

## Perry Barr (Aldridge Road)

Perry Barr had been without greyhound racing since 1984 following the surprise sale of the Walsall Road stadium by Ladbrokes but during 1990 negotiations started to re-introduce the sport.

It could not be on the site of the former stadium because that had been demolished and built on but just across the Walsall road to the east was the Alexander Sports Ground that was situated on Aldridge Road. The Sports ground had been constructed way back in 1929, bizarrely enough just one year after the original Perry Barr stadium had opened.

The stadium was no longer used for athletics because the new Alexander Stadium in Perry Park served this purpose so when Maurice Buckland a former trainer head of a consortium called the Perry Barr Greyhound Racing Club suggested the idea of greyhound racing at the venue it was given planning permission.

The new build was completed quickly and on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1990 Birmingham had a second track in action (1° 53' 55.091"W 52° 31' 10.817"N). A host of trainers found attachments at the track over the following years; the great Geoff DeMulder guided Fearless Mustang to the Derby final as a Perry Barr trainer during the first Derby tilt for the new track.

The circumference of the track is 435 metres and the circuit had ample width with race distances of 275, 460, 500, 660, 710 and 895 metres. An Outside Sumner hare was used on Tuesday and Thursday race nights overseen by Racing Manager Gary Woodward. There were kennels for 82 hounds on site.

The former trainer from the previous Perry Barr Frank Baldwin took over as Racing Manager in 1991 and Zap won the Cesarewitch for Alan Honeyfield in 1992. Michael Bacon and Henry Tasker both enjoyed success whilst attached to Perry Barr.

Another Perry Barr hound made the Derby final in 1995, this time it was Heres Seanie trained by Pat Ryan that gave Perry Barr a remarkable start during their fledgling years, another change of Racing Manager saw Ian Hillis take over. Another Cesarewitch victory was claimed in 1998 by Fourth Ace (Barry Wileman and other notable wins included a Juvenile and Pall Mall.

The track was ticking along nicely with Maurice Buckland as General Manager, yet another Racing Manager Tim Hale took over. They even hosted their first big event from 1997-2002, following the closure of Hackney the Guineas was transferred to the Midlands venue before moving on to Nottingham.

Looking to put a halt on their shrinking empire the GRA under their parent company Wembley plc had plans to build a track in Liverpool but before this they took over the Perry Barr stadium. In May of that year a £4.2 million takeover was agreed with Perry Barr Greyhound Racing Club. Stephen Rea and Gary Woodward were brought in as the General and Racing Manager's. After initial investment into the stadium the GRA brought the former classic race the Scurry Cup to the track following the closure of Catford. The prize money for the event took a serious hit during the transfer of the competition.

The stadium was fortunate to host two trainers championships in 2005 and 2012 and in between the Scurry was moved to sister track Belle Vue and the rekindled Birmingham Cup was discontinued in 2009 leaving Perry Barr with no major event to boast about.

The track today uses an outside Swaffham hare and is a regular on the BAGS service overseen by Racing Manager Martin Seal. GRA under new parent company Risk Capital ran into financial difficulties and unpaid loans resulted in NAMA (Ireland's National Asset Management Agency) taking control of the GRA. In 2013 a long term lease was secured with NAMA by a management team led by GRA Managing Director Clive Feltham to run the track.

Thoughts returned to racing in 2014, July brought a major trophy after Mileheight Alba lifted the William Hill Classic; trainer Pat Rosney represented Perry Barr during this period of 2014.

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### Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes	
275m	Carrigeen Zig	=16.66	30.04.1991		
	Blissful Piper	16.61	04.06.1991		
	Motown Way	16.61	29.06.1991		
	Ancient Heart	16.40	2002+		
	Meadowbank Paolo	16.34	05.10.2003		
	Pennys Saga	16.29	01.07.2004		
	Giglis Roanokee	16.24	22.07.2004		
	Giglis Roanokee	16.22	05.08.2004		
	Ningbo Jack	16.05	09.08.2005		
	Laser Beam	16.06	02.08.2005	Scurry Gold Cup Final	
	Roxholme Freddie	16.04	18.08.2006		
	Horseshoe Ping	15.81	17.05.2007	Scurry Gold Cup Heats	
	460m	Torbal Ash	27.97	13.11.1990	
		Velvet Spark	27.67	01.08.1994	
480m	Derbay Flyer	28.80	25.09.1999		
	Burberry Boy	28.45	02.04.2003	Birmingham Cup semi-finals	
	Westview Lad	28.31	17.07.2004		
	Bat On	28.18	13.04.2006		
	Raging Jack	28.13	28.12.2006		
	Zigzag Dutchman	28.13	23.01.2007		
	Blonde Dino	28.07	19.06.2008		
	Sawpit Sensation	28.07	15.12.2011		
	Taylors Sky	28.07	21.03.2012		
	Judicial Review	27.96	31.07.2015		
	500m	Westmead Spirit	30.03	10.09.1991	
Toms Lodge		29.94	25.09.1993		
660m	Crown Lodge	41.17	14.11.1991		
	Lavally Pete	40.90	01.02.1999		
	Cuba	40.88	27.10.2001		
	Drumskea Beauty	40.69	05.10.2003		
	Drum Shane Boy	40.54	10.06.2004		
	Skipping Lady	40.44	01.07.2004		
	Dark Charm	40.16	22.07.2004		
	Jack Spark	39.98	09.04.2005		
	Head Iton Paddy	39.93	31.07.2008		
	Ballymac Sandra	39.88	03.08.2012		
	Droopys Lucinda	39.84	22.05.2015		
	Newinn This Way	39.55	31.07.2015		
	710m	Dark Luke	44.48	14.50.1991	
Head For Glory		44.13	14.10.1999		
Double Take		43.21	05.10.2003		
Swift Jade		43.01	23.01.2007		
Swift Ninja		42.97	24.01.2008		
Chaotic Doty		42.94	01.05.2015		
895m	Shropshire Lass	57.19	06.07.1991		
	Spewood Wizard	56.97	04.09.2000		
915m	Head Iton Jordan	56.75	09.08.2007		
480mH	Trojan Flight	28.91	24.03.2005		
	Druids Mickey Jo	28.88	02.08.2005		
	Taipan	28.75	23.01.2007		
660mH	Olives Champ	41.22	26.03.1991		

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