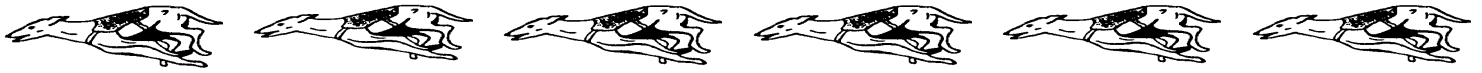


Running for their Lives!



Newsletter of Greyhound Action No. 14 Spring 2007

Winning Words!

GA launches big public education campaign

The dog racing industry is in big trouble. Attendances down, tracks closing, media exposés of the mass slaughter of greyhounds.

A few decades ago, crowds at many greyhound race meetings were similar in size to those at today's Premiership football games.

The average attendance at dog racing is now less than 600.

For most of the major tracks, profit margins are so narrow that a drop of just a few percent in attendances would see them go to the wall - and fewer tracks means fewer races, means fewer greyhounds bred, means fewer discarded and put to death.

Due to a massive reduction in hardcore dog-race enthusiasts in recent years, the racing industry is increasingly relying on the attendance of ordinary members of the public to keep the tracks open. But most ordinary people in this country are fond of dogs and would not support greyhound racing, if they were aware of the slaughter and suffering that it involves.

This is why Greyhound Action has launched our *Winning Words* campaign, to educate ordinary people who are going for "a night at the dogs" and to persuade them not to do so or, at least, never to do so again.

The main idea of the campaign is for our leaflets to be distributed as often as possible to people going into major greyhound tracks on race-nights. To hold demonstrations outside such tracks would require a reasonable number of participants, but such leafletting sessions can be successfully carried out by just two or three people at a time.

A small group of our supporters have already started the ball rolling at Wimbledon, one of the biggest dog tracks in the country, where they have been leafletting every Saturday evening and sometimes on other race-nights too - and attendances at the track are falling, as a consequence.

There are major greyhound stadiums in or near the following locations:-

Brighton, Chester-le-Street, Coventry, Crayford, Doncaster, Glasgow, Great Yarmouth, Hall Green (Birmingham), Harlow, Henlow, Manchester, Mildenhall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, Oxford, Perry Barr (Birmingham), Peterborough, Pontefract, Poole, Portsmouth, Reading, Romford, Sheffield, Sittingbourne, Sunderland, Swindon, Walthamstow (London), Wimbledon (London), Wolverhampton.

If any of them is anywhere near you, please consider taking part in a leafletting campaign against the track. Contact Greyhound Action for leaflets, more info and to be put in touch with other people in your area who would also like to be involved.

If, for any reason, you are not able to actively take part in the campaign, please try to send us a donation, however small, towards the cost of the many thousands of leaflets we will need to get printed to make *Winning Words* a winner.



Greyhound killer in court

Seaham Slaughterer fined for enviro offence

Supporters of Greyhound Action, accompanied by rescued greyhounds, demonstrated outside Durham Crown Court on March 16th, when greyhound killer David Smith appeared there for sentencing on a charge of burying two dogs on his property without a permit.

Smith had pleaded guilty to the charge, brought by the Environment Agency, a month earlier at the Magistrates Court, where GA supporters also held a demonstration.

The case followed media revelations last July, that Smith had used a captive-bolt pistol to shoot greyhounds, brought to him by trainers and others involved in the dog racing industry, and then buried their bodies on his land. He was said to have slaughtered 10,000 dogs over a 15 year period. Sentencing Smith to a £2,000 fine with £2,000 costs, Judge Peter Armstrong told him "had this been a case of animal cruelty, you would have been going to prison today".



Unfortunately, Smith could not be charged with causing suffering to the dogs he shot, as there were no witnesses prepared to give evidence as to how they died. We have received information that some trainers who took greyhounds to Smith saw him shoot dogs several times before they lost consciousness, but, surprise, surprise, they were not willing to come forward to testify against him.

Neither could he be charged in connection with the actual killing of the greyhounds, as, unfortunately, if suffering cannot be proved, it is not illegal for a person to shoot a dog, if they have been given permission to do so by the "owner".

There is little doubt, however, that many of the dogs shot by Smith suffered considerably and that some were buried alive, having been stunned, rather than killed, by his captive-bolt pistol.

In December 2004, following an RSPCA prosecution, Andrew Gough, a South Wales "greyhound executioner", was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment, after a dog he had shot with a similar weapon regained consciousness and was discovered whimpering in agony on a Caerphilly hillside. The £2,000 fine imposed on Smith was appallingly lenient, but the judge's hands were tied because the charge only related to the burying of two greyhounds witnessed by a Sunday Times reporter on July 12th last year. Because the Environment Agency failed to excavate his land, Smith could not be charged in connection with any of the thousands of other dogs he had previously buried.

We are now pressing the Inland Revenue to prosecute Smith for tax evasion in relation to the £10 a time he was said to have received for killing those dogs. It is disgraceful that the greyhound racing industry itself wasn't in the dock, accused of causing the mass-slaughter of the thousands of dogs it callously discards every year, when they are no longer of any use as money-making machines.

David Smith is, without doubt, an evil man, but those who run the dog racing industry are even more wicked, as it is their activities that allow characters like him to flourish. Smith's greyhound-killing days have now come to an end, but that does not mean that any dogs have been saved from slaughter, as the "surplus" greyhounds he put to death are now just being killed elsewhere.

Thankfully, Smith's two court appearances, together with the GA demonstrations outside, generated a huge amount of publicity against the greyhound racing industry, which will, without doubt, encourage even more people to refrain from attending or betting on dog racing.



Another rough reception for dog race reps

Angry demonstration at awards event



On the evening of Sunday, January 21st, representatives of the dog racing industry were, once again, forced to run the gauntlet of angry greyhound protection campaigners as they arrived at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London's West End for an awards ceremony hosted by the British Greyhound Racing Board (BGRB).

Almost 100 Greyhound Action supporters (twice as many as last year) gathered at the hotel entrance to protest loudly and vociferously against the annual suffering and slaughter of many thousands of dogs caused by the greyhound racing industry.

The protesters, holding banners and placards, used megaphones, whistles and airhorns to create a barrage of sound, as an expression of their disgust at the callous treatment of greyhounds. Many thanks to all our supporters who attended this protest and helped make it even more successful than last year's demonstration.

Like last year, it was great to be able to take the war against greyhound persecution right into the enemy's heartland, so to speak, and to make the tuxedoed bigwigs of the dog racing industry suffer just a little in exchange for the massive suffering and death they impose upon greyhounds, as they line their pockets with the blood-stained profits of animal abuse.

An indication of the widespread public support for Greyhound Action occurred shortly after the demonstration, when one of our supporters took a taxi to Paddington station to catch her train home. She told the taxi driver about the demo, and the reasons for it, and, when they arrived at the station, he refused to accept the fare and asked her to put the money towards our campaign.



More good news for greyhounds

Fewer dogs racing, more tracks closed.....



Figures released by the National Greyhound Racing Club show that there were 10,101 greyhounds registered to race in 2006, representing a 15% fall (1,311) on the number registered in 2005 and 1,811 less than in 2004. Yet more evidence of the dog racing industry's decline.

Two more greyhound tracks, at Rye House (Hoddesdon, Herts) and Chesterton (Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffs) have closed and dog racing enthusiasts are pessimistic about their chances of ever opening again.

Northern Ireland's only major greyhound track, at Brandywell Stadium, looks set to disappear after Derry City Football Club announced plans for the stadium's redevelopment that do not include a dog track.

Following complaints from Greyhound Action supporters, the Ann Summers company has ended a promotion involving dog racing and stated that it has no plans to ever do anything similar again.

Website wonders!

Big increase in visitors to greyhoundaction.org.uk

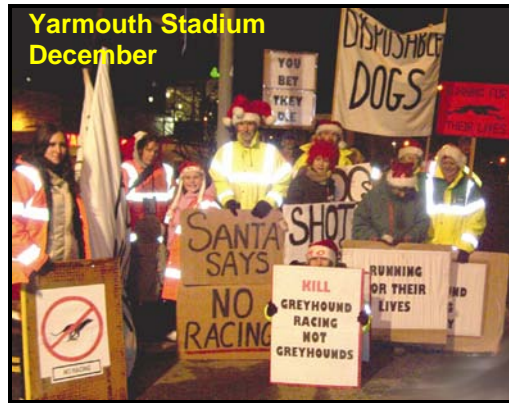
Visits to the Greyhound Action website are now averaging about 390 per day (over 110,000 in the past 12 months), up from about 280 a year ago.

Our grateful thanks, once again, to eMonkeys, who continue to maintain the site for us in such an excellent fashion.



Making a stand for greyhounds

More GA stalls and demonstrations



Yarmouth Stadium
December

Greyhound Action supporters have been out and about educating the public with stalls and demonstrations in many different parts of the country. During the run-up to Christmas, there were GA stalls at several Cruelty-Free Fayres and quite a number of demonstrations have taken place outside greyhound tracks in recent months. GA supporters have also held street stalls and leafletted shoppers in various towns and cities. Please contact GA if you would like to help with demos, stalls or leafletting in your local area.



Welshpool Cruelty-Free Fayre
December



Brighton Christmas Without Cruelty
December



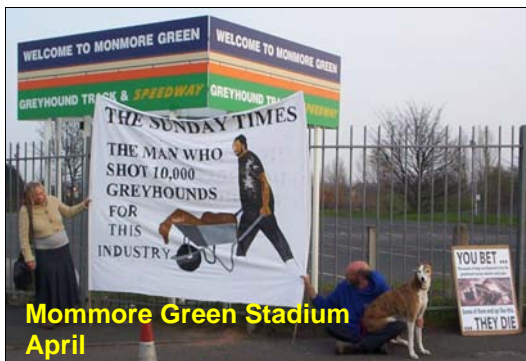
Edinburgh
Cruelty-Free Fayre
December



Coventry Stadium Valentine's demo
February



Henlow Stadium
March



Mommore Green Stadium
April



Reading Stadium
April



Perry Barr
Stadium
April

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