

## Knowle (Bristol)

In March 1924 15 acres of land were secured by Albert Ford, chairman of the Bristol Greyhound Club. Racing started on Wells Road, in the Knowle area of Bristol on 23rd July 1927 and gave the city its first taste of greyhound racing. The stadium was capable of holding 15,000 spectators and on that first night 8,000 people who saw a greyhound called Plunger win the first race.

Fifty-five meetings on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays were held in the inaugural year of 1927 overseen by Ford and attendances fluctuated but on several occasions there would be over 10,000 turning up to watch the new sport. The main race distance was 500 yards.

The track was duly sold towards the end of the year to a company called the Amalgamated Greyhound Racing Association as Knowle Greyhound Stadium (Bristol) Ltd continued racing on the same three nights. The management organised the first ever 1,000 yard marathon held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1933. Reconstructions of the bends took place in January 1937 and the principal races in the fledgling years were the Knowle Owners Challenge Vase that was held four times a year, the Victory Trophy over 550 yards also held four times per year and the Hurdles Championship over 525 yards twice yearly.

Throughout the war the track experienced good crowds and afterwards the track lighting could be used for the first time in six years. The track was described as a good sized track with a large 440 yard circumference with long straights (100 yards) and a long run-in. With banked bends it was most suitable for wide runners and larger galloping types. The hare was an 'Inside Sumner' and 500, 525, 550 and 700 yards were the regular post war distances.

There were huge kennel facilities for 126 greyhounds charged at £1, 1s per week and in addition there was an isolation kennel block with veterinary care and a paddock kennel for race days. Facilities included the Grand Enclosure, Popular Enclosure and two clubs called the Greyhound club and Sports club.

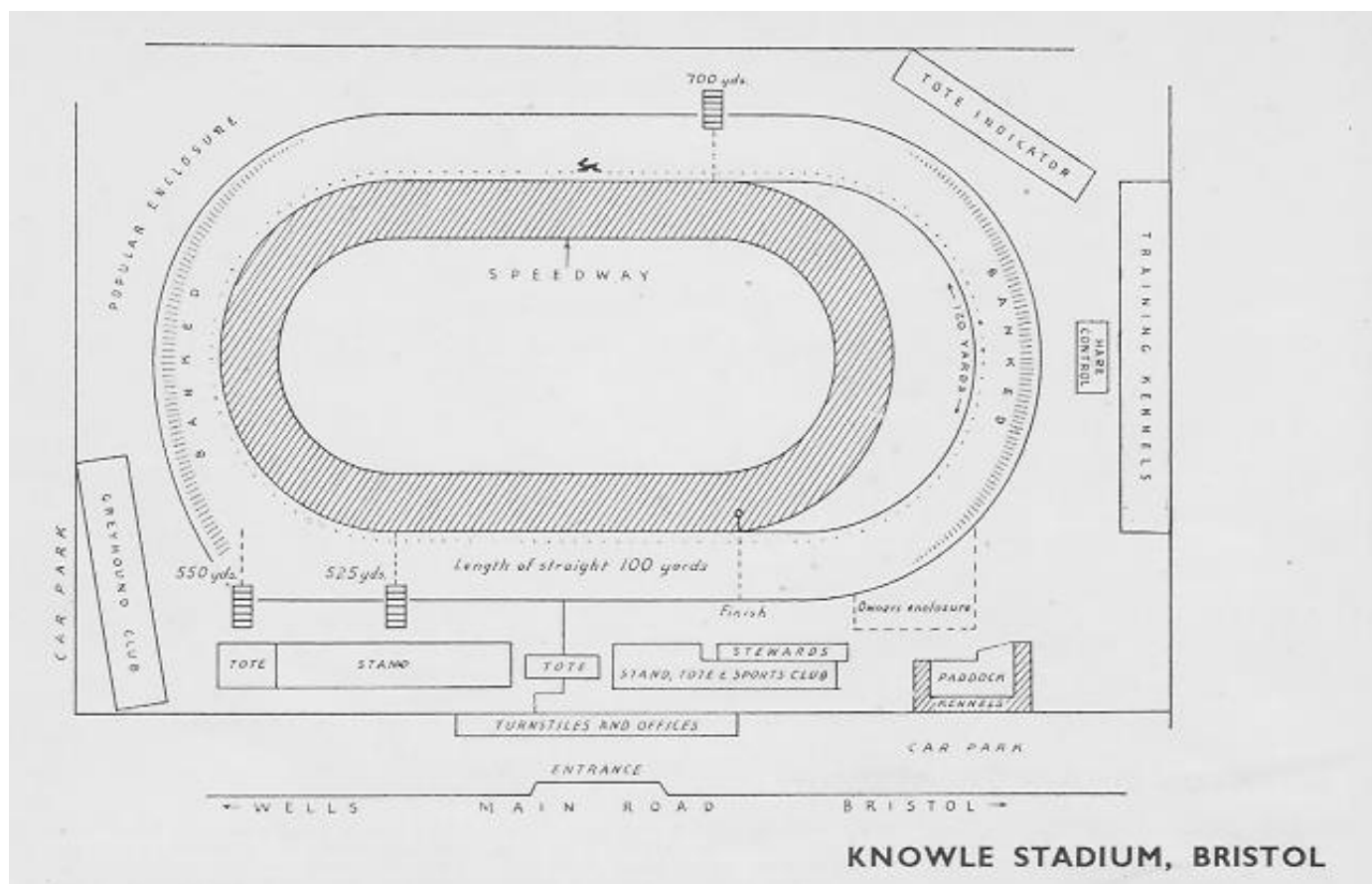
In 1947 there was just under half a million pounds staked on the totalisator, a very significant sum but still dwarfed by local rival Eastville. Knowles turnover was £495,354 whereas Eastville staked £1,269,299.

Stan Raymond, Harry Sayers, John Rowe and Marshall were the main trainers during this popular era and into the fifties. Raymond left for Eastville in the mid-fifties before the track became subject to a bid from developers.

The site was sold by the company and the very last meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1961 to be replaced by housing. The company was liquidated by Edward Balfour during March of 1961.

The site today is the unusual oval shaped housing around 'The Square' (2° 34' 15.437"W 51° 25' 50.182"N).

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### Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
500y	Keen And Clever	30.79	1928+	
	Doubtful Dick	30.69	03.10.1928	
	Dearly Beloved	29.10	1946+	
525y	Dearly Beloved	30.05	1946+	
550y	Killanahan Dasher	32.59	12.1944	
	Fortune Monarch	32.09	08.04.1945	
	Dearly Beloved	31.43	1946+	

+ Date when record was held, not necessarily the year it was set.