

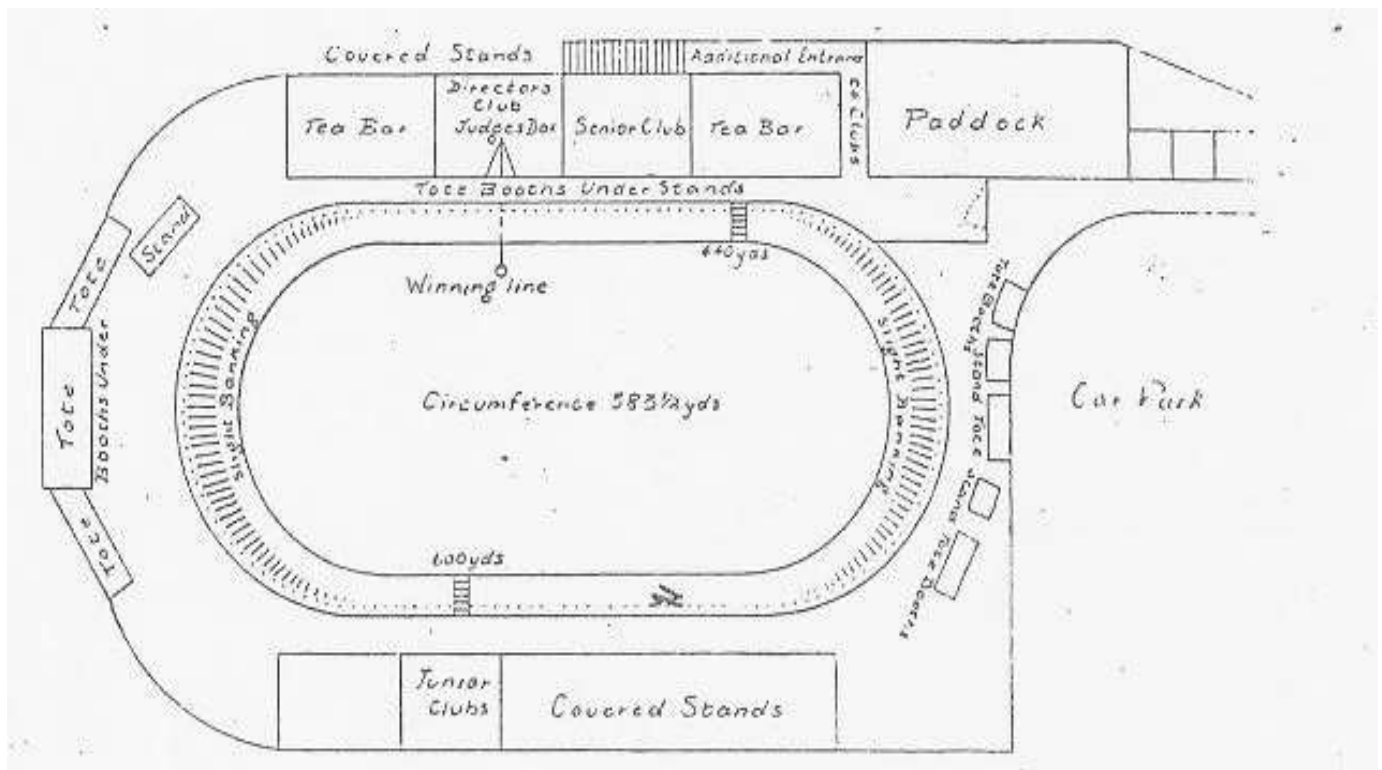
Wandsworth

In April 1933 the Wandsworth Stadium that could accommodate 20,000 spectators opened to greyhound racing opened with style as the HM Scots Guards band played for the public. The site chosen was an area of unused land south of the Wandsworth reservoir between Garratt Lane (formerly South Street) and Buckhold Road. Just to the south was King Georges Park offering the public a nursery, tennis courts, bowls green, swimming and paddling pools. This tranquil setting was unfortunately ruined by an unsightly storm relief sewage aqueduct that ran straight through the middle.

Wandsworth stadium cost £100,000 to build, it was hailed as a "triumphant achievement for everybody concerned" when it opened in April that year. The local Borough News reported that a former Chelsea player Alex Jackson had bought a greyhound called Jovial Honey and was keen for the Wandsworth management to consider allowing football to be played at the stadium. The stadium was reputed to have created dozens of jobs for Wandsworth residents during a difficult time that was known as the Great Depression.

Either side of the track were two very large covered stands that could seat 7,000 people each and offered fine views of the racing. Unfortunately the first major headline to hit the track was in 1936 when rival gangs fought a battle in front of thousands of witnesses and one man was murdered after being stabbed to death.

The stadium however soon returned to normal trading and in 1938 introduced the Eclipse which would become a prominent competition in the racing calendar. War soon arrived and disrupted regular racing but the regulars were given a treat in August 1942 when the greatest wartime greyhound of them all Ballynennan Moon appeared at the track. He duly broke the track record over 440 yards. One year earlier Wandsworth had experienced major open race success for the first time when the Miss D Thomas trained Heavy damages won the Guineas at Park Royal.



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During the summer of 1946 greyhound racing experienced an extraordinary high with phenomenal attendances and it was during this period that a company called London Stadiums Ltd brokered a deal to takeover Wandsworth Stadium Ltd, Park Royal Stadium Ltd and Charlton Stadium (1936) Ltd. The three companies that were taken over received shares in London Stadiums Ltd.

The Sunbury kennels were located in a rural setting on Hamworth Road in Sunbury-on-Thames which was 11 miles from Wandsworth stadium. The kennels set in fourteen acres had accommodation for 600 greyhounds with served the London Stadiums of Charlton, Park Royal and Wandsworth. In addition to the kennels it offered a fully equipped veterinary surgery including x-ray, ultra-violet and infra-red ray apparatus with the kennel staff and veterinary surgeon living on site. The self-contained exercising grounds included over three quarters of a mile of special track for road work.

Wandsworth transported their racing hounds from the track kennels to the race track by using a 'Scammell Mechanical Horse' that pulled a trailer of no less than 56 greyhounds eager for racing and waiting in their individual kennels as they approached the track.

In 1947 a greyhound called Motts Regret reached the Wandsworth Spring Stakes where he finished second to Balmaha. This attracted the attention of Fred Trevillion who would rename him Trevs Perfection. The same year Rowley won the Hunt Cup for Wandsworth trainer O'Shaughnessy. Also in 1947 another major competition was introduced called the Olympic, this race paired with the Eclipse would result in many of the sport's top hounds frequenting the track. (The only home winner of the Olympic would be Even Gait in 1956).

The Director of Racing for all of the London Stadiums Ltd tracks was R E C Parkes and Racing Manager at Wandsworth was K A Guy. It is also interesting to note that Bill Francis was an Assistant Racing Manager here in the late fifties.

Coursing still had very strong links with track racing to the degree that there was a competition called the 'London tracks coursing cup' confined to London track greyhounds in 1953. The event held near Cambridge went to Must Venture trained by Bill Cowell at Wandsworth.

In 1955 Wandsworth hurdle grader Moyshna Queen starred alongside Frankie Howerd in a film called Jumping For Joy. The bitch was called Lindy Lou in the film.

In 1961 Charles Boulton replaced K A Guy as Racing Manager and his assistant was John Rowe (father of Bob), John would soon become the Leicester Racing Manager. One year later Charlton closed temporarily following difficulties and the Cloth of Gold was switched to sister track Wandsworth. Trainers at the track in 1965 were Hourigan, Natriss, O'Shaughnessy, Holyhead and Bill Cowell.

Wandsworth in London closed on the 4th June 1966 stating that it could not compete with big local tracks, West Ham, Walthamstow, Wembley and White City but the real reason was of course the price received in selling the stadium and land for re-development. The American style Arndale Centres had first been introduced to the UK in 1961 and the pedestrianized mall type centre was constructed in Wandsworth in quick time. The centre still exists today but is called the Southside shopping centre (0° 11' 37.717"W 51° 27' 14.557"N).

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Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
400y	Johnny Handicraft	23.36	23.07.1960	
440y	Ballynennan Moon	25.27	02.08.1942	
	Mondays News	25.12	08.05.1948	
	Town Prince	25.22	01.05.1958	
600y	Dante II	34.57	19.07.1947	Olympic Final
	Fly Red II	34.98	16.08.1958	
650y	Carols Champion	38.00	1963+	
	Vals Parachute	37.72	24.07.1965	
825y	Arena Belle	48.67	1963+	
	Blue Hill Miss	48.62	07.08.1965	
440yH	Keep a Trump	26.57	16.08.1941	
	Prince Fodda	25.83	18.05.1964	
600yH	Fodda Champion	35.81	05.06.1958	
650yH	Fairfield Surprise	39.04	28.09.1963	