

Henlow

During the boom time of 1927 Henlow was one of many tracks appearing around Britain, this site at Henlow Camp was previously a straights track starting in 1923. Racing got underway on 1st August 1927 but the track was to remain independent for nearly fifty years.

The stadium is located on the Bedford Road, Lower Stondon in the area known as Henlow Camp named after the First World War RAF Henlow but is now a civilian settlement. In the early days of racing the hare was a drag lure driven by a lorry wheel and racing was watched from the Ickleford side of the track. There were issues in the early thirties when due to the popularity of Sunday racing the crowds blocked the main road when attempting to frequent the track. In 1935 the track licence changed hands from H.E Day to A.A Furr.

Henlow remained a popular flapping track and had a capacity of just 1,000 spectators after the Second World War following a switch of viewing facilities to the other side of the track still used today.

In the late fifties the Smith family took over the running of the track and in the late sixties racing was held on Monday and Friday evenings at 7.45pm over distances of 350, 530 and 880 yards. The circumference was 470 yards and the principal event was the Henlow Derby. There was an inside Sumner hare on an all sand track with seven bookmakers on site. Totalisator and photo finish had also been installed.

In 1974 Come on Wonder (full litter brother to Dolores Rocket) broke track records at West Ham and Crayford before being disqualified and going on to race on the independent circuits winning the Henlow Derby.

It was not until 1976 that the opportunity arose to race under NGRC permit rules, SW Smith was the General Manager and Dave Smith was the Racing Manager. Track changes resulted in the circumference being made considerably smaller, the 412 circumference hosted distances of 318, 484, 730 and 890 metres, the third and fourth bends retained a rather odd shape in the process. In 1990 an extra set of boxes was introduced bringing in distances of 277 and 680 metres. Facilities by now included kennels for 72 greyhounds, a car park for 400 vehicles, bar and refreshment rooms and two open stands.

In 1992 Patsy Cusack steered Pennys Best to the Greyhound Derby final and in January 1994 Jock McNaughton a Strathclyde man bought the track from the Smith family, McNaughton had previously been a permit trainer at Rye House and Henlow and as a boy had raced at Blantyre. McNaughton retained Dave Smith as Racing Manager and the pair experienced glory later that year when the small track beat a host of big names to win the National inter-Track title against Stainforth at Wembley.

The track changed hands again by soon after with Tony McDonnell buying the lease under the name of Henlow Racing Ltd. McDonnell would be General Manager and he bring in an ex trainer Keith Mellor as the Racing Manager. McDonnell continued to run the track but changes were made on the management front, Keith Woolsey became General Manager and Paul Mellor (son of Keith) Racing Manager.

In 2007 the Greyhound Derby trophy was lifted by Henlow connections, Westmead Lord from the Nick Savva kennel claimed the highest accolade. Just one year later businessman Bob Morton (known for owning Westmead Hawk) purchased the track from Tony McDonnell along with Kevin Boothby who took a half share. Many felt that the team of Morton and Boothby had saved the track from potential development.

Success was easy to come by for Henlow hounds over the next few years, many top race winners included Westmead Palace (Cesarewitch), Midway Skipper (two TV trophies), King Kane (TV Trophy) and White Soks Roks (Golden Jacket).

Derby champion Taylors Sky won the Henlow Derby in 2011 breaking the track record twice in an event that had grown in prestige. A year later Bob Morton's moved back to the Channel Islands leaving Kevin Boothby in sole control but with a strong team of Keith and Paul Mellor (Track & Racing Manager respectively) and Assistant RM Lorraine King a former open race trainer.

In October 2014 Rio Quattro equalled the 460m track record before winning the richest ever prize in greyhound racing in 2015 when the Daniel Riordan trained black dog picked up a remarkable £250,000 winner's purse. The famous greyhound Derby trophy had been picked up by Henlow connections for the second time in nine years.

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Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
250m	Night Trooper	15.25	23.11.1998	
	Gamble It	14.96	01.05.2000	
	Quivers Ace	14.92	07.06.2007	
277m	Second Option	16.65	04.04.2008	
	Minnies Tyrana	16.52	21.05.2009	
	Droopys Bocelli	16.26	17.12.2009	
318m	Ecins Best	19.01	08.09.1980	
	Chin No Nose	18.97	12.04.1991	
428m	Bush Standard	25.56	08.11.2012	
	Boher Chieftain	25.82	04.10.2012	
	Aero Babooshka	25.53	22.03.2015	
460m	Trade Congress	27.65	19.06.1998	
	Couriers Dream	27.43	18.09.1998	
	Fear Khan	27.28	25.09.2005	
	Westmead Osprey	27.25	16.09.2010	
	Westmead Osprey	27.21	07.10.2010	Henlow Derby heats
	Taylor's Sky	27.21	13.10.2011	Henlow Derby heats
	Taylor's Sky	27.08	20.10.2011	Henlow Derby semi-finals
	Mays King	27.05	01.06.2014	
Rio Quattro	=27.05	19.10.2014		
484m	Raheen Rudie	29.12	03.1986	
	Westmead Call	29.12	10.10.1986	Henlow Derby final
	Cannongrand	29.08	25.10.1989	
550m	Westmead Baron	33.35	18.05.2001	
	Little Honcho	33.30	25.04.2005	
	Westmead Liz	33.25	02.01.2006	
	Questhouse Ellie	33.10	24.04.2006	
	Westmead Bolt	33.07	20.10.2011	
	Airport Captain	32.94	21.07.2013	
	Jet Stream Sound	32.87	16.08.2015	
	Lobo	40.21	15.10.1999	
680m	Shebas Lass	42.87	29.10.1990	
	Snow Shoes	42.60	20.11.1991	
	Fortunate Man	42.51	20.11.1991	
	Snow Shoes	42.14	25.11.1991	
692m	Ard Beauty	42.31	23.04.2009	
	Dazzle Special	42.02	08.03.2010	
730m	Blue Shirt	45.50	18.06.1984	
	Tarnwood Snowdrop	45.22	1988+	
	Chicita Banana	44.96	13.06.1990	
842m	King Kane	52.66	24.08.2014	
870m	Tiptree Poker	55.31	27.10.1997	
	Betathan Pebbles	54.95	30.10.2005	
	Midway Skipper	54.93	13.08.2009	
890m	Cregagh Prince	57.29	1987+	
	Clydes Dolores	57.20	22.02.1988	
460mH	Bomber Bailey	28.20	23.07.2009	

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