

Castleford (Whitwood)

In April 1939 William Burrows and John Cain applied for a betting licence for greyhound racing (see article below). The stadium situated north of Altofts Lane, Whitwood would be known locally as Whitwood but clearly the plan to accommodate £2,500 spectators had been a little hopeful because in 1947 the stadium was described as only being able to hold 1,000.

In the sixties the social club was popular being able to seat 400 people which resulted in shows being set up on non-race days for the public. A circumference of 400 yards meant that distances of 394 and 504 yards were used on the race days of Tuesday and Saturday.

The stadium remained independent for 31 years and also hosted whippets before closing in 1970. It reopened however and from June 1979 to June 1980 speedway was also held at the track, the team was called the Castleford Kings.

In 1980 the track was described as an all sand, D shaped circuit running mainly handicaps, distances were 280, 370, 485 and 660 metres. Facilities included two bars and a tea room; eleven bookmakers were on site betting on Wednesday and Friday evenings at 7.30pm. Trials were on Sundays and the hare was an inside Sumner.

Whitwood joined the National Greyhound Racing Club (NGRC) on 7th October 1985 but would only stay affiliated to them for a short period of time. Generally when independent tracks joined the NGRC costs would increase forcing some to revert to their former status.

One moment to savour whilst operating as a fully licenced track was the appearance of the one and only Scurlogue Champ on November 22nd 1985. He smashed the track record over 830 metres, winning by 18 lengths in 54.45sec and priced 1-4.

During 1986 trainer Moffat won the Western Two Year Old Produce Stakes with Fulwood Star ensuring the name Whitwood would forever remain in the history of licenced records.

Independent again by 1987 owners John and Carol Hyde changed the track dimensions to 275, 460, 650 and 835 metres with a circumference of 400 metres. The main competitions held at the track were the Whitwood Derby, Whitwood St Leger and Whitwood Rose bowl.

The last meeting was held in February 2001 ending a 62 year association with greyhound racing. The site today forms a small part of the New Wheatsheaf and was to be found stretching to part of the Whitwood golf course.

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ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF THE WEST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE.

BETTING & LOTTERIES ACT, 1934

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE
FOR A FUTURE TRACK UNDER SECTION 6 OF THE
BETTING AND LOTTERIES ACT, 1934.

To the County Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire,
To the Chief Constable of the West Riding of York-
shire, and
To the Castleford Urban District Council.

WE, WILLIAM BURROWS of 46 West Street, Castleford in the County of York and JOHN THOMAS CAIN of 33 Saville Road Castleford aforesaid being the occupiers of a proposed Track situate on the North side of Altofts Lane Whitwood in the Urban District of Castleford in the said Administrative County (being fields numbers 153 and 158 on the Ordnance Survey Map 1935 Edition) DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE of intention to apply on the 20th day of APRIL 1939 for a licence to be granted to us authorising the provision of betting facilities on the said Track in connection with the following kind of sporting events namely Dog Racing. The said Track will have one entrance for pedestrians on the South side of the said Track and two separate exits for pedestrians on the South side of the said Track leading into Altofts Lane aforesaid. The said Track will have a car park on the West side of the said Track with one entrance for cars on the South side from Altofts Lane aforesaid and a separate exit for cars into Altofts Lane at the South side. Accommodation will be provided for 2,500 spectators as to 500 on a proposed stand and as to 2,000 round the ground.

Dated this 18th day of February 1939.

WILLIAM BURROWS.

J. T. CAIN.

Image courtesy of Graham Yates

Selected Totalisator Turnover

Year	Turnover £
1939	6,442
1941	15,680
1942	15,466
1943	13,716
1944	11,983
1945	20,124
1946	26,959
1947	14,509