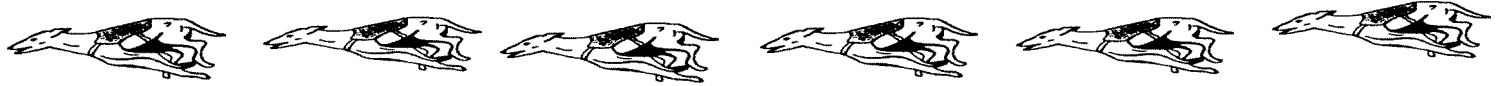




Running for their Lives!



Newsletter of Greyhound Action No. 25 May/June 2009

Cutbacks, criminals and cruelty

Sorry saga of the greyhound racing industry goes on

The British dog racing industry has been forced to make yet more cutbacks in the face of a further decline in attendances, due in no small part to increasing public awareness of the slaughter and suffering of greyhounds bred to run on the tracks.

At the same time, a number of court cases and media exposés have, yet again, revealed the cruel and criminal nature of many of those involved in the corrupt and seedy world of commercial greyhound racing.

◆ "Trading difficulties" have caused the management at Peterborough Stadium, claimed by the industry to be one of Britain's most financially-viable tracks, to drastically cut the amount of trainers permitted to run dogs there, meaning that, as from the June 1st, the number of dogs racing at Peterborough will be reduced by 30% from 512 to 350. According to a statement by the local greyhound trainers' association, stadium bosses had told them that "current financial circumstances at the Stadium were not good and urgent remedial measures needed to be put in place".

It is, of course, concerning to hear of such a large number of greyhounds 'surplus to requirements' and we are

demanding that the stadium management and greyhound racing authorities provide suitable accommodation for all those no longer wanted for racing.

However, over all, the decision is a good one for greyhounds, as it means less demand for these dogs to be bred for the racing industry, and fewer will suffer and die as a consequence.

Reduced attendances led to the stadium making its racing manager redundant and dropping its Tuesday race night at the beginning of the year.

Attendances at the track have also been hit by continuing revelations about the serious injury and slaughter of dogs racing at the stadium, which are outlined in a special leaflet regularly distributed in Peterborough town centre and outside the stadium by local Greyhound Action supporters.



*Greyhound Action in the North-East
Info stall in Middlesbrough city centre*

◆ Hull Stadium is to scrap its Thursday meeting and will now only be open for racing on Saturday evenings. Andrew Wagstaff, the stadium manager, stated in a press release that attendance figures had slumped dramatically in the past few months, making racing on Thursdays uneconomic. Both Wagstaff and racing manager Mick Smith have been forced to take 50% pay cuts.

◆ Bookmakers William Hill, who own greyhound tracks at Newcastle and Sunderland and contribute heavily towards the dog racing industry, have suffered a 4% drop in operating profits and are £1.45 billion in debt.

◆ Former greyhound trainer, Brian Stirling, has been jailed for 10 years for conspiracy to supply cocaine and

possessing amphetamines with intent to supply. Drug gang boss Stirling, who raced dogs at Newcastle Stadium, was described in court as "heavy duty" and "a dangerous man". He gave up his trainer's licence in 2007, after being charged by racing authorities with giving a potentially fatal drug to a greyhound, so the dog could be raced while still injured.



A recent demo outside Peterborough Stadium

◆ In 2006, another North-East trainer, Graham Calvert, was fined £700 for a similar doping offence. Last October Calvert, who raced at Sunderland, was jailed for two years for firearms and drug offences. Gambling addict Calvert had made headlines when he sued William Hill, claiming the firm had not done enough to stop him placing bets even though he asked them to protect him from his own addiction. The William Hill connection to these two criminals goes even further than that, however, as the tracks at Newcastle and Sunderland are both owned by them.



◆ In March, greyhound trainer Robert Freeman, who kept more than 30 dogs at kennels in Essex in "concentration camp" conditions with no food, water or light, was jailed for 90 days for "causing unnecessary suffering". His father, John, an ex-trainer, was given a suspended sentence for "failing to prevent suffering to animals". Both were banned from keeping animals for 10 years.

◆ The following month, Brian Brunton, a Cirencester man who bred and raced greyhounds, was ordered to do community service and banned from keeping animals for life after he left a "retired" dog so malnourished that she plummeted to half her normal weight.

Left - Demo at Swindon dog track, just down the road from where Brunton bred greyhounds

◆ In May, the activities of greyhound executioner Larry Earle were exposed by the Irish Sun, which revealed how he charges 10 euros a time to shoot "unwanted" racing dogs at his knackers yard in County Wexford. This follows an exposé in the Sunday Times last November of a knackers yard in Hertfordshire that was killing greyhounds for £20.

Dog racing's had its day in the USA

Good news for greyhounds from across the pond

◆ According to February's figures, revenue for Dubuque Greyhound Park in **Iowa** has fallen by over 6%.

◆ In **Colorado**, a senate committee has endorsed a Bill relaxing betting restrictions on televised racing. Kennel operators claimed it would be "the last nail in the coffin" for live greyhound racing in the state, which stopped last summer after their contract negotiations with track owners broke down. All racing in Colorado is controlled by one company, BLB Investors, which closed the Mile High greyhound track last June and has no money to invest in other tracks because of financial problems.

◆ The commission that oversees horse and dog racing in **Texas** is facing a shortfall of 14%, nearly \$678,000, mostly due to decreased betting.

◆ Representative Mary Cooney, who wants to outlaw commercial greyhound racing at **New Hampshire's** two remaining dog tracks in Belmont and Seabrook, told reporters: "I did the math, and if the workers from these tracks went on unemployment, they'd be better off and it would cost the state less." Property from the state's recently closed Hinsdale track was auctioned off in April to help pay \$1.75m owed to creditors.

◆ In 1989 **Wisconsin** had 5 greyhound tracks. Now there's only Dairyland in Kenosha, where track bosses expect to lose as much as \$2.8m in 2009, following estimated losses of \$2.48m for 2008.

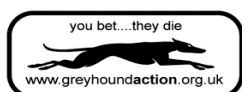
At its height the track boasted 20 kennels housing over 1,200 dogs. Currently there are approximately 700 dogs housed in 11 active kennels, with 2 having closed just recently for financial reasons.

◆ **Rhode Island's** Twin River greyhound track is on the verge of going bankrupt. Wagering on races there dropped from \$37.9m a decade ago to \$13.2m in 2008 and the track's owners are struggling to pay back \$565m in outstanding loans.

◆ Earlier this year, US greyhound protection activists led a successful campaign to prevent the introduction of commercial dog racing to **Jamaica**.



Florida – demo by 40 members of Grey2K USA outside the Naples-Fort Myers greyhound track in Bonita Springs in April



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