

Halifax

Halifax RLFC purchased four acres of land from a local farmer in 1878 for the sum of £3,000. By 1886 the land had been converted into a new multi-purpose sports ground and rugby stadium known as Thrum Hall. In addition to the rugby stadium there was a cricket pitch and bowling greens.

Thrum Hall would host some significant rugby matches over the next four decades including a rugby league Challenge Cup final.

In 1928 a speedway dirt track was constructed around the cricket pitch and hosted the Halifax Speedway team until 1930. Greyhounds replaced the speedway the following year and the greyhound track was most unusual taking the form of a D shape despite the fact that it surrounded a cricket pitch.

So on 5th November 1931 the hounds charged around the track on Spring Hall Lane for the first time, the first runner past the winning line was a 4-1 shot called Unconscious. The first distances included 300, 480 and 500 yards (mainly handicaps) and the Manager Director was H.Wood. The track after the war was known as the New Halifax Greyhound Stadium and could accommodate somewhere between 3,000 to 5,000 spectators during Monday and Thursday racing.

The track remained independent for 44 years before the move to become affiliated with the NGRC. Facilities during this period included a licenced bar and snack bar, racing was held on Monday and Friday evenings at 7.30pm and trial sessions took place on Sunday mornings. The track was grass and race distances of 352 and 490 yards (mainly handicaps) were the featured events.

The change to NGRC racing arrived in 1975 under the new permit scheme at the time, the scheme enabled smaller tracks to race under rules at reduced costs scenario. No less than six new tracks joined the NGRC permit scheme in 1975 and Halifax owners Jack Wardman and Owlerton director Mr J Carter jumped at the chance to bring some credibility to the venue. Wardman introduced a festival of racing the same year which attracted some of the North's best dogs.

Just one year later a syndicate that included Jon Carter and Barbara Fearn wife of NGRC steward Alan Fearn purchased the track and in 1978 another change of ownership took place. David Collins a local businessman was the latest buyer and quickly got to work installing photo finish and ray timing for the first time as well as building a new clubhouse for the patrons. Despite all of this good work from Collins the track ceased to run under NGRC rules in 1979.

Halifax RLFC sold Thrum Hall for £1.5 million to Asda in 1998 which stands in place of the entire sports grounds today.