulous real ale and craft beer scene, as well as the National Football Museum, Rusholme's Curry Mile and a decent Chinatown. Both have theatres, concert halls and gigs galore.

Rotherham United

Where is it?

South Yorkshire, not far from Sheffield

Address: AESSEAL New York Stadium, New York Way, Rotherham, S60 1AH

Website: www.themillers.co.uk

By road:

A14 / A1 / A57 / M1 / A6178 / A630. It should take around 3 hours, so not the longest of trips. There is no car parking at the ground for away fans (apart from disabled, bookable in advance), but there are plenty of car parks within a short walk. Another option is to park at Sheffield's Meadowhall shopping centre and take a 6-minute train journey.

By rail:

It is marginally quicker to change at Peterborough / Doncaster (three-and-a-half hours) than Liverpool St / Kings Cross / Doncaster (4 hours and a bit). Given this is a relatively new stadium, it is great to find that it's only a short walk from the railway station. Given that the match is on a Tuesday evening, you won't be able to get back to Ipswich after the game. There may be a connection back as far as London, via Meadowhall and Doncaster.

How to fill in time on matchday:

You won't be spoilt for choice when it comes to town centre pubs, though one or two nearest the ground may well be home fans only. If you are travelling via Sheffield, which is only a 12 minute train ride away, then the Sheffield Tap (platform one) is an essential stopover, noting that football colours are not permitted.

What's the ground like?

It is very modern – it opened in 2012 – and of simple single-tier construction. Capacity is a compact 12,000, but it is an enclosed bowl, which seems always to improve the atmosphere.

Away allocation:

The away end is the Mears Stand, with an allocation of 2,500. We were there last season of course, so there's no "League One Novelty Value" likely to boost our regular away support here. That said, it is a very good away day, and it's usually a reasonably quick journey home.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Town fans looking to extend the trip are likely to stay in Sheffield, which is only a short (12 minute) train ride away. Sheffield has a huge out-of-town shopping centre at Meadowhall, a fabulous choice of wonderful pubs (it's one of those places where we seem to discover a new favourite every time we go), and a wide choice of hotels to suit all budgets. A major student city, nightlife is good, quite apart from theatres and museums too.

Shrewsbury Town

Where is it?

The far side of Birmingham. Head towards Wolverhampton and keep going for another 30 miles, past Telford. If you continue another 9 miles, you'd be in Wales.

Address: Montgomery Waters Meadow, Oteley Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ST

Website: www.shrewsburytown.com

By road:

A14 / M6 / M54 / A5. It may take as little as three-and-a-half hours, but much of the route is notorious for delays, so do allow plenty of extra time. There is no away parking at the stadium, nor in the adjacent retail park or nearby streets, but there are a number of unofficial car parks nearby.

By rail: *High risk of rail disruption due to engineering works as the match is on Easter Monday!!*

Change at Ely / Birmingham (a bit over 5 hours), or Liverpool St / Euston / Birmingham (a bit over 4-and-a-half hours), or Liverpool St / Euston / Crewe (just under 5 hours). The station is a couple of miles (40 minute walk) from the ground, though there is a range of bus options, especially for daytime games.

How to fill in time on matchday:

There is a retail park next to the ground, with a number of chain eateries and a supermarket café. There are reasonable pub options in the area around the ground and also in the town centre (one Town fan has told us he is really looking forward to spending some time in Shrewsbury as the pubs are so good). At the ground, there is a small Fanzone which is open to all fans.

What's the ground like?

A small, modern stadium, with 4 separate single-tier stands, and a capacity of just 10,000.

Away allocation:

The away end is the North Stand, holding up to 1,800 fans, including a disabled platform.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

To be honest, the only time we've been to Shrewsbury was for that League Cup game some years ago, and I seem to recall going straight there and back. Luckily, the club's website has the following info for fans wanting to extend their stay: "Shrewsbury is the county town of Shropshire and is set on the banks of the meandering River Severn. The town itself has a long history and many of the buildings date back to the 16th century and beyond.

Shrewsbury has a lovely mix of high-street stores and local boutiques and there are many pubs, restaurants and bars scattered across the town centre.

For more information on where to stay and what to do visit www.visitshrewsbury.co.uk"

Southend United

Where is it?

Essex, on the coast. Turn left just before Chelmsford and keep going. It's our most local league game of the season.

Address: Roots Hall, Victoria Ave, Southend, SS2 6NQ

Website: www.southendunited.co.uk

By road:

A12 / A130 / A127, with a journey time of only just over an hour.

There is no away parking at the stadium but there are some unofficial car parks, and street parking is also possible.

By rail:

The nearest station to the ground is Prittlewell just before Southend itself. Change at Colchester or Chelmsford and then again at Shenfield. Journey time is around 1 hour 45 minutes. It is only a 5 minute walk from Prittlewell to the stadium. If there is a rail replacement bus for any part of this trip, you'd be far quicker on a Galloways coach.

How to fill in time on matchday:

Southend is a major seaside resort, with the world's longest pier, well over a mile of it, and Grade II listed. All the usual seaside attractions are to be found, so it's a good day out. There are a few pubs not far from the ground, though there's a question as to how away friendly they will be – we are likely to count as a local derby. But there are loads of pubs in town and on the seafront.

What's the ground like?

It's an older stadium, with 4 separate single-tier stands. Capacity is just under 12,500.

Away allocation:

Away fans are in the North Stand, which has several pillars that, for many, will get in the way of a perfect view. The away allocation is normally 1,200, though this can be increased to 2,000. Either way, there is a high chance we will sell out this match, as it's a new stadium for many town fans, and it's our closest away game of the season.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Most Town fans will daytrip this game, given how easy it is to get home. Those who decide to make a break of it will be able to enjoy one of Britain's most famous seaside resorts, with everything that you would expect from that. So, it's a pretty good place to while away a couple of days.

Sunderland

Where is it?

In the North-East, half an hour beyond Middlesbrough, and not far from Newcastle.

Address: Sunderland Stadium of Light, Sunderland, SR5 1SU

Website: www.safc.com

By road: Around 4 and a half to 5 hours, the obvious route is the A14 / A1 / A19. Official coaches are likely to leave at least 8 hours before kick off and arrive back around 6 hours after the end of the game. Parking around the stadium is limited but there is plenty of parking available in the Town Centre. There is a Park and Ride scheme from the Sunderland Enterprise Park on Wessington Way (A1231) which is accessible from the A19 and a Park and Walk scheme from the University of Sunderland Campus.

By rail: Cross country options are available from Ipswich via Peterborough and Newcastle (some options require additional changes at Cambridge or York). At Newcastle you take the Metro to the Stadium of Light or St Peters. Or go via London and change at Liverpool St / Kings Cross / Newcastle. It is a very short walk to the stadium from the suggested Metro stations, and only about 15-20 minutes' walk from Sunderland city centre.

How to fill in time on matchday:

There is a Fanzone outside the stadium, open to home and away fans. There are also many pubs and clubs within a short walk, most of which are away-friendly. If the weather's good and you have a bit of time, it's only a 20 minute walk to the seafront, where you will also find pubs worth visiting. The town centre has reasonable shops and places for a bite to eat.

What's the ground like?

It's the biggest ground in League One by some distance, holding 49,000. It's unlikely to be full for our visit, but that won't stop the home fans making plenty of noise.

Away allocation:

The away end is the upper tier of the North Stand, and the usual allocation is 3,000. Given the size of the stadium, you would expect an upper tier to be quite high up, and you wouldn't be wrong, so expect plenty of stairs. It's a great view from up there, but you'll have to shout to be heard at pitch level.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

This is our only trip to the north-east this season (unless we get a cup game...), so many Town fans will find the excuse to spend a night or two in the city of Newcastle. It is rightly famous for its pubs, clubs, bars and restaurants, though sadly the one that did the "curry hell challenge" is no longer there. It is just a short metro journey to Sunderland. For those wanting to stay closer, Sunderland also has some reasonable pubs, and hotels tend to be cheaper – there's even a new hotel right next to the stadium.

Tranmere Rovers

Where is it?

Merseyside, but the other side of the river from Liverpool. Yes, the Mersey Ferry still runs, though there are tunnels for trains and cars.

Address: Prenton Park, Prenton Rd West, Birkenhead, CH42 9PY

Website: www.tranmererovers.co.uk

By road:

A14 / M6 / M56 / M53 / B5151. It is likely to take at least 5 hours, and, given the likely speed restrictions for much of the M6, could take quite a bit longer. There is some parking at the ground, as well as some unofficial car parks nearby. Street parking is also possible, though there are some restrictions near the ground.

By rail:

The nearest stations are Birkenhead Central and Rock Ferry, each around a 15 minute walk to the ground. Change at Peterborough / York / Liverpool Lime St, or Liverpool St / Euston / Liverpool Lime St. It will take around five-and-a-half hours each way. If there is a group of you, it might be easier to share a taxi from Liverpool.

How to fill in time on matchday:

If you have travelled all the way from Ipswich, you are unlikely to have much spare time before the game! So you may be grateful for the club's Fanzone, which includes a marquee. Otherwise there are a number of pubs within a reasonable walk; from experience, even those that look unlikely tend to be very friendly.

What's the ground like?

It has a capacity of 16,500, but 5,700 of that is in the Kop, opposite the away end, so it looks a wee bit uneven.

Away allocation:

The away end is the Cowshed Stand – but the name is unfortunate, as it's actually pretty good. It hold 2,500. The burgers are excellent, and beer is on sale. Views are pretty good too, and you feel close to the action.

If you're spending a bit more time there:

If you don't know Liverpool (and we haven't been there much in recent years...), then you are in for a treat. It is well worth spending some extra days there. Of course there is the music history, and the modern Cavern Club hosts live music every day. There are some great restaurants, a really impressive shopping centre right in the middle of town. Also the museums and leisure facilities of the Albert Dock area, on the river. Unmissable highlights include the Mersey Ferry (just like in the intro to 'The Liver Birds' (google it if you're too young), and the Philharmonic pub, up near the concert hall of the world-renowned Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Oh, and if you want a cathedral, they've got one to spare – as the song goes.

Wycombe Wanderers

Where is it?

Turn right off the M25 onto the M40 and you'll soon be close.

Address: Adams Park, Hillbottom Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 4HJ

Website: www.wycombewanderers.co.uk

By road:

A12 / M25 / M40 / A4010. Google maps suggests it will take 2 hours. We think that is very optimistic. There is a car park at the stadium, but it does take a long time to escape after the game, as the stadium is at the far end of a long single access road. Unofficial car parks can be found all along that road.

By rail: *High risk of rail disruption due to engineering works as the match is on New Years' Day!!*

Change at Liverpool St / Marylebone. It is scheduled to take nearly 3 hours, but you might cut half an hour or so off if you are lucky with tubes. The bad news is that the ground is almost 3 miles from the station, so almost an hour's walk. There is a limited shuttle bus from the station matchdays, or you can catch a more frequent bus from the bus station, around a 10 minute walk from the rail station.

How to fill in time on matchday:

There are bars at the ground which welcome away fans, and there is a marquee outside the away end which is only for away fans. Otherwise, there isn't a lot around the ground, as it is a mile or so into an industrial estate. There are of course several pubs between town and ground, but you'll need to make an early start to take advantage, given it's a long walk.

What's the ground like?

It's a smaller ground, capacity 10,000, with a particularly large stand along one side. It feels a bit like a smaller version of Peterborough's ground.

Away allocation:

The away end is the Dreams Stand, a modern, all-seated end which holds 2,000. For larger away followings, a further 350 seats are available in the Main Stand (which is opposite the big stand, known as the Frank Adams Stand).

If you're spending a bit more time there:

Given that High Wycombe is only 25 minutes by train from Marylebone, we suspect that the majority of Town fans wanting to spend more time away from home will focus on the attractions of the capital.