

Leeds (Elland Road)

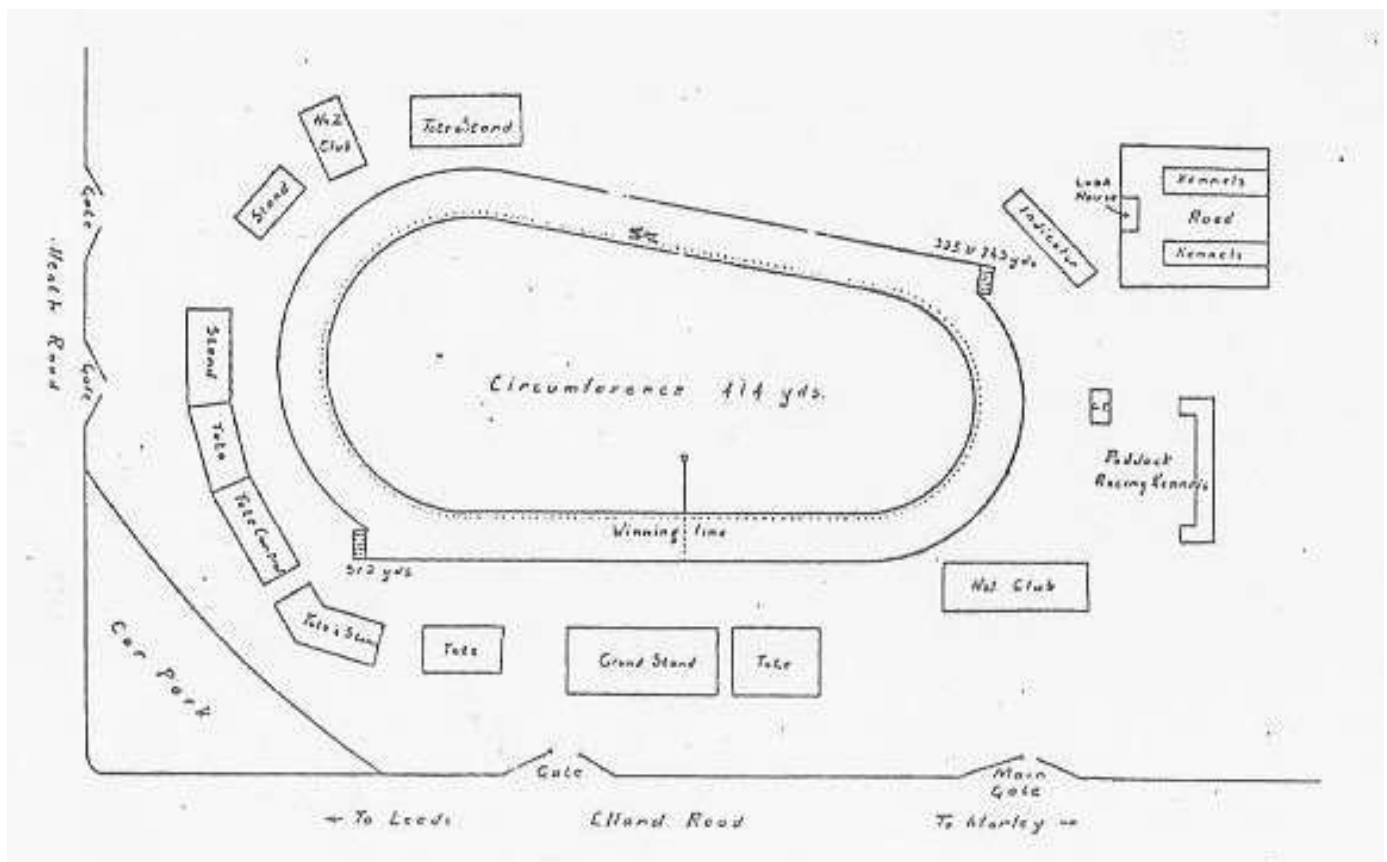
Elland Road Greyhound Stadium opened on Saturday 16th July 1927 featuring racing every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday evening and an additional Saturday matinee at 3pm. The stadium is not to be confused with the football ground or Fullerton Park. The Elland Road football stadium was on the north side of Elland Road whereas the greyhound stadium was on the south side.

Fullerton Park then arrived and was located directly on the west side of the Leeds United football ground and exactly opposite the Elland Road greyhound stadium. Although Fullerton Park initially ran greyhound meetings it was better known for speedway especially because the GRA stopped their greyhound operation and just one year after Fullerton Park opened and came to an agreement with the Leeds Greyhound Association Ltd in the form of a share in the company.

Races were soon taking place over 300, 500 and 750 yards on a circuit with a tight 400 yard circumference. Handicaps were popular with the local population who attended in significant numbers in these early days and race days would include Friday night and Wednesday afternoon slots. Resident kennels within the stadium grounds numbered 120 and exercise grounds were situated adjacent to the stadium.

The early thirties brought about issues with the tracks totalisator; it would have to be closed down on more than one occasion following questions over the legality of using the system. Despite this the track maintained a very healthy business and even introduced professional baseball before the start of the Second World War. Mark Barker the Racing Manager and a Director at Leeds United passed away in 1943 following illness and the greyhound racing was held sporadically during the duration.

Following the war business boomed with the totalisator turnover passing 31 million (£1,167,103 to be precise). The Leeds Greyhound Association Ltd was enjoying the windfall and spent considerable sums upgrading facilities. New distances of 325, 512 and 743 yards had also been introduced. The first major open race success that the track achieved was winning the St Mungo Cup in Scotland; Cheerful Comedy trained by Burgess was the greyhound in question.



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Harold Richards was brought in as Racing Manager in the early fifties before moving onto Midland Sports for a short time and then Gloucester. Two big competitions were inaugurated; the Ebor Stakes was introduced in 1951 followed by the Yorkshire Two Year Old Produce in 1958. Richards would be replaced by S R Clarke as the sixties arrived and then J Bell and V Holland around the same time that the Totalisators and Greyhound Holdings (T.G.H) purchased the track and added it to their portfolio.

Racing by now was held on Monday and Saturday evenings and the amenities included five buffet bars, five licenced bars and a restaurant. The hare was an Outside Sumner hare and the resident trainers were Tommy Brown, Joe Kelly, Alf Eggleston and Harrison.

Towards the end of the decade an exceptional greyhound trained by Joe Kelly lit up the track, the greyhound was Lisamote Precept that would go on to win the International and Lincoln in 1969 and the prestigious Scottish Derby the year before. A second Scottish derby cam the way of Kelly in 1970 after Brilane Clipper prevailed.

In 1971 Leeds provided a major shock by beating top tracks in their quest for winning the annual Duke of Edinburgh Cup, they reached the final and defeated Clapton to lift the trophy. Another Racing Manager Harry Bridge had arrived by the time Ladbrokes acquired the Totalisators and Greyhound Holdings (T.G.H) group which included the tracks at Brough Park, Crayford & Bexleyheath, Leeds, Gosforth, Willenhall and Monmore. They also persuaded Arthur Aldridge to leave GRA and take over as racing director.

A very successful period of racing followed in regard to the Leeds name appearing on major trophy winners lists. The list included multi winners Honeygar Kid and Jon Barrie (both trained by Ray Andrews). However amidst the glory was the disappointing closure of the track kennels in 1979, this forced Tommy Brown and Jim Brennan (better known for his spell at Sheffield) to retire and Joe Kelly switched to Owlerton after twelve years and more than 2,500 winners. Contracted trainers replacing them were Pete Beaumont, Jim Brown and the previously mentioned Ray Andrews who would soon move to Belle Vue.

Tim Hale and Derek Bowman replaced Harry Bridge on 1st January 1981 and would only oversee the action for one year because Ladbrokes closed their second track within two years as Leeds followed Willenhall.

The last meeting was held on 15th March 1982 with the last ever winner being Mike Supreme (1° 34' 30.467"W 53° 46' 30.218"N).

Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
325y	Celtic Chief	18.16	17.03.1945	
	Hepicoleum	17.95	28.06.1947	
500y	Flinstone	28.01	20.06.1964	
	Fly Dazzler	27.92	1972+	
	Princess Quail	27.92	1972+	
512y	Chatterton	29.04	1947+	
	Cheerful Comedy	28.75	25.10.1947	
650y	Marvellous City	37.40	17.05.1965	
	Elland Rumba	37.10	1970+	
	Passing Look	36.98	1968+	
	Shady Pagoda	36.85	1972+	
700y	Western Stream	??	1954+	
	The Cherry Tree	40.36	23.06.1960	
	Passing Look	40.17	1968+	
	Gleneagle Comedy	40.16	1972+	
743y	All Out	44.02	1947+	
	Paddy the Gag	43.84	10.11.1948	
880y	Claudyne		23.05.1966	
	Miss Thorn	51.95	1970+	
500yH	High St Boy	28.95	1970+	
512yH	Kyle Champion	30.53	02.06.1945	

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