

Stockport (Hazel Grove)

South-east of Stockport lies the suburb of Hazel Grove and back in 1932 a new greyhound track was constructed just south of the London, Midland and Scottish railway viaduct on the east side of the Macclesfield Road. The surroundings at the time were sparsely populated but the track was able to include Stockport within its catchment area and with sixty omnibuses passing the stadium every hour on a variety of routes it was expected to be a success. The Stockport Greyhound Racing Co Ltd that initiated the construction was led by their Chairman J.W Marples, a well-known dog judge.

The build however was subject to considerable controversy because the council was adamant that the site was required for future dwelling-houses and residential buildings which then led them refusing planning permission and subsequently putting a ban on the work that had already started. Mr W Gardener acting for the new stadium owners stated that "The position is that whether the council approves the plans or not, the project can be carried through. We have secured a five year lease on the ground with an option to purchase, and should the council ever wish to make a road through this ground, as is suggested, the track can be moved to another position." Remarkably this was all taking place in November 1932 just one month before the proposed opening.

The finishing touches to the stadium were still in progress when the first meeting was scheduled and held on the Saturday afternoon of 23 December 1932. Originally there was no tote due to government restrictions at the time, the racing kennels were situated parallel with the Macclesfield Road and the resident kennels were to be found a short distance from the track in Buxton Road. Stands were erected in each enclosure just in time for the public opening although work continued afterwards to increase the capacity of the stadium.

The track applied for a licence with the National Greyhound Racing Society (NGRS) and it is believed that it was probably granted but it is known that in 1934 they were affiliated with the rival British Greyhound Tracks Control Society (BGTCS) when the raced on Saturday afternoons. The main distance was 500 yards and a 'Sumner' hare was used.

During 1935 John Sharp a businessman and bus company owner purchased the stadium which also hosted Speedway in 1937. Business peaked in 1946 (See figures below) and it is likely to have been an independent track for a period of its existence because there is no record of NGRC membership after the war. The track circumference at this time was recorded as 430 yards with distances of 310 & 525 yards.

In March 1960 John Sharp the stadium owner decided to sell ten acres of the site to City and Town Buildings Ltd, of London. Sharp felt that the sport was dying, killed by the betting tax and also revealed that he had been offered an incredible £100,000 for the stadium just after the war when greyhound racing was in its heyday.

The site was duly sold and demolished but initially it was turned into football pitches before redevelopment into the Greyhound Industrial Estate although the northerly part of the stadium near the viaduct still remains waste ground.

The southerly part of the stadium is where the 'Carpet Right' building stands today.

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Selected Totalisator Turnover

Year	Turnover £
1938	2,437
1941	8,285
1942	7,422
1943	9,374
1944	11,240
1945	21,669
1946	469,889
1947	118,133
1948	55,940
1949	147,308
1950	115,384
1951	97,286
1952	95,200
1953	84,267
1954	63,000