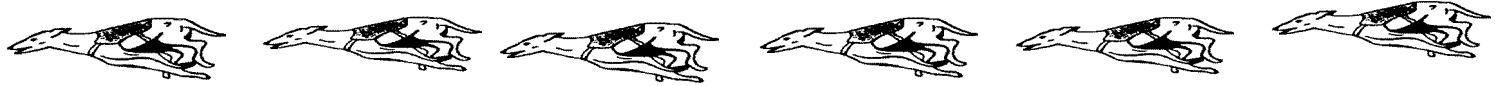




Running for their Lives!



Newsletter of Greyhound Action

No. 29

Jan/Feb 2010

Could it be curtains for Cov?

Racing suspended after 5½ year campaign

Coventry Stadium has suspended greyhound racing following an intensive campaign by local Greyhound Action supporters.

This encouraging news is a big victory for Coventry Against Greyhound Exploitation (CAGE), who vowed to put an end to the track after it reopened in April 2004.

Since that time CAGE have held hundreds of demos and leafletting sessions (averaging at least one a week) outside the stadium, to educate punters about the plight of the greyhounds and urge them never to go to dog racing again.

Their valiant efforts helped reduce attendances at the Coventry track to such an extent that it began to suffer big financial losses and has now been forced to suspend racing.



In fondest memory of Brian (lurcher, in foreground), a regular member of the CAGE campaign, who died recently at the age of 16

If the suspension leads to a permanent closure of the track, this will be excellent news for greyhounds, as we estimate that its existence is responsible for the putting to death of at least 300 of these dogs every year.

Campaigners will be encouraged by the words of Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) representative, Richard Hayler, who said: "Official letters seeking basic information fundamental to the regulation of the track have been ignored and other issues reported to us are being investigated or closely monitored.....in the current circumstances I cannot imagine the GBGB being in position to issue a licence to Coventry for 2010, and certainly not before the year end."

This is the second big success for CAGE, who successfully fought plans to construct another greyhound track at Coventry's rugby stadium in 2002.



Dedicated – one of hundreds of demos outside the stadium

Transatlantic triumphs

Victories for greyhounds in the USA

Last year 7 greyhound tracks closed in the USA, bringing to 20 the total that have ended racing in the past 5 years.

Now there are only 23 dog tracks remaining in eight states and the latest good news is that New Hampshire's House of Representatives has voted to outlaw the greyhound racing industry there.

This follows a ban on commercial dog racing in Massachusetts, which came into force on January 1st, following an intensive campaign by greyhound protectionists.

The continuing decline of the greyhound racing industry in Florida has forced the state's Naples-Fort Myers track to operate only 6 months of the year.



Grey2K USA campaigning for the Massachusetts ban

Dog track attendances down again

£millions spent on marketing fails to halt decline



Attendances at British greyhound tracks dropped by 3.2% during 2008, despite a costly marketing campaign by the dog racing industry, including £millions spent on TV advertising.

There has also been a 14% reduction in the number of registered greyhound trainers during the past 12 months and greyhound breeding figures are continuing to fall, both in the UK and in Ireland, meaning that fewer dogs are being produced to be discarded and put to death.

Latest figures from the Greyhound Racing Association (GRA), which owns more tracks than any other promoter, recorded a 15.3% fall in attendances, together with an 11% drop in revenue, and only the sale of their Portsmouth track prevented the company from making a £2m loss.

Left - Demos and leafleting have cut attendances at Wimbledon

The GRA's 2008 annual report stated that its tracks had "experienced a shortfall in corporate bookings for both entertaining clients and Christmas parties" and punters were obviously spending less, with restaurant diners down 16,000 from 2007.

At Wimbledon, the most well-known of its five tracks, the GRA has been forced, for financial reasons, to close the main stand and put a stop to Tuesday evening race meetings.

Regular leafleting sessions outside the stadium by local Greyhound Action supporters have played a big part in driving down attendances and plunging the track into ever deepening economic problems.

The £100,000 win prize for the Greyhound Derby, Britain's biggest dog race, run annually at Wimbledon, has been cut by 25%, after the competition's previous sponsors, Blue Square, pulled out and new sponsors William Hill were unwilling to pay the full amount.

In Scotland, Glasgow's Shawfield has become the latest of a string of greyhound stadiums to drop midweek racenights and tracks throughout Britain and Ireland have suffered financially through having to cancel racing due to the freezing weather.

Irish greyhound racing hit by budget cuts

"Dreary scenario for the industry"

According to the Racing Post: "An air of depression descended on the Irish greyhound fraternity..... following the Budget revelation that the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund would be cut by 13%, following on from an even bigger cut 12 months earlier. The new funding level for greyhound racing..... represents a loss of roughly 1.7m euros ...given the bigger loss the previous year and the massive cuts that have been made within the industry, it opens up a dreary scenario for the industry.....the Irish industry is now on the threshold of inevitable hardship."

The Irish Greyhound Board (IGB) has already had to put in place cost savings of more than €2m to account for the 9% reduction in funding for 2009.

On-line gambling site GamingZion stated: "As a result, many trainers are not renewing their licenses for next year. A recent study showed that for every euro trainers received in prize money during the last decade, at least five times as much was spent on training expenses. A decrease in external support, they say, will cripple the industry."

Meanwhile, former IGB chairman, Pascal Taggart, has stated that bad economic decisions by the Board's current bosses mean that the cost of a new stadium being built at Limerick will be 20m, which will send the IGB "into potential bankruptcy".

2009 was a terrible year for Irish bookmakers, with 105 betting shops being forced to close, and the greyhound racing industry received a further jolt when Paddy Power terminated their sponsorship of the Irish Derby at Shelbourne Park after financing the event for the past 10 years.



Demo at Dublin's Shelbourne Park