

Ramsgate

Ramsgate first obtained a greyhound track in 1928 when a plot of land south of Dumpton in the Sir Moses Montefiore Ward was selected by the Greyhound Racing Association (Isle of Thanet) Ltd. The track opened on Saturday 26th May and was called Dumpton Park named after the parkland to the north. The Kent coast line railway was replaced by a road called Dumpton Park Drive and the stadium was erected off this road between Muir Road to the south and Montefiore Avenue to the north.

Interestingly the Tunnel Railway (also known as the Ramsgate Underground Railway) was built around the same time and the narrow gauge railway went directly under the stadium.

The opening meeting finally arrived despite much controversy in the district and at 3pm Mrs D Coleman's Southern Surprise trained by A F Dandridge won the first ever race over 500 yards at odds of 4-1 in a time of 32.25 secs. The six race card attracted a fine crowd with the other winners being trained by W Wyles, Archie Whitcher and R Sandy. Race two went to Merman owned by Mrs Lyne Dixson wife of the famous Major Lyne Dixson.

A second meeting was held on the Monday before the schedule reverted to every Thursday and Saturday. The Director of Racing was Major L Lyne Dixson himself and the Racing Manager was Ernest Ledger. Ledger would remain the Racing Manager for over thirty years.

Ramsgate saw a second track built in 1936 known as Newington; the track was situated on the west of Newington Road, just north of Bush Avenue but unlike Dumpton Park never raced under NGRC rules. The Dumpton Park stadium was described as a well laid out course 430 yards in circumference with good long straights and easy turns. It had an 'Inside Sumner' hare and amenities included the Thanet Racing Club, a glass fronted enclosure in the 4s, 6d ring. The kennel facilities were opposite the track adjoining the Dumpton Park railway station.

After war was declared Ramsgate suffered major disruption with racing being suspended during 1940. Around the same time two trainers brought great success to the track, Jack Daley and Jack Sherry scored wins at regular intervals culminating in some very fine performances. A greyhound called Good Worker excelled for Daley winning the 1948 Laurels, Silver Salver, Champion Stakes & Wimbledon Produce. Sherry trained a first class hurdler called Blossom of Annagura, the brindle dog achieved a notable double by defending his Grand National crown in 1950 and lifting the Wimbledon Gold Cup.



Jack Sherry with Shakespeare in 1968.

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In 1954 Ramsgate Sports Stadium Ltd closed down the Newington track leaving Ramsgate with NGRC racing only. J J Foster joined the track as Assistant Racing Manager to Ernest Ledger during this period.

During the sixties the track closed during the winter months of January & February but raced on Wednesday & Saturday evenings in summer with the principal event being the Cavalier Cup and ownership of the track was in the hands of the Ramsgate Dumpton Thanet Greyhounds Ltd. J J Foster took over the Racing Managers from the long serving Ledger and the attached trainers were Sherry, W McKenna, T Cracknell & Jim Barry.

In 1975 trainer Peter Rich former head man to John Coleman won all eight races in one meeting producing a remarkable 428,793-1 accumulator.

A huge turning point for Ramsgate materialised in 1976, the track had been struggling to attract large crowds due to an ageing stadium and poor facilities but a company called Northern Sports led by Mick Hawkins and his son David stepped in. At first it was a low key purchase with some investment but plans were afoot for a grand revamp. Just one year later in 1977 Jeff Jefcoate left the GRA to join Ramsgate as Racing Manager, J J Foster became Director of Racing and a new race with attractive prize money was inaugurated called the Thanet Gold Cup leading to speculation that something special was on the horizon. The speculation soon led to fact when plans were submitted to the local council for planning permission for a new million pound grandstand.

In the meantime Northern Sports took control of Oxford and Long Eaton in 1978 and the long awaited build started at Ramsgate which finally came to an end in 1984.

The state of the art facility featured a 200-seater tiered restaurant which became a model for the industry soon after. A sports centre was built within the stadium and included squash and snooker clubs and a gymnasium. The company then announced that Oxford would follow suit.

Northern Sports soon gained respected status within the industry and led by David Hawkins Ramsgate profited with huge attendances throughout the eighties. The great Scurlogue Champ broke the track record in 1985 and the track experienced tow English Greyhound Derby finals with Carrigeen Chimes (Gary Baggs) in 1985 and Sunley Express (Peter Rich) in 1986. Stan Kennett and Ron Luton supplemented the successes being brought in by Baggs and Rich greyhounds such as Spiral Darkie, Fiddlers Run, Keeper Tom and Noelles Turbo. In 1986 Gary Baggs decided to move to sister track Oxford and whilst trialling there received an offer from Walthamstow shortly afterwards.

Northern Sports situation improved even further with a BAGS contract being secured by Ramsgate joining sister track Oxford. Mick Wheble was given the role of BAGS co-ordinator overseeing new Racing Manager Stuart Netting at Ramsgate. Trainer Paul Garland joined from Oxford and secured a Derby consolation with Dromin Fox in 1993.

Disaster struck in 1995 when Northern Sports suddenly went into administration, it had transpired that the construction parent company Hawkins of Harrow had invested heavily into garden centres and the construction industry had suffered from recession simultaneously. The receivers were called in and despite Oxford being saved sometime later the same did not apply for Ramsgate. The popular stadium known as the Garden Track of England closed its doors in May 1996.

The site today is the Brindle Grove housing (1° 25' 46.389"E 51° 20' 36.636"N).

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Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
440y	Ashfield Envoy	25.77	05.08.1938	
	Glum	25.70	17.70.1948	
460y	Tara Beware	26.88	06.04.1960	
	Stedlyn Ploughright	=26.88	29.09.1962	
500y	Four Mile Bridge	28.74	02.07.1937	
	Good Worker	28.72	06.09.1948	
	Greenane Midas	28.31	31.07.1965	
600y	Maidens Delight	35.51	18.05.1938	
	Crissie Tanist	35.31	16.07.1947	
700y	Darts Luck	41.79	17.06.1934	
	Fat Licence	41.79	20.06.1936	
	Keystone	41.46	13.08.1947	
715y	Glostello	42.33	19.10.1963	
500yH	Honeymans Last	29.80	25.05.1930	
	Final Selection	29.40	1970+	
235m	Spartacus	14.89	12.10.1991	
	Oakfront Drive	14.68	11.10.1993	
450m	Creamery Cross	26.96	02.07.1983	
	Poor Brian	26.95	26.09.1992	
590m	Hello Blackie	37.28	28.07.1990	
	Coalbrook Susie	37.16	27.07.1991	
	Star Treatment	37.09	12.10.1991	
	Patriot Sail	36.82	05.05.1994	
640m	General Leader	40.01	26.09.1983	
	Trans Mercedes	39.75	28.07.1990	
	Catsrock Dan	39.71	17.07.1991	
	Loch Bo Anchor	39.68	11.10.1993	
855m	Scurlogue Champ	54.26	01.07.1985	
	Glenowen Queen	53.95	02.12.1985	
1045m	Belladare	68.60	19.05.1986	
	Wayzgoose	68.11	10.05.1992	
450mH	For Daniel	27.68	09.10.1989	
	Deerpark Jim	27.49	01.08.1992	
590mH	Sentimental Sam	38.89	12.10.1991	
	Bruces Way	38.23	25.11.1991	
	Glenrobin	37.59	16.03.1992	
640mH	Freewheel Kylo	40.82	11.10.1993	