

Swaffham

Swaffham became a new track to the NGRC permit scheme on 16 November 1987. The 416 circumference circuit was constructed just south of the Dereham Road on the east side of Broom Covert. The track is in the middle of nowhere and relied on the catchment area of the market town of Swaffham to the west and some clientele from further afield such as Kings Lynn and Norwich. It ran parallel to the closed Great Eastern Railway Lynn & Dereham line which ran through an area that separated the track from NRM horticulture laboratories.

Maurice and Anne Kirby opened the track to the public with Maurice acting as the Racing Manager on the race nights of Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Distances were 270, 480, 686 & 896 metres behind an 'Outside Sumner' hare. There was a large car park, 72 kennels and 10 on course bookmakers but limited facilities in terms of structures with just one main stand.

Despite its small standing within the industry the ability to attract some good trainers resulted due to the lack of greyhound racing in the area. The likes of Kevin Cobbold and Ken Peckham were attached here and the open race calendar proved successful with John McGee being a frequent visitor, his Derby champion Hit the Lid appeared and broke the track record at Swaffham less than two months after claiming the crown.



*A warm August evening at Swaffham in 1988.
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In 1989 Tom Smith was brought into the track as the new General and Racing Manager and by 1991 he had acquired the lease. Smith also called in the NGRC to investigate some of the tracks trainers who are admitting unlicensed handlers into their kennels in addition to allowing racing greyhounds to be kept at elsewhere. Together with his son Gavin the Smith family were always looking to improve the mechanical workings of a track from hare systems to drainage and soon the Smiths were about to produce a new hare that would change the industry.

They came up with a hare that was modelled on the older outside 'McKee-Scott' but it had modifications that allowed the hare driver to use a simple turn switch and the an even simpler hare rail at ground level with the wire running on pulleys underneath. Within a ten year period the popular 'Outside Sumner' and 'older 'Outside McKee' had all but disappeared within the industry. The hare was known as the 'Swaffham' and allowed the Smiths to set up a very successful greyhound parts company.

Vince Moody took over the lease from Smith but the pair fell out in 2000 resulting in the closure of the stadium to greyhound racing. Owner Maurice Kirby allowed the venue to be used for stock cars and as schooling track for greyhounds. The Swaffham Raceway named after the Kirby's company planned to reintroduce greyhounds in 2011 and spent considerable sums on the facility but sadly Maurice passed away in 2012.

Stock cars still take place today (0° 37' 51.734"E 52° 39' 17.240"N).

Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
270m	Glengiblin Rover	16.77	25.03.1988	
	Surge Home	16.44	12.09.1988	
	Curryhills Mike	16.32	02.12.1991	
	Hot Hot	16.31	14.09.1993	
418m	Killee Stranger	25.50	31.03.1989	
440m	Hairy Head	27.02	06.03.2000	
	Dims Favourite	26.85	24.04.1990	
480m	Hit The Lid	29.32	29.08.1988	
620m	Tarnwood Emperor	38.37	28.11.1989	
686m	Denes Mutt	40.59	25.03.1988	
	Allglaze Dixon	43.35	31.10.1988	
	Decoy Cheetah	43.55	22.11.1994	
834m	Mullawn Rip	54.22	13.02.1990	
856m	Paradise Ash	55.73	02.12.1991	
	Barefoot Queen	55.50	24.05.1993	
1102m	Stir About Bidy	74.03	20.06.1992	
270mH	Ashgrove Gift	16.97	29.10.1991	
480mH	Run On King	30.24	02.12.1991	