

Charlton

South of the Thames in London on the Woolwich Road just east of Gallions Road was the Charlton Greyhound Stadium. Built and opened in 1928 by Thomas Murphy an amusement contractor the stadium became one of the many London tracks opening in the late twenties.

An amusement contractor was someone that had dealings with circus acts and there is a record of an extraordinary event concerning Murphy and his thirteen member Jazz Monkey band. The band escaped in 1926 after thieves let them loose and the thirteen monkeys made their way from Latimer Road to just about everywhere as they caused havoc in the Latimer Road underground station and many other parts of London, one even made it to Rugby. It sounds unbelievable but Murphy was clearly the type of person that defied convention as his memorial indicates.

Thomas Murphy only lived until 8th March 1932 at the reasonably young age of 39 leaving his estate and the stadium to his benefactors. His memorial features is quite remarkable in the fact that it has two life sized greyhounds asleep on it in the Charlton cemetery.



The extraordinary grave of Thomas Murphy commemorating an extraordinary life.

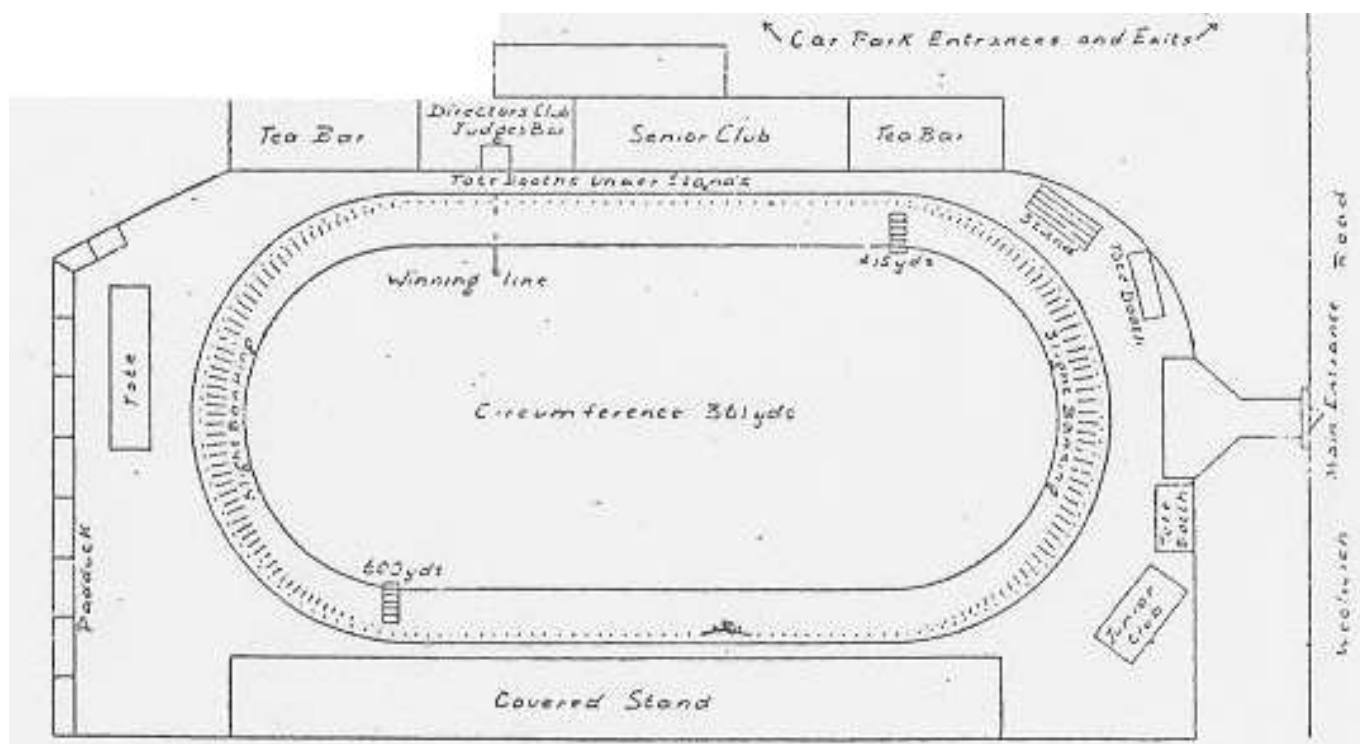
The shareholders of 'The Charlton Stadium Company Ltd' met as the company was liquidated and wound up in 1936 and then taken over by the 'The Charlton Stadium (1936) Ltd'. Under new ownership the stadium was completely rebuilt and new ventures were brought in such as boxing bouts that were organised as the company traded up until the start of the Second World War. Like so many tracks during wartime the racing was severely interrupted but business was booming by the end of the war. Totalisator turnover was in excess of £1 million every year after the war. These represent phenomenal figures based on today's figures.

During the war the brilliant Ballynennan Moon won the Charlton Spring Cup in 1943 which at the time was Charlton's second biggest event behind the Cloth of Gold which had begun in 1941 over the distance of 600 yards. The first Charlton hound to claim glory on the open race front was Satin Beauty trained by Durant who won the Coronation Stakes at Wembley in 1942.

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The circuit was a small 361 yard circumference with short straights favouring sprinters and not galloping types.

On June 5th 1946 Charlton Stadium (1936) Ltd was acquired by a company called London Stadiums Ltd, in addition the deal included the takeover of Wandsworth Stadium Ltd and Park Royal Stadium Ltd. The three companies that were taken over received shares in London Stadiums Ltd. The Sunbury kennels were located in a rural setting on Hamworth Road in Sunbury-on-Thames which was over 20 miles from Charlton stadium. The kennels set in fourteen acres had accommodation for 600 greyhounds with served the London Stadiums of Charlton, Park Royal and Wandsworth. In addition to the kennels it offered a fully equipped veterinary surgery including x-ray, ultra-violet and infra-red ray apparatus with the kennel staff and veterinary surgeon living on site. The self-contained exercising grounds included over three quarters of a mile of special track for road work.



Black Coffee provided the next major winner for Charlton when taking the Circuit in 1949 and several years later in 1957 the Irish St Leger champion Kilcaskin Kern flew straight to London and joined new trainer Tony Dennis qualifying for the Cloth of Gold final at Charlton with included three quick trials on three successive days. The decision was justified after the bitch duly won the title shortly afterwards. Kilcaskin Kern then successfully defended her title the following year.

In the fifties London Stadiums Ltd appointed R E C Parkes as Director of Racing to oversee their three tracks at Charlton, Park Royal & Wandsworth. The Racing Manager was A Lambert.

In 1959 Charles Boulton replaced A Lambert as Racing Manager before the track closed in September 1961 following difficulties. The Cloth of Gold was switched to sister track Wandsworth. The closure lasted four years before the company opened up again for racing again in 1966; K A Guy was brought in as the new Director of Racing. Guy a former Racing Manager at Wandsworth took up his new position in June 1966 following the tracks closure. Charles Boulton also returned as Racing Manager from the closed Wandsworth.

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Also arriving from Wandsworth were two major events, the Olympic and the Cloth of Gold, the latter of course was Charlton's own original race. Racing was on Tuesday and Fridays evenings at 7.45pm and trials were held on Wednesdays at 11.30am. The trainers at the track after reopening were the well-travelled Bill Cowell, J Hourigan, P.O'Shaughnessy, G Holyhead and Miss B Nattriss, most were ex-Wandsworth trainers.

Uncertainty for the future arrived in 1967 because hot on the heels of GRA's purchase of Clapton and Slough the company then bought Charlton to add to their portfolio. GRA had a separate company trading called the GRA property trust with the intention of buying tracks, to what end nobody knew yet. The official line was to improve the value of its property portfolio but in time this proved not to be the case.

Two more big events the 'Greenwich Cup' and 'Ben Truman Stakes' were held at Charlton following the demise of New Cross in 1969 and the final London Stadiums Ltd track Park Royal closed its doors the same year blaming the opening of betting shops for the outcome.

GRA Charlton finished racing on 28th September 1971 after more than forty years racing to make way for warehouses (0° 1' 44.061"E 51° 29' 19.442"N).

The track ran three major events 'The Olympic' which would return to the racing schedule in 1979 at Brighton and the 'Greenwich Cup' found a new home at Catford, but the Cloth of Gold was discontinued. The GRA were quick to advertise Catford to the Charlton regulars just four miles away but most stopped going racing following the loss of their track.

Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
415y	Jubilee Time	23.46	04.09.1943	
	Mighty Midget		04.06.1959	
	Carry On Oregon	23.36	1970+	
600y	Victory Welcome	34.56	22.05.1941	
	Crazy Paving	34.34	25.07.1959	
775y	My Bang Bang		26.07.1966	
	Mothel Duchess	45.93	1970+	
880y	Mothel Duchess	52.69	1970+	
379yH	Neds Bay	24.22	19.08.1966	
415yH	Still Moving	24.70	26.09.1941	
	Halfpenny King	24.20	1970+	
600yH	Brindle Regatta	35.58	30.07.1960	