

## Spennymoor

Spennymoor holds the post war record for the shortest spell as a licensed track from spring 1997 until January 1998. The promoter of the greyhound track at the time was Paul Stephenson and he had attempted to join the NGRC under the permit status before applying for a full licence. The licence was eventually granted and Spennymoor started trialling under rules before racing under the NGRC banner for the first time in June. The main distances of 270 & 460 metres were mainly handicap races and Sunday racing was inaugurated but the enterprise ended soon after with the track actually closing its doors on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1998.

Spennymoor had existed as an independent track since 30 June 1950 being run by various promoters for 47 years until the move to NGRC racing which went against the general opinion that a move from independent racing to fully licensed racing was a sensible thing to do.

The town of Spennymoor got its name from being a large area of moorland covered with thorn bushes and was founded around 1850. The County Durham town was another coal mining area with the Binchester Colliery Railway running near a site proposed for a new greyhound track after the war. The old brick works off Merrington Lane near Low Spennymoor was chosen and a greyhound track was constructed on the west side of the lane to provide entertainment for many of the coal miners houses nearby. During 1938 the White City (Newcastle) company that owned White City (Newcastle) at Scotswood Bridge unsuccessfully attempted to introduce racing in the town.

During the sixties an 'Inside Sumner' hare was used with distances of 300, 500 & 700 yards, race day was Monday at 7pm and there was a licensed club for patrons and 60 kennels for the greyhounds. By 1980 there were additional race nights on Thursday and Saturday evenings and there were six bookmakers in attendance with trials held on a Sunday.

The area changed radically over the years with the extremely large Merrington Lane Industrial Estate springing up to the south-east and the smaller Coulson Industrial Estate to the north following some years later, replacing the old miners housing. Changes also took place with promoters with a development company owning it at one stage and before Neville Porter purchased it in 1991. The track enjoyed a decent run under Porter who introduced the Northern Derby and trainers such as Ted Soppitt frequented the venue before the track came under the control of Paul Stephenson.

After closing in 1998 the site would inevitably go to ruin and a fire burned down anything of value at a later date. Even the local press soon forgot about the track with a recent article stating that it last hosted greyhounds in the eighties. The area was cleaned up and bought by Woodford Land a development company who gained permission for 200 homes before selling to Dunelm Castle Homes and Homes by Woodford.

Today there is little to remind anyone of the track, the A688 runs directly above the area with Merrington Lane now known as Front Street (1° 35' 35.504"W 54° 41' 47.435"N). The only vague reminder is the nearby public house that has stood for 100 years and currently pays tribute to the track with its new name the 'Winning Post'.

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**Selected Track Records**

<b>Distance</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>
460m	Boyne Border	27.64	19.10.1997	
460m	Pond Saturn	27.83	28.10.1997	
630m	Kokkini Hani	40.64	29.06.1997	

**NGRC only**