

## Poole

Poole Stadium was first used in 1933 by the local semi-professional football team Poole Town becoming the first residents to use the stadium built and owned by Poole Borough Council. It was constructed during the great depression in the hope that it would provide entertainment for the public during a difficult period.

The Sports Arena as it was referred to in the early days was located quite near to the town centre and could be accessed from Victoria Road (now Elizabeth Road) off the main Wimborne Road. It was not until 1948 that a second sport arrived at the stadium, the Poole Pirates speedway team was born and they moved in competing in the third division after being granted a licence by the Speedway Control board.

Major changes took place in 1960 after the Southampton greyhound track owners Charlie Knott Sr. & Charlie Knott Jr. initiated plans to construct a track around the football pitch and speedway track. Incidentally Charlie Jr. was a well-known retired Hampshire county cricket bowler at the time. The venue underwent considerable change with a grandstand and terracing being introduced on both sides of the stadium.

On 8<sup>th</sup> May 1961 the opening meeting took place with the Mayor of Poole Alderman Bill Cole conducting the opening ceremony. There was an eight race card featuring five dogs in each race set up around a 380 yard circuit. The first ever winner was Count on Chippelgaun a 5-1 shot in a time of 29.7 secs. The Racing Manager was aptly named D.J Poole before T.H.Pickett took over the hot seat.

Despite the Knott's Southampton stadium closing in 1963 they remained involved in Poole until 1980 selling their interest in the stadium. Despite this the three sports ran side by side for the over three decades 1960-1990 before problems would arise.

As the eighties approached the leading trainers were Rita Randall and Pat Clarke and Ernie Walsh became the new Racing Manager. Following the previously mentioned sale by the Knott's the greyhound operation ran into difficulties and on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1985 closed down before being brought back to life by TGV Ltd headed by Terry Bentham on April 5<sup>th</sup> of the same year. Simon Cross took over as Racing Manager from Ernie Walsh and TGV Ltd took the opportunity to conduct some renovations. Cross was soon to be replaced by Geoff Lee.

Scurlogue Champ provided a huge boost in 1986 appearing on July 12 and of course breaking the track record in the process. The future looked brighter with decent facilities including a restaurant for 100 covers, a car park for 800 vehicles and two bars. The all sand circuit used an 'Outside Sumner' hare and racing continued on Thursday and Saturday nights (with an extra Monday night in summer).

The optimism was short lived as ownership changed again to a company called Playbell Ltd who then removed the greyhound track to accommodate a larger football pitch on 30 June 1990.

In February 1992 hopes were revived that greyhound racing could return to Poole after plans were announced by the Derek Block owned Poole Stadium Development Corporation that they were looking to emulate a track such as Hove and Romford. This sparked interest from the BS Group and Clark Osborne who stated that they had been in discussions with the local authorities regarding the re-opening of Wimborne Road. Even the GRA made it clear that they were monitoring the situation too.

The BS Group won the race and secured a long time lease from the Poole Borough Council in 1994 and racing finally returned. Although Poole was added to the company's assets in 1994 they sold Bristol in 1997.

Under The BS Group the track thrived and was able to attract a good calibre of trainer. One such trainer was Jo Burridge who brought Poole their first taste of major success winning the 1998 Reading Masters with a greyhound called You Will Call. Two years later Peter Ruddick scored a double breeders triumph after Touchdown Lobo lifted the Two Year Old Produce Stakes at Swindon and Hes Nobodys Fool claimed the Breeders Forum at Hall Green. Graham Holland was another trainer plying his trade at the track.

The 'Golden Crest' which had been hosted by the track since 2000 had become the principal event easily surpassing the significance of the tracks previous main feature 'The Wessex Vase'.

In 2002 the BS Group took control of Reading adding to their portfolio that already contained Poole, Swindon & Milton Keynes. Dave Lawrence was Racing Manager at Poole by now.

Jo Burridge continued to impress on the open race circuit with Westcountry Lady topping the list after a 2007 Trafalgar Cup win and another trainer Mark Grady scored major wins.

A major boost for Poole came in 2012 when the track was awarded a BAGS contract for the first time and the Racing Manager today is Ian Sillence.

### Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes	
480y	Croughbawn Champion	27.82	27.09.1962		
	Cat Man Do	27.56	18.03.1972		
230m	Office Whisper	14.39	1989+		
	Annekas Gold	14.38	1989+		
232m	Seamans Hope	14.41	25.04.1985		
250m	Official Figure	14.98	10.04.1998		
	Louisville	14.96	07.02.2004		
	Kews Noble	14.88	31.07.2007		
	Marinas Malouda	14.78	06.05.2011		
445m	Railroad Tracker	27.43	1989+		
450m	August Twenty	26.70	01.11.1997		
	Rosmon Major	26.45	10.02.2007	Golden Crest Semi-finals	
	Glynnscross Mal	26.45	17.03.2009		
	Miss Crispys	26.44	08.06.2010		
	Buzz Doc	26.37	26.04.2011	Golden Crest heats	
	Fifis Rocket	26.30	30.04.2011	Golden Crest Semi-finals	
	Lode Henry	26.25	02.07.2013		
	Daddy Knowsbest	26.20	13.07.2013		
	455m	Golden Sand	27.34	30.08.1983	
	630m	Chiltern Sarah	39.92	1989+	
632m	Westmead Call	??	1986+		
	Farm Hill Jill	40.00	25.09.1986		
640m	El Onda	38.96	09.05.1998		
	Manners Slaney	38.74	13.10.2007		
	Wise Totty	38.68	26.04.2011		
840m	Musical Treat	52.45	15.11.1997		
	Gift of Gold	52.21	09.05.2000		
	Blonde Pearl	52.06	16.02.2007		
845m	Carker Coal	55.48	1989+		
855m	Scurlogue Champ	54.86	12.07.1986		
445mH	Grove Whistler	28.90	1989+		

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