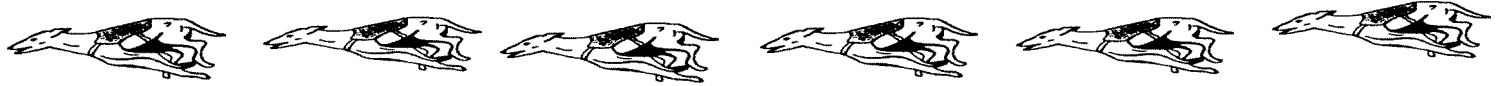




Running for their Lives!



Newsletter of Greyhound Action No. 26 July/August 2009

Hull hell-hole closed again

More cuts nationwide as racing industry continues to decline

◆ **Hull** greyhound track has closed just 20 months after it reopened, despite its new owners having spent £250,000 on refurbishments.

The track reverted from a two-meeting a week schedule to one - every Saturday - but, as racing manager Mick Smith told the media: "We've continued to lose money and Dave Marshall (promoter) has pulled the plug. We wanted to put on a carvery and all sorts of things to try to make some money, but we had no support at all from the GBGB (Greyhound Board of Great Britain) and that, plus a lack of paying punters, was what's killed us."

The track had closed previously in 2006 after becoming dilapidated, but reopened again the following year, when it was taken over and refurbished by local leisure company DMQA Holdings.

We hope this time the closure will be permanent, as, according to our most recent research, the existence of a track like Hull is responsible for the deaths of as many as 500 greyhounds per year, due to the demand it creates for these dogs to be bred and subsequently discarded.

The track would also have been responsible for dozens of serious injuries annually to greyhounds racing there. For example, a post by a Hull trainer on a pro-racing internet forum in May read as follows: "At Hull last night 1 trainer lost 2 dogs, both suffered terrible injuries 1 dying on the track and the other having to be put to sleep.....How many dogs will it take to get injured or worse like last night before something is done?"

◆ It comes as no surprise that the **GBGB** were unable or unwilling to support the Hull track.

According to a Racing Post article: "The GBGB has had to make 'a savage cut' to its budget for grants to tracks (from £2m to £486,000) 'to address a significant drop in income'."

The total GBGB budget fell by almost £2m from £11.5m last year to £9.7m for 2009, following a big drop in contributions from bookmakers, owing to fewer people betting on dog racing.



◆ Manchester's **Belle Vue** greyhound stadium was forced to cancel a special race meeting scheduled for Father's Day after it attracted "only moderate interest in advance bookings". Weekly demonstrations and leafletting by Greyhound Action's North-West branch have played an important part in reducing attendances at the track.

Left – A recent demo outside Belle Vue

◆ According to the Greyhound Star, Sunday evening dog race meetings at **Coventry** Stadium are losing money every week. Operations manager Mick Conneely said: "A full open race card on a Sunday does not attract the

large crowds they once did and consequently we are losing money by putting them on each week.

The loss incurred ranges from £500 to three times that figure as prizemoney for each ten-race Sunday comes to at least £2,500." There are rumours Sunday meetings may be limited to one a month or scrapped altogether and the track has already been forced to cut prizemoney on other race-nights, resulting in a reduction of funding from the GBGB of 15%. In a further cost-cutting measure, the stadium has dispensed with the services of one of its groundsmen. Attendances at dog racing there have plummeted since Coventry Against Greyhound Exploitation started staging regular demos in 2004.

- ◆ Thursday night race meetings at **Henlow** are in danger of being cut due to poor attendances.
- ◆ Crowds at **Peterborough** Stadium's Saturday greyhound racing are down 20% on last year and total spending per head has also fallen. The track has already dismissed 30 trainers owing to a reduction in the amount of racing there, including the scrapping of Tuesday night meetings.
- ◆ **Mildenhall** Stadium promoter Dave Coventry is struggling to make greyhound racing pay. Coventry told the Greyhound Star: "We have to be losing money on Tuesdays and while Fridays are better, they are nothing special. In greyhound racing, unless you can get crowds along you are sunk." He admitted the stadium only got "perhaps 100" people for a greyhound meeting, compared with crowds of 2,000 for stock car events and 400 for speedway.
- ◆ **Portsmouth** dog track is having problems finding enough greyhounds to run there and many of its races now have only five dogs instead of six.
- ◆ At **Perry Barr** (Birmingham) the prestigious Summer Cup race was cancelled due to lack of sponsorship. With on-course turnover well down on last year, the local bookmaker who previously sponsored the race said he could not justify doing it again.
- ◆ And at **Crayford** another big racing event, the Crayford Vase, was also called off because no sponsor could be found for it.
- ◆ **Brighton & Hove** Stadium Controller, Kevin Wilde, was criticised by dog racing enthusiasts after withdrawing complimentary race night meals for trainers and staff. Wilde responded: "The track is really struggling to keep its head above water at present and we need big savings to balance the books. Everything will go into the pot and some unpopular decisions have to be made."
- ◆ In **Ireland** a huge cut has been proposed in the Horse & Greyhound Racing Fund for 2010 by an expert group established by the government to identify massive reductions in public expenditure in response to the recession. The cut would severely damage the Irish greyhound racing industry, which receives millions of euros annually from the Fund.



Recent demo outside "struggling" Brighton & Hove

Demos for the dogs in Dorset

Campaign launched to close greyhound track at Poole

Yet another greyhound track, this time at Poole, is facing regular demos by local Greyhound Action supporters, following the formation of a new GA branch in Dorset. The branch also plans to hold info stalls in Poole town centre and other locations throughout the county. If you live in the area and would like to help the campaign, call Dorset Greyhound Action on 07952 115771.



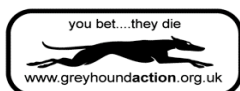
One of several recent demos outside Poole Stadium and an info stall in the town centre



GA calls for commercial greyhound racing ban

Strong submission to Defra consultation

In a submission to a Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs consultation on the "welfare of racing greyhounds", Greyhound Action has called for betting on dog racing to be made illegal, thereby effectively abolishing the greyhound racing industry. GA put forward strong arguments in favour of the Racing Dog Protection Act, "an official proposal to outlaw betting on dog racing in the UK", which has recently been drawn up by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Racing Animals.



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