

## Clacton

The Old Road ground, south of the Gas and Water works on Anchor Road was used by a local cricket club and from 1906 the football club shared the ground. The council landlords forced the ground to be rebuilt in 1935 shifting its position by just fifty yards or so in a westerly direction so that a new car park could be built.

The ground experienced considerable investment over the following years with a concrete grandstand, seating for 500 and a covered terrace all added after the war. A further low terraced cover had been installed by the time the greyhound racing arrived in 1967.

Spurred on by a peak in tourism, the council decided that the seaside town of Clacton-on-Sea needed greyhound racing and although it meant upsetting the football club the plan went ahead. A track was constructed around the outside of the existing football pitch used by Clacton FC but it also required the stands to be dismantled and the pitch to be shifted once again. The back straight (or far terracing) became inaccessible and a totalisator office was built on the end of the main stand, another alteration was the permanent addition of a portakabin used as the Greyhound Bar and Café. The changing face of the ground did not please the football supporters and when in 1974 the council gave six-month's notice to the club the outlook was bleak. Luckily the council subsequently offered a recurring one year licence afterwards.

Despite the fact that the town now had a greyhound track it had already started to find that the tourism boom had started to fizzle out, Clacton-on-Sea's popularity had reached its crescendo by 1970. The greyhound operation ticked over regardless for over a decade using an 'Outside Sumner' hare and running race distances of 240, 450 & 650 yards.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1984 the management headed by General Manager Mr J.Carolan and Racing Manager Mr J.Old joined the National Greyhound Racing Club (NGRC) bringing credibility to the operation but also increasing costs. The race distances were 213, 404, 570, 760 & 925 metres. The totalisator turnover from August to December was £31,159 but the track quickly switched back to independent status in 1985. Also in 1985 the council announced that they planned to sell the nine acre site to developers who wished to build a retail park.

The last football game took place on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1987 quickly followed by the final greyhound meeting one week later on 27<sup>th</sup> February. The site was demolished the same year and turned into the retail park as planned. The site today is the Halfords and Morrisons (1° 8' 46.967"E 51° 47' 24.555"N).