

## Slough

George Bennett Sr. a resident of Slough established himself as a quite an entrepreneur in the area, Bennett had bought and sold a cinema in nearby Chalvey before purchasing the Dolphin Hotel in Slough in May 1914. The hotel was next door to the Dolphin ground which had hosted cricket, bowls and football in the nineteenth century. Slough Town AFC took over the ground in 1890 and Bennett became their owner as well.

So Bennett had his football club and hotel and then decided that the ground required more activity and after watching the new sport of greyhound racing rise so quickly he made the decision to construct a greyhound track around the pitch. Work got underway and on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1928 the Slough public witnessed the first ever race at the track.

The Dolphin stadium was situated nicely off the Uxbridge Road and had a reasonable catchment area and as early as 1929 the Slough patrons were lucky enough to see a greyhound called Idle Chief win 16 consecutive races fuelling the excitement of those that came to watch him.

Bennett continued with his enterprises and introduced a training camp for boxers at his Dolphin hotel becoming a home for boxers such as Tommy Farr, Ben Ford, Jack Doyle, Primo Camera, Marcel Thil and Midget Wogan.

In 1936 Bennett sold the Dolphin Stadium to Clapton Stadium Company Limited who controlled Clapton, South Shields, Warrington and year's later Reading. H.Garland Wells who was joint vice president of the NGRS and Clapton Stadium Ltd was instrumental in the company's decision to purchase another track. The stadium was renamed Slough Greyhound Stadium.

Incidentally Bennett would end his boxers training camp in 1937 but his son George Bennett Jr. would continue to hold sporting events at his Dolphin hotel.

The track circumference was 400 yards and the course was described as a handy little track with bends that favour railers, a good run-up to the first bend means trap draw has little advantage. Don't forget in those days seeding was not considered which explains the odd statement (trap draw has little advantage on a track favouring railers). There was a training establishment at Sunnymeads, Dedworth in Windsor used solely for Slough.

Principal events included the Easter Cup, Whitsun Cup, Yuletide Cup, Home Counties Cup and Coronation Puppy Championship with the addition of a race called the Dolphin Trophy honouring the tracks roots. All of these events failed to offer serious prize money that would attract the best greyhounds in the country but after the war the Buckinghamshire Cup was introduced in 1946 and that would attract some of the best.

Totalisator turnover after the war helped secure trading for many years for most tracks due to the healthy profits that could be gained at the time. Turnover in 1946 was £1,495,881 and in 1947 it was £700,974.

S.T.Lucas was the Racing Manager in the fifties before handing over to John Collins in 1959, the Director of Racing for Clapton Stadium Ltd was E W Godfrey and he also handed over in 1959 to H J Richardson. E Luper and H Luper then took over as the new Managing Directors of the company during a time when relationships with bookmaker firms came under scrutiny. The bookmakers betting shops were taking bets on races at greyhound tracks which upset many and in 1963 Clapton Stadiums Ltd owners of Clapton, Slough and Reading scrapped evening starting times in an attempt to scupper the bookmaker's shops.

In 1966 the Greyhound Racing Association (GRA) purchased the track from New Clapton Stadiums Ltd, the GRA deal also included the sale of two training sites with 180 acres and an interest in the West Ham stadium. Under the GRA the trainers responsible for supplying the greyhounds to Slough were Jimmy Jowett, Bill Krailing, Paddy Pierce, Jim Barker, Ron Jeffrey and Jim Sherry, the latter three also supplied Reading. Racing took place on Tuesday & Saturday evenings.

The hare was an 'Inside Sumner' and track amenities included a steak bar, 2 buffet bars and 4 licensed bars.

In 1971 Slough and Reading followed changed to the contract trainer system, a policy that many stadia had adopted. Three years later former sister track Clapton closed resulting in the prestigious Classic the 'Scurry Gold Cup' being transferred to Slough. This race would be a catalyst for some long overdue major success for the track.

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The 1977 running of the Scurry was marred by sadness after a wonderful competition. A three way battle was emerging between two promising newcomers Wired To Moon and Cahurmore Speech and defending champion Xmas Holiday. Cahurmore Speech broke the Slough track record in the semi-finals before finishing runner up to Wired To Moon in the final with Xmas Holiday finishing third. On the way back to the Northaw kennels after the race Adam Jackson's finalist Fiano was killed in a vehicle accident.

In 1977 Ted Dickson who had gained an attachment at Slough around 1970 achieved the first Classic win for the track after winning the Laurels with Greenfield Fox. The white and black dog was a little bit special and went on to take the Scurry and Pall Mall the following year. Dickson also trained a fawn dog called Linacre whose exploits included four big wins in 1977, the Derby consolation, Edinburgh Cup, Sussex Cup and Wembley Spring Cup. Dickson was rewarded in 1977 by becoming the trainer of the year.

The brilliant Yankee Express secured an incredible hat-trick of Scurry titles in the early eighties and arguably one of the greatest ever stud dogs and a future Derby champion Whisper Wishes started his English career at Slough with Jill Holt taking the 1983 Select Stakes.

Slough had begun to compete with the big boys and in 1986 another champion arrived, this time it was Tico trained by Arthur Hitch. Tico, a black dog by The Stranger out of Derry Linda first ran at Clonmel on 8 July for his breeder Jimmy Morrissey of Carrick-on-Suir and won in impressive fashion by ten lengths, recording 29.86sec for the 525yds course. A few weeks later he came into the charge of Slough trainer, Arthur Hitch. Tico cost his new owner, Alan Smee, £5,000 and would of course go on to win The 1986 Derby.

The final months of existence for Slough were from January to 21<sup>st</sup> March 1987. Sold for industrial development by the GRA the Scurry moved to Catford, the trainer dispersed and Racing Manager Peter Reagan joined Catford.

Today the site is a Sainsbury's supermarket although the original kennels at Sunnymeads in Windsor that supplied the runners to the track still exists and is home to current Swindon trainer Terry Atkins.

### **Selected Track Records**

<b>Distance</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>
275y	Oola Rattler	15.51	1946+	
460y	Sallys Chat	25.70	07.11.1961	
	Shamrock Clipper	25.62	17.05.1966	
	Tipper	25.60	1970+	
475y	Parish Model	26.71	1947+	
640y	Jeannies Wonder	36.63	1970+	
650y	Lucky Arrow II	36.92	07.09.1965	
	Lielow		29.03.1966	
	Quails Glory	36.42	08.09.1970	
675y	Diamond Jim	39.42	1946+	
860y	Miss Elegant	49.66	16.07.1963	
	Hiver Whitenose	49.58	1970+	
880y	Boreen Brandy		22.03.1966	
	Gladness	50.97	05.03.1968	
460yH	Rorys Pleasure	26.57	21.03.1961	
475yH	Cadet Captain	27.69	1946+	
442m	Northwood Double	26.74	1978+	
	Rodeen Jet	26.62	19.06.1985	
	Cahurmore Speech		1977+	Scurry Semi-finals
593m	Owners Guide	37.20	1979+	
807m	Westpark Putter	52.13	1978+	

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

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### Selected Tote Returns

<b>Year</b>	<b>Turnover £</b>
1939	182,949
1941	315,009
1942	336,212
1943	395,908
1944	523,544
1945	854,889
1946	1,495,881
1947	700,974
1948	627,513
1949	521,787
1950	428,003
1952	465,800
1953	449,966
1954	481,000