

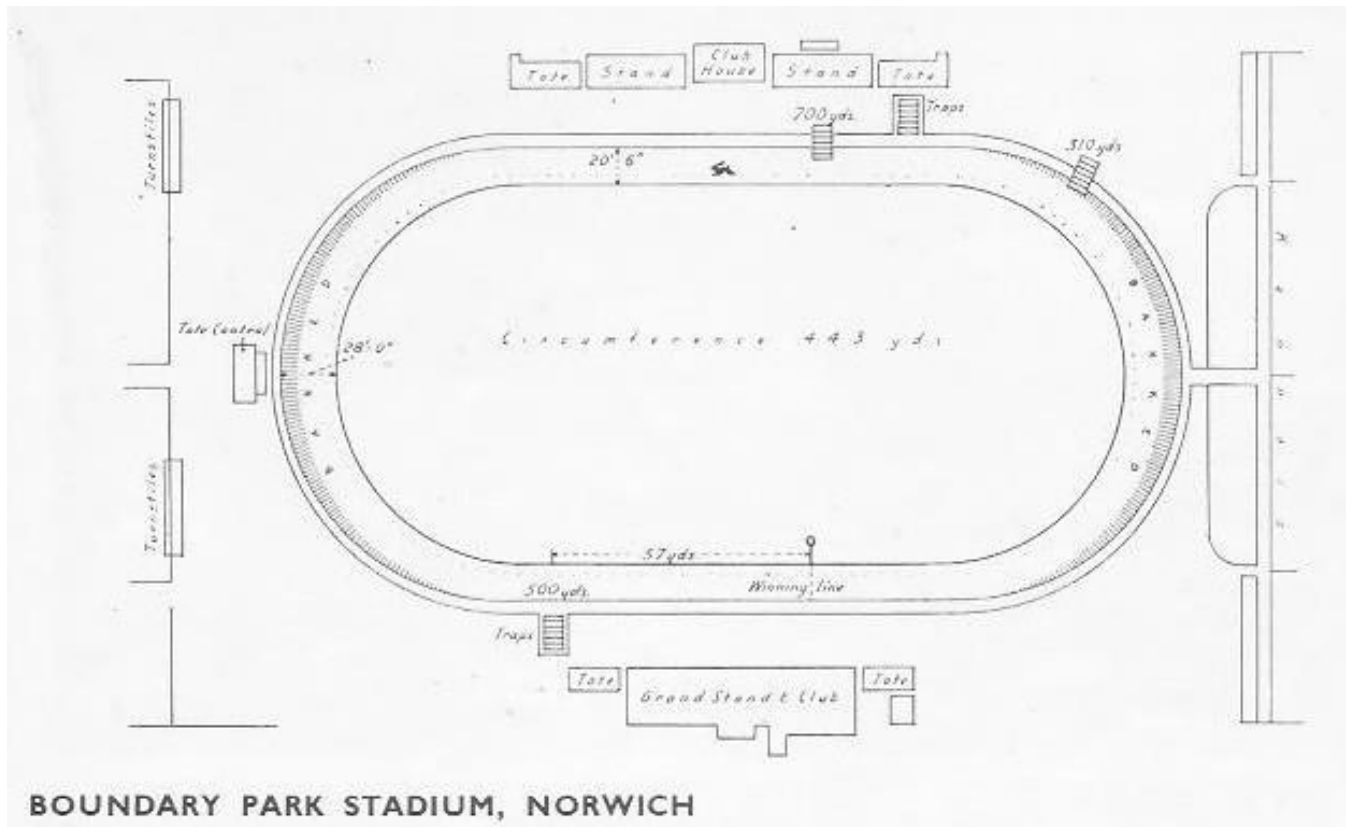
Norwich (Boundary Park)

During 1932 the city of Norwich was to experience the coming of two greyhound tracks, the first to open was a track called The Firs on the west side of where the Holt Road meets the Cromer Road in the Hellesdon area despite its address being noted as Aylsham Road. The stadium would be a popular speedway venue and the opening greyhound meeting took place on 30th July at which stage rival track stage Boundary Park was well on the way to be completed. The Firs site was previously a field and probably received its name from being built next to Firs House. Just over two months later on the 6th October Boundary Park opened off Boundary Road. If you walked south down the Cromer Road from the Firs you would reach the junction with Boundary Road and a scattering of houses. The two tracks were within five minutes walking distance from each other but it did not seem to bother the owners of either track.

Boundary Park under National Greyhounds Norwich Ltd would race every Monday, Wednesday & Saturday and the Firs operated by Eastern Speedways would race the same nights in addition to a Thursday as well. Billed as the 'wonder stadium' Boundary Park took the city of Norwich by storm, the cost of the build had been over £25,000 with the opening night offering seven races over various distances. The first race was at 7.45pm, admission was either in the 2 shillings 6 pence enclosure or 1 shilling enclosure. There was covered accommodation for over 4,000 people, an all-electric totalisator with the entire furnishing of the stadium carried out by the Curl Brothers Ltd of Norwich.

The main grandstand was on the home straight with two smaller stands, a club house and two tote buildings all opposite on the back straight. Between the first two bends was an extremely uniformed kennel area with 160 kennels and a large paddocks, the turnstiles and large totalisator indicator were located between the third and fourth bends.

The following year in 1933 a third track sprouted up in the Thorpe area next to the River Yare, this was quite a weird and wonderful track in the sense that it was a small enterprise built on a flood plain. As a result during winter the fields known as Careys Meadow were sometime manually flooded to form an ice rink, the only recorded case of a greyhound track doubling as an ice rink! The first meeting was on 17th June 1933. With three greyhound tracks and as a result of the stiff competition it was inevitable that something had to give and that was the Firs which closed to greyhound racing in 1935.



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The Second World War was fast approaching but bizarrely this did not stop Norwich from then gaining another track, the large City stadium at Sprowston Road opened for business on 25th July meaning that there were once again three tracks serving the Norwich public with racing. This soon changed as Thorpe held its last ever meeting on 2nd September the same year.

There is not much information on the Norwich tracks during and after the war but it is clear that there was not too much success in terms of open racing. The Norwich trainers clearly did not travel around much with most of the big tracks and therefore competitions out of reach for the Norwich connections. One thing is for sure and that is that at least the public experienced the sight of one of the best greyhounds in the country in 1946 & 1947 and that greyhound was Rimmells Black. The Stanley Biss trained black dog travelled to Norwich and duly broke the track record during April 1946. Also after the war improvements were made to the amenities including new track lighting, an 'Inside Sumner' hare and ray timing being installed. The circumference was 443 yards with the characteristics described as an average size racecourse with short straights and easy bends. Most suitable for the railer but there were no kennel fees due to the fact that there was no prize money on offer. Arthur Rising was the Racing Manager for over a decade until the track closed.

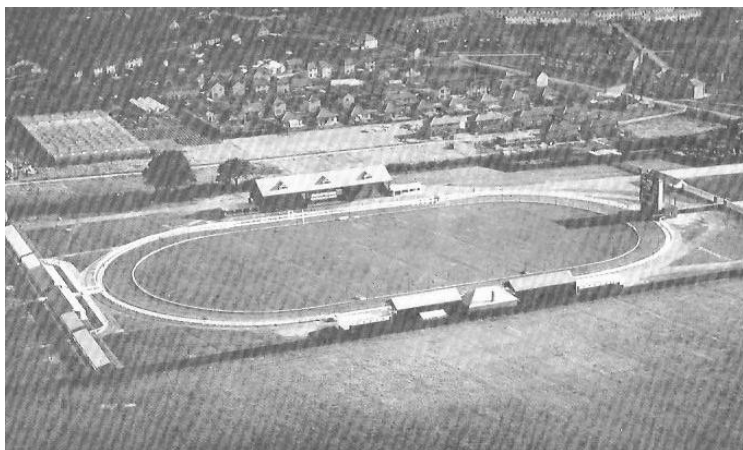
There was a nice story surrounding a grader called Elizabeth Lizz who set a new record as the oldest debutant at a licensed track when winning a race aged four years, three months old in 1947. She belonged to a litter that included four others who reached the Western Two-Year Old Produce Final.

In 1962 the track ceased to trade after being sold as a redevelopment site for the Eastern Electric Company, the last meeting took place on 1st December 1962. The site today is the huge B&Q store found between Overbury Road and Coronation Road (1° 16' 13.191"E 52° 39' 24.749"N).

Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
280y	Vexatious	16.19	23.04.1936	
300y	Boundary Albert	17.17	29.07.1945	
500y	Rimmells Black	28.40	03.04.1946	
500y scratch	Fakenham Eagle	28.84	18.06.1945	
	Cancy Sweeper	28.72	22.12.1945	
723y	True Pal	43.11	18.03.1933	

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



Aerial view of Boundary Park.