

Newcastle (White City)

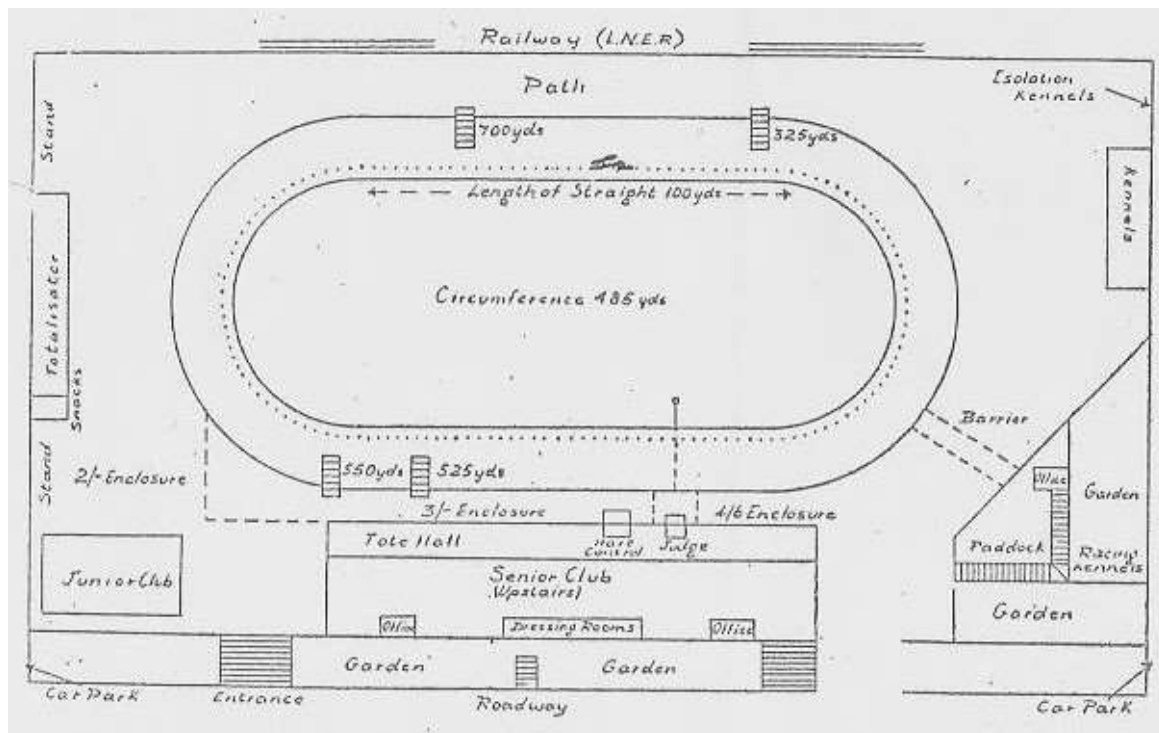
The White City stadium in Newcastle was just south of the Tyne at the end of the Scotswood Bridge, there was a spare plot of land where the stadium could just about squeeze into between the river and the Redheugh Branch railway line. It was the first track to open in Newcastle and the ever present GRA had a financial interest in the venture.

The stadium was opened by the Tyneside Sports Stadium Ltd Company on the 26th May 1928 and the track had a circumference of 485 yards. Rival track Brough Park would open just 28 days later whilst Gosforth did not appear until 1932 and Gateshead 1937.

There were two car parks situated on either side of the stadium off the Chain Bridge Road with the entrance sporting some picturesque gardens. The main stand on the home straight featured a 300 feet wide maple Senior Club upstairs with three bar lounges and glass fronted viewing above the tote hall and offices. The senior club could be accessed from the 3 shillings and 4 shillings 6 pence enclosures with an annual subscription of 2 shillings 6 pence.

On the fourth bend there was a junior club within the two shillings enclosure that also included two stands, totalisator and snack bar. The paddock and racing kennels were situated near the first bend with the resident and isolation kennels set further back on the second bend.

It was described as a very good galloping track with long 100 yard straights and easy bends with a 550 yard distance in one circuit behind an 'Inside Summer'. By 1940 the distances were established as 325, 525, 550 and 700 yards and were verified with a racecard notice by the NGRC's official measurer G E Marshall. As the war approached business remained steady, the General Manager was JA Melville and the Racing Manager T Greggs.



Track layout in 1947.

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Despite superb facilities and good business after the war problems arose, the totalisator turnover was a healthy £1,106,242 in 1946 at its peak, lowering to £606,005 one year later. The problems came about because of the controversial government taxation of greyhound racing towards the end of the forties. It was in 1951 that Managing Director Mr Whatley reported that tote receipts were £75,000 of which £47,000 was taken out by taxation. The government policy continued to make matters difficult for greyhound racing with close scrutiny and restrictions of gambling still considered in the interests of the general public.

The net result for White City Newcastle was the closure of the track on 26th May 1951, exactly 23 years after it opened. New castle lost its first track which became a depot and then eventually industrial units.

The site today is the industrial units that can be found on Toll Bridge Road (1° 41' 33.946"W 54° 57' 53.743"N).