

## Nottingham (White City)

Several plots of land opposite the Nottingham Corporation Sewage Works pumping station and next door to a football ground in Trent Lane were identified and acquired as a perfect site for a speedway and greyhound stadium. Speedway arrived first in 1928 when the Nottingham Tornado Motorcycle Club put in a grass track but plans for greyhound racing had been discussed as early 1927 and the GRA ensured they had a financial interest in the stadium.

In 1929 a dirt track was laid down by the Olympic Speedway Ltd Nottingham over the grass track and was called the Olympic Grounds but speedway came to an end during the 1931 season. However when White City (Nottingham) Ltd finally constructed a greyhound circuit in 1933 the speedway returned until it finally ceased at the outbreak of the war. Why the stadium was called White City is not known, it has been attributed to Frank Parker who brought back the speedway in 1933 but this is unconfirmed.

Apart from the 457 yard circumference greyhound track itself a main double decker grandstand was built on the home straight featuring club and tote facilities. There were two more additional stands to the left and right of the main grandstand and as the patrons entered the stadium from the new car park they would pass the resting kennels and to the left of these (behind the fourth bend) there were another 200 centrally heated brick resident stadium kennels.

On Saturday June 24<sup>th</sup> 1933 the Duchess of Portland opened the stadium under NGRC rules of racing in the presence of 1500 people. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Nottingham were also present during the opening night in which all proceeds were donated to the Harlow Wood Hospital and St Dunstan's Home. Seven races over 502 yards were held with the first ever winner being the 5-2 shot Dragwell Queen trained by McDougall in a time of 31.31. The fastest time of the night went to the Burke trained Well Out in a time of 29.24 sec. McDougall scored three winners and Burke had two successes along with another trainer Bridgwood.

Within a couple of months a busy schedule of racing was held on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday nights at 7.45pm. After the war the speedway track was concreted over and used as a parade area for the greyhounds as business boomed. Totalisator turnover in 1946 was £1,549,732. The principal event was the St Dunstan's Trophy over 525 yards and distances by now were 362 & 525 yards behind an 'Inside Sumner' hare and it was not long before undersoil heating was installed.

In the early fifties the Racing Manager was B Pash who was replaced by F Sharpe in the late fifties but controversy ensued in 1957 over a situation that involved the owner and General Manager. Eight year old Elias Jolley had to stand trial after being accused of widespread rigging of tote odds and destroying evidence. By the mid-sixties the Managing Director was F W Shaw and he ensured that there was no chance of rigging by virtue of setting himself up as General and Racing Manager as Mr Jolly took a back seat.

Resident trainers in the sixties included Frank Heald, Bill Savage and Wilf Flint as the stadium owned a significant number of the greyhounds that provided the graded racing strength, handicaps were also very popular. Racing was held on Thursday at 7.30pm and Saturday at 7.15pm.

Ben Parsons had a spell as a trainer at the track which resulted in a major open race competition win; the empty trophy cabinet finally had some silverware when Cash For Dan won the Television Trophy. It was first and last major achievement. Harry Bish was Racing Manager at the end of the decade.

In 1970 Ernest Jolly passed away which resulted in a sequence of events that led to the sale of the stadium to property developers. It was due to cease trading on 12<sup>th</sup> September but the well-known veterinary surgeon Paddy Sweeney attempted to snatch the stadium out of the hands of the developers for £125,000. Sweeney was acting for the newly formed Greyhound Council of Great Britain but sadly the efforts failed and the site would be redeveloped into warehouses.

The site today is where Little Tennis Street stands.

.....continued

### Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
362y	Bold Tan	20.37	12.09.1946	
	Cheerful Catapult	19.90	03.07.1958	
525y	Don Gipsej	29.38	31.05.1947	
	Feakles Wish	29.12	17.06.1965	
	Cladius	28.83	10.05.1966	
715y	Cash For Dan	40.70	1970+	

