

## Long Eaton

Long Eaton is a town situated almost exactly halfway between Derby and Nottingham which has resulted in the stadium in particular coming under the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire county jurisdiction over time. This area was one of the most active in terms of greyhound tracks and the Long Eaton circuit was one of the earliest in the region.

On the east side of the railway line and west of where Grange School stands was the location of the track built on a recreation ground that was used for cricket, football and even cycling, there was also tennis courts and a bowling green. The ground was demolished in 1928 as work began on a new stadium. Constructed by F Perks and son the stadium opened under NGRC rules on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1928 with the first race being over 525 yards which was won by Lady Jazz, a 50-1 shot in a time of 31.70sec.

The track was situated on Station Road with one small covered main stand on the home straight and six slightly smaller covered stands going anti-clockwise from the fourth bend to the back straight. Speedway arrived one year later in 1929 with a cinder track being laid down. There was a considerable amount of local housing in the immediate vicinity with the school mentioned earlier being built around the same time next door.

The stadium continued to race under NGRC rules right up to 1948 when a fire devastated the main stand and caused major damage to some of the other stands. The 10,000 capacity stadium owned by Long Eaton Stadium Ltd suddenly had to invest a lot of their hard earned income on repairs. The totalisator turnover for the two previous years had been excellent with £638,438 staked in 1946 decreasing slightly to £620,780 the following year.

The track then remained unaffiliated to any governing body for the majority of its existence barring tow short spells in later years. During the independent days the racing was held on Monday and Friday nights at 7.30pm. The track circumference was 460 yards with distances of 300, 510, 525 & 760 yards.

Long Eaton continued to offer decent facilities with two glass fronted stands, two bars and two refreshment rooms making it one of the better flapping tracks in England. The premier race at the track was The Charity Trophy run in June and then replaced by the Long Eaton Derby over 485 metres some years later. It was described as a good grass galloping track and had a watering system installed. Additionally there were six track bookmakers and kennels for 56 greyhounds.

A huge boost for the track arrived in 1978 following the purchase of the track by Northern Sports adding to their portfolio of Ramsgate and Doncaster. Oxford Stadium had also been bought during 1978 by the company that came under the parent company Hawkins of Harrow. The Managing Director David Hawkins ploughed a huge amount of money into Ramsgate and later Oxford as both tracks thrived. As a result Long Eaton and Doncaster did not share the same success with much smaller amounts spent on them. NGRC rules were introduced again only until January 1980. Hawkins decided to lease the track to a Mr Keith Barber a big name in stock car racing and a man that had leased Long Eaton previously.

When Hawkins of Harrow ran in to financial difficulties in the early nineties Northern Sports suffered and despite the fact that they were a profitable subsidiary of the parent company the receivers took control of Northern Sports in 1995. Long Eaton was leased to a new promotion and NGRC rules were attempted again for a very short period until 1998 when the stadium was burnt down, believed to be the actions of vandals but not proved. The stadium subsequently became derelict and remained so for twelve years upsetting the local residents. In June 2010 the site was demolished and cleared with housing planned.

Today the site is a literal warren of houses comprising two main streets of Speedway Close and Circuit Drive.

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### Selected Tote Returns

<b>Year</b>	<b>Turnover £</b>
1941	171,608
1942	231,264
1943	156,486
1944	222,876
1945	301,800
1946	638,438
1947	620,780
1948	348,566
1949	179,143
1950	89,730
1952	69,167
1953	80,950
1954	72,000