

Peterborough

The Liberty of Peterborough was an historic area and comprised of around thirty parishes and in 1931 the Peterborough Racing Club opened their new greyhound track within the Liberty.

The venue was described as being off Star Road which is misleading because although this is in the Fengate area the actual track was off the Fengate Road. The plot of land chosen for the track was in south-east Fengate directly north of Peterborough Corporation sewage pumping station (0° 13' 17.117"W 52° 34' 8.249"N).

The opening night was listed as Saturday 4th April 1931 with no less than a twelve race meeting on show for the excited public. The Managing Director was G Hooke who organised racing on Mondays and Saturdays which consisted mainly of greyhounds but there were whippet races within the entertainment. The first ever winner was a greyhound called Dewdrop.

The second meeting on Monday 6th April was recorded as being a record crowd for the area with 400 being present. It appears that the racing continued up until the war with a maximum capacity of 700 being able to attend the track.

When the war had finished there was a major milestone for the track because the Perkins family became heavily involved. Reg Perkins from a farming and transport business family and George Ellingworth a garage owner purchased the track in 1945 and quickly began to improve facilities. At the time the hare was still reported to have been moved around the track by two men cycling so you can imagine the basic facilities that were on offer!

The purchase proved fruitful because greyhound racing hit its peak in 1946 and it is known that one year later in 1947 the track had a totalisator turnover of £49,719. By this time it was also known as the Peterborough Sports Stadium and Reg Perkins took sole control several years later following the death of George Ellingworth.

The racing continued independent of the NGRC but remained popular with the local population and by the sixties had an outside Sumner hare in operation, licensed bars and refreshments, photo finish apparatus and on course bookmakers. The immediate area also underwent major changes with industrial units appearing with frequent regularity and a road called First Drove serving as the entrance to the stadium. In 1977 Reg Perkins retired leaving the day to day management to his sons Rex and David. Rex had worked at the track since the age of 17 and became the face of Peterborough stadium.

Rex Perkins continued to oversee the running of the stadium with racing on Tuesday and Saturday evenings at 7.15pm. Track distances at this time were 275, 475 & 675 yards and there were now nine track bookmakers.

The second major milestone arrived in 1982 following the decision of the management to join the NGRC permit scheme that was in operation at the time. This allowed smaller tracks to run under NGRC rules at reduced rates and was the catalyst for Peterborough to improve in stature. In 1983 the Peterborough Derby was inaugurated and soon became a very popular event at the track. The first winner of the event was Dutch jet from Rye House.

Peterborough trainers were now able to attend other tracks and wins by their greyhounds included the Ben Truman Cup in 1986 and two East Anglian Derby successes.

The stadiums reputation began to grow and Rex Perkins was actually elected the Mayor of Peterborough from 1987 and with his wife Margaret raised thousands of pounds for charities. In 1988 grand plans were unveiled for a new grandstand and restaurant and following the completion of the half a million pounds project Peterborough was now seen as a major player. The raceview restaurant could seat 200 with a further 600 seats available on the glass fronted grandstand.

Prominent trainers would find attachments at the track during this period and included the likes of David and Linda Pruhs and Trevor Cobbold. By 1991 John 'Ginger' McGee had joined the track and the Irishman actually won trainer of the year in 1991 while attached to Peterborough. One of his greyhounds Ideal Man claimed a Grand National title the same year and not to be outdone fellow trainers David Budd and Marlene Westwood both scored big races wins with Aylesbury Duck and Seafield Quest ending a glorious year for the track.

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Three years later in 1994 Charlie Lister had a brief attachment to the track which brought the first Derby final appearance of a Peterborough greyhound when Callahow Daly made the decider. David Pruhs began to win open races on a regular basis and Clean Paws trained by Lorraine King won the Guys And Dolls and Oxfordshire Gold Cup in 1996. Pruhs steered Jaspers Boy to the 1998 Greyhound Derby final and the brindle dog achieved the remarkable feat of winning two Select Stakes. The same year the long term Racing Manager Mike Middle left the track to assist a new track at Wisbech to be replaced by Martin Race and Note Book gained a fabulous TV Trophy victory for trainer George Adams.

A low point came on March 24th 1999 when the stadium suffered severe damage when a fire spread from an adjoining warehouse and destroyed two bars, a tote booth and a 250 person seating area. The damage resulted in a six month closure but the management remained positive and rebuilt and refurbished by September re-opening on the 21st.

Top Savings trained by Gary Adam secured the Puppy Classic and Juvenile crowns in 2001 before transferring to Charlie Lister and embarking on a famous career. Adam had won two competitions with the hound and would have relished the chance to handle him through the Derby. Open race success continued topped by Midway Tomsscout claiming the Golden Jacket in 2004.

2003 was a pivotal year for the track because Rex Perkins passed away after a long illness and his son Richard and nephew Rob dedicated a new £3 Million extension to his name. The raceview seating area could now hold 1,000 spectators and corporate boxes were also added putting Peterborough as one of the leading provincial tracks.

Paul Miller became Racing Manager and Peterborough was rewarded with a BAGS contract in 2012. More recently David Pruhs lifted the Peterborough Derby in 2013 with Frisby Barney and the 2014 Romford Puppy Cup with Laughing Gravy.

At the end of 2014 the track became BAGS national champions after defeating five other tracks in the final at Nottingham. They won the event when they pipped Monmore by just one point 55 to 54. And one year later the winning Towcester team manager Andy Lisemore arrived to take over the Racing Manager's hot seat replacing Paul Miller.



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Selected Track Records

Distance	Name	Time	Date	Notes
235m	Ports Delight	14.46	24.09.1983	
	Small Song	14.44	1989+	
	Im From Tallow	14.39	18.06.1990	
	Mount Royal Fox	14.31	19.02.1995	
	Razldazl Eddie	14.28	11.08.2007	
	DisBestBoy	14.19	08.09.2007	
	Rotar Wing	14.05	08.08.2009	
	Rotar Wing	13.95	21.04.2010	
	Rotar Wing	13.95	09.10.2010	
250m	Monleek Town	14.87	27.02.2013	
420m	Siroco	25.68	03.03.1984	
	Town View Spring	25.58	29.04.1986	
	Slippy King	25.51	21.07.1990	
	Daleys Whisper	25.51	12.10.1990	
	Highway Leader	25.15	30.07.1994	
	Westmead Logan	25.15	24.04.2009	
	Little Sensation	25.05	28.07.2010	Peterborough Derby Heats
	Fancy Socks	25.02	23.04.2011	Peterborough Derby semi-final
	Mountjoy Rock	24.88	06.08.2011	Peterborough Derby Final
	435m	Frisby Barney	25.99	27.03.2013
Ramodi		25.97	17.04.2013	
Bay City Impact		25.95	22.05.2013	
Frisby Barney		25.69	03.08.2013	Peterborough Derby Final
605m	Decoy Lassie	37.71	04.04.1985	
	My Boy Mac	37.51	17.03.1990	
	Simply Free	37.24	12.09.1994	
	Glencoes Tom	37.11	09.04.2002	
	Bower Surfer	37.10	12.09.2009	
790m	Aidans Choice	50.32	27.09.1983	
	Gold Sash	50.24	04.09.1989	
	Poor Sue	50.21	26.06.1991	
	Poor Sue	50.10	01.07.1991	
	Fortunate Man	49.66	15.06.1992	
	Greenacre Lin	49.61	14.05.2005	
805m	Rearguard Bond	51.36	01.11.2014	
975m	Red Boss	64.08	19.10.1987	
	Lenas Cadet	63.30	19.11.1988	
	Jangos Snowdrop	63.15	07.06.2008	
420mH	Gis A Smile	25.90	27.06.1994	
	Im Henry	25.85	17.05.1997	

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