

CHASING DREAMS
A HISTORY OF VICTORIAN GREYHOUND RACING
Tim Haslett. 2008

Section 1
The History of the Sport

Chapter 1: The Coursing Years

The origins of the Greyhound are found in ancient history dating back nearly 4000 years, appearing in pictures on the walls of ancient Egyptian tombs. The greyhound appears in many paintings through our history and is the only dog mentioned in the Bible: in Proverbs. 30:29-31

There be three things which do well, yea,
Which are comely in going;
A lion, which is strongest among beasts and
Turneth not away from any;
A greyhound;
A he-goat also.

There are two notable mentions in English literature.
The monk in Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th century *The Canterbury Tales* reportedly spent great sums on his greyhounds:

Greyhounds he hadde as swifte as fowel in flight;
Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.

In *Henry V* Henry's speech to his troops just before the Battle of Harfleur compares people to coursing greyhounds:

I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start.
The game's afoot.

Greyhounds in Art

The Greyhound was also a common element in many hunting scenes in renaissance and medieval paintings indicating its ubiquitous presence in the lives of the European aristocracy. Unlike other hunting dogs, which rely on an acute sense of smell, the Greyhound is a sight hound and chases anything that moves. The greyhound could spot its quarry from a long distance and run it down at speeds of close to 70 kmh or 20 m per second. Originally the sport of coursing was designed to show a single dog's skill in sighting and catching a game animal. Later, this became a contest between two dogs matched against each other with large sums of money being bet on the winner.

The greyhound had significant royal patronage in England. In the 10th Century, King Howel of Wales made killing a greyhound punishable by death. In England in 1014, King Canute enacted the Forest Laws, which decreed that only nobleman could own Greyhounds. He also set aside large areas of rolling countryside for hunting by the nobility and upper classes. Because commoners and peasants faced severe punishment for owning a greyhound, Greyhound coursing became a sport for the wealthy aristocracy. The Forest Laws were abolished by Queen Elizabeth I, who had the Duke of Norfolk draw up rules to judge competitive coursing. These rules established how big a head start the hare would get and the ways in which the two greyhounds' speed, agility, acceleration and concentration would be judged against one another. These rules have changed little to the present day.

The oldest form of hare coursing simply involved two dogs chasing a hare, the winner being the dog that caught the hare. The competitive version of coursing has a number of variations. Open coursing takes place in the open, and closed coursing, which was a later 19th century development, takes place in an enclosure with an escape route. Open coursing is either run as *walked-up* coursing, where a line of people walk through the countryside to flush out a hare, or as *driven coursing* (such as the Waterloo Cup), where hares are driven by beaters towards the coursing field.

In each case, when a suitable hare appears, a person known as a *slipper* uses a *slip* with two collars to release two dogs at the same time, in pursuit of the hare. The hare is given a head start (known as *fair law*), usually between 80–100m. The hare will run at 45kph and the greyhounds, which run at speeds in excess of 60kph, will start to

catch up with it. Since the greyhounds are much bigger than the hare, and much less agile, they find it hard to follow the hare's sharp turns, which it makes as the greyhounds threaten to catch it. This agility gives the hare an important and often crucial advantage as it seeks, usually successfully, to escape. The dogs are awarded points on how many times they can turn the hare, how closely they follow the hare's course and for a kill. The contest between the greyhounds is judged from horseback and the winning greyhound will proceed to the next round of a knockout tournament.

The competitive version of coursing has developed since the first set of English rules for hare coursing was drawn up by the Duke of Norfolk. It remained an aristocratic sport and Royal patronage of coursing continued when, between 1619 until his death in 1625, King James I released 100 hares each year at Newmarket for matches between the King's greyhounds.

Even in those times, wagering on the results was a part of the coursing scene. Throughout the history of greyhound racing, wagering has been one of the constant and defining influences on the development of the sport.

The history of the Greyhound in Australia dates to the very earliest European contact. When Lt. James Cook received instructions from the Admiralty that the aristocrat Joseph Banks was to accompany him on his 1768 journey on the Endeavour, he did not anticipate that Banks would bring two greyhounds with him. On April 28, 1770 Cook landed on Botany Bay and the Greyhound stood on Australian soil the first time in history. On one outing, the greyhounds tried to catch some of the rare animals, probably rock wallabies. "The Greyhound," wrote Banks "sighted a strange animal about the size of a rabbit and gave chase but immediately lamed itself against a stump hidden in the long grass." This was the first recorded sporting event between England and Australia establishing what was to become a great tradition. The result: Locals 1 Visitors 0.

When Governor Phillip arrived with the first Fleet in 1788, he brought three wild rabbits and two greyhounds with him and subsequent arrivals from the motherland frequently brought greyhounds to the colony.

The First Victorian Coursing Club

From the 1850s, the aristocratic tradition of open coursing continued with match races between greyhounds owned by wealthy Victorian landowners. As there were no hares, the resourceful locals used rock wallabies as the quarry.

In these early colonial times, greyhounds were also used to hunt the growing number of rabbits that threatened the pasture for sheep and cattle. Ownership of a hunting dog was common. (Pictures) However, purebred coursing dogs were rare and imported dogs from good bloodline attracted high prices. Mr. George Chirnside paid £400 (\$36,000) to import Melfort who won the Australian Waterloo Cup for him in 1884.

In the early 1870s, the hares were being imported and were breeding prolifically. Being imported game, hares were protected and there were heavy fines for poaching. However, illegal coursing was a highly popular sport. In early 1873, the Game Act removed the protection of the hare. The hare became the target of the hunter, the coursing sportsman and the “pot hunter” who would often sell his catch for up to 5/- (\$30) each. Many men found a good living hunting and selling hares.

In the summer of 1872, a small group of sportsmen approached Mr. William Clarke, the biggest landholder and richest man in the Colony, with a request to form a coursing club and course hares on his property at Sunbury. Clarke, who was already President of the Melbourne Cricket Club, was to become President of the Victoria Coursing Club. Clarke. His wife, Lady Clarke, was one of a group of Melbourne women who burnt the bails used during the 1882-3 cricket tour by the English cricket team and put the ashes in an urn to be a perpetual trophy.

THE AUSTRALIAN COURSING CLUB MEETING AT WERRIBEE PARK.

picture

Date(s) of creation: June 11, 1877.

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Apart from presiding over meetings, Clarke's role would be to provide the venue and preserve the hares. The sport at this stage was an activity reserved for the gentry and Will Clarke was delighted when the Governor, Sir George Bowen, agreed to be patron and promised to attend the first meeting set for the last four days of May in 1873. A special train would be provided to take spectators from Spencer Street to Sunbury. The main event of the card for the meeting was the Sunbury Stakes with 32 dogs competing for a 20 sovereign (\$2300) piece of plate donated by the VCC.

Opening meeting of the Victoria Coursing Club, at Digger's Rest. picture

Date(s) of creation: May 15, 1875.

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The stake was won by Mr. G. Plant's *Nicodemus* with the runner up being Secretary Tom Haydon's imported dog *Pell Mell* who was destined to become an outstanding success at stud. The press covered the meeting in detail giving much emphasis to the fact that hares were coursed for the first time in the Colony. [Also check for photos.](#)

THE WATERLOO CUP

In the brief period between the first coursing meeting at Sunbury in May 1873 and The Waterloo Cup in August, the popularity of the sport spread like wildfire. On 26th June, a match race for £100 (\$9,000) a side was held at a Mr. Cameron's property twelve miles from Melbourne on Sydney Road. The meeting created great public interest through press coverage. In July, the Grant and Polworth Coursing Club conducted a three-day meeting at Marathon, 17 miles from Melbourne, and early in August the Ballarat Coursing Club held a four-day meeting at Pentland Hills

The first Waterloo Cup meeting programmed three events: the Cup, the Purse, and the Plate. Will Clarke was elated when His Excellency and Lady Bowen arrived. The

well-mounted Vice-Regal couple followed the action with enthusiasm while lesser mortals followed on foot.

Mr. Watson received a pure gold collar as the first Victorian Waterloo Cup trophy for the win by *Miss Heller*. The Purse was won by Mr. M. Whelan's Haidee (by *Pell Mell*) and the Plate went to *Hen* from Ben Hepburn's kennels at Ballarat and owned by a Mr. W. Learmonth. During the meeting Will and Janet Clarke were generous hosts providing luncheons for members of the Club and a number of the visitors.

At a dinner given in his honour by the Victoria Coursing Club, Will Clarke said he felt "that coursing was free from all contaminating influences and that good sport in the field was a mirror to every other relation of life." He asked all present to be upstanding and charge their glasses for the toast "Success to Coursing in Victoria." Mr. Jonathan Binns Were, who founded the stock broking firm J B Were in 1840, proposed a toast to the "Importation of Greyhounds".

During the remainder of the 1870s, involvement with coursing was soon to become almost epidemic throughout Victoria. Importations from England by William McCulloch and others were announced regularly in the press. By 1875, there were 24 clubs established in Victoria; the VCC, Ballart, Grant and Pollwarth (Geelong), Williamstown, Western District, Ararat, Fitzroy-Collingwood, Dowling Forest, Mortlake, Kilmore, Brunswick, Clunes and District, Hamilton, Sandhurst, Melton, Echuca, Heathcote Town and District, Kyneton, West Bourke, Maryborough and Carisbrook, Wyndham, Gisbourne, Stawel, Beaufort and Runnymede. In the 1870s, Victoria was, apart from the gold fields, a predominantly rural economy and the clubs represented the rural gentry and their views on society.

The popularity of coursing in Victoria could be seen in the increases in prize money for the Waterloo Cup, which was from £130 for the winner in 1873 to £1000 in 1876. This represented \$90,00 in present-day terms and can be seen in comparison with the current \$100,000 stakes offered for Group 1 races, such as the Melbourne Cup and the Australia Cup in Melbourne.

Will Clarke's view coursing was free from all contaminating influences was also indicative of the extent to which the rural life was free of the contaminating influences the city. Clark himself as a member of the landed gentry, a class from which embodied all natural virtue. Such men believed, in the words of Ancient Roman writer Arrian:

"true huntsmen do not take out their hounds to catch the creature, but for a trial of speed and a race, and they are satisfied if the hare manages to find something that will rescue her"

The attitudes would become deeply ingrained in the Greyhound fraternity as it developed. As the sport grew, it became necessary to have some form of organization to run such major events as the Waterloo Cup. The natural order was for this to be a confederation of like-minded gentleman drawn from the **coursing** clubs of rural Victoria. These like-minded gentleman regarded Greyhound coursing as an amateur and manly sport. Certainly, there was wagering on the side, but no one actually did it for a living. Participants in coursing were bound together by common sentiments and ideals about the nature of the sport. So it was within the natural order of things for such men to govern and control the sport.

This arrangement worked well while coursing, both Open and Plumpton, was the sole form of the sport. When speed coursing was introduced in Melbourne some 60 years later, the divisions between the urban and rural interests would become increasingly sharp. This was never more obvious when the National Coursing Association banned speed coursing, which was predominantly held in the Metropolitan urban centres, during the running of the Waterloo Cup.

In May 1877, eligible clubs were invited to send delegates to a meeting at Scott's Hotel in Melbourne to form a national coursing body. Twelve clubs sent representatives, New South Wales providing two, the Victoria Coursing Club three, Ballarat two and the others one each. Will Clarke was unanimously elected as President of the new National body. A "National" body based in Victoria was soon to prove unworkable and the states became autonomous. The Victorian Coursing Club

became known as the National Coursing Club of Victoria with representation based on membership of the individual clubs.

The NCC was to become the organizing body for Open Coursing and Plumpton in Victoria. The clubs that constituted the NCC consisted of groups of men who met together to course their dogs. The formality of these organizations probably resembled that of a well-organized game of beach cricket. Membership of the NCC gave the privilege of nominating and competing for such major events as the Waterloo Cup. The major role of the NCC was deciding where these prestigious events would be held, itself often a matter of sharp debate, and later registering the greyhounds. It was above all else a meeting of "sporting men of goodwill" and was well designed to meet the needs of the coursing fraternity. This happy situation was to change when the nature of coursing changed from rural activity to an urban-based racetrack activity, which was to become known as Speed Coursing. The NCC was a not-for-profit organization, which ran coursing for the benefit of its members. Its democratic structure and conservative rural culture would prove inadequate to manage and regulate the pressures generated by the commercial interests of proprietary ownership. Ultimately, this would weaken its claim to be coursing's governing body and lead to its long, slow and painful decline.

It was not long before coursing involved big money, not only in prize money, but also in wagering. Much of the bitterness that was to develop between the Australian Coursing Club and the Victorian Coursing Club involved a "defaulter", a man who had not paid his gambling debts.

THE AUSTRALIAN COURSING CLUB AND THE CHIRNSIDES

The Victoria Coursing Club prospered as the principal club, adding a Derby and Oaks meeting to its fixtures. Despite the prestige and success of the club, a new club was formed named the Australian Coursing Club. This arose as a result of a dispute over the winner of the Waterloo Cup. It was an early indication of the political squabbles that would beset the sport, as powerful interests sought to gain control and influence over the increasingly popular and lucrative sport. The new club's venue was at Werribee Park, the property of Thomas and Andrew Chirnside. In April 1875, the

estate hosted the inaugural coursing meeting of the Williamstown and Wyndham Club. With the Chirnside brothers as joint Presidents and the capture of Tom Haydon as Secretary, the club gained patronage from the Governors of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania.

The Australian Coursing Club's initial meeting, run over two days in April 1878, was a great success, so much so that visitors, some from England, declared the venue the best they had ever witnessed and the coursing outstanding.

The introduction of Plumpton coursing in 1882 tolled the death knell of coursing at Werribee Park and the Australian Coursing Club was wound up in 1886.

PLUMPTON COURSING

English Coursing Clubs had needed to ensure the enthusiasm and support of the coursing public as well as attracting more followers, more publicity and more financial support for coursing. Following Open Coursing on foot, over open country, in bad weather and over large distances involved a certain amount of hardship for most of the spectators. It is not difficult to imagine how quickly the greyhounds outstripped even the most fleet of foot. The weather could also be a problem. Reports of early Open Coursing events in Victoria record that the spectators carried large amounts of whisky to keep themselves warm in the freezing temperatures. As a result, a vast proportion of the spectators were no longer sober by the end of the event. One unfortunate gentleman became so disoriented that he wandered off and was found next morning frozen to death under a tree, the effects of hypothermia and alcohol having led to his demise.

Soon the revolutionary idea of fencing off an area for coursing and restricting the size of the course to a rectangle measuring approximately 800yds by 400yds was being discussed. The name given to the new enclosed coursing was Plumpton Coursing, named after a small village midway between London and Brighton where enclosed coursing was first introduced on the property of a Mr. Case.

The Plumpton would not have to rely on finding hares in the wild but would capture and breed hares to run the course to the end. Hare drives, as they were to become known, were designed to capture hares to be trained for the course and soon became a regular part of Plumpton Coursing.

To give them a chance of survival equal to that in the wild, there were a number of hare sized exits at the end of the course where the hares could escape. The hares were trained to find these escape hatches well in advance of the main event. The careful breeding and selection of the hares specifically for Plumpton coursing would ensure a higher and more consistent standard of hare than the unpredictable process of taking the first hare that was found in the wild. It also meant that successful hares could be re-cycled.

Plumpton Coursing had significant advantages over open field coursing. The guaranteed supply of hares meant the meeting was guaranteed to take place. Open coursing relied on the chance that hares would be found in the wild. There were reports of open coursing meetings in Victoria where the dogs had waited in the slips for up to four hours in the freezing cold conditions waiting for a hare to be flushed out.

A certain element of luck would be eliminated because the courses were of a relatively constant length, around 800m. In open coursing, the distance covered during the course could vary immensely and courses of up to 10 minutes were not unusual. The greyhound's explosive speed does not suit it to such endurance events and these longer events became a test of endurance rather than a test of speed.

Most importantly, the chase was always in view, allowing the spectators to see the course from beginning to end. In Open Coursing, the greyhounds could sometimes pursue the hare over four miles – a fine spectacle for horse riders who could keep up but not much of a spectacle for those following on foot. The shorter distance for the Plumpton also meant that a program of 60 courses could be held in an afternoon.

In addition, the hares were better fed and a smaller percentage would be killed as they were trained to find the escape hatches at the end of the course. Courses rarely

exceeded half a mile so both hares and greyhounds would not suffer undue distress. The judging would be more closely observed and attract less criticism.

Judging had become a vexed issue in Victoria. The Judging of the course had drawn much criticism at Sunbury during the Waterloo Cup meeting in 1873. It seemed that not one colonial Judge had given complete satisfaction. Will Clarke decided to import a Judge, Mr. George Warwick, from England for the 1874 season but Warwick advised that his terms and conditions were a £300 fee (\$36,000) plus first class return passage and, whilst in Victoria, first class travel and accommodation. Will Clarke and William McCulloch, the Vice President and others guaranteed the costs and Warwick was appointed for the 1874 season.

Will Clarke isolated an area, which would become famous as the “Oval” and which was around 800 yards long and 400 yards broad. The hares were bred on adjacent and securely fenced paddocks and driven from their semi-captivity into the enclosure area a day or two prior to a meeting. The Oval was situated close to the Diggers Rest railway station with a background provided by a stony rising known as Mount Misery, probably named by some luckless pioneer or explorer.

A number of Plumpton courses opened around the same time. Mr. J.B. Scott, a former Warwickshire courser, purchased some uncleared land nine miles from Melbourne, which he named Sherwood Park and transformed it into a Plumpton ground. Another Plumpton ground was opened by the Ballarat Club on the Ercildoune estate of Sir Samuel Wilson, sixteen miles from Ballarat by rail. The Cox family and in particular Archie Cox, who would later become a Stipendiary Steward with the Victoria Racing Club, provided a venue for coursing at Moonee Valley. The venue came into its own as an enclosed Plumpton ground and would become the site for Waterloo Cups and other Classics.

The change from open coursing to enclosed Plumpton coursing had a marked impact on breeding. Plumpton conditions favoured leaner speedier dogs. The stamina, which had been necessary to contest five courses on the vast open spaces, was no longer a vital necessity. On the shorter courses, honours generally went to the swiftest and this

changed the pattern of breeding for all time. Plumpton coursing set the scene for the emergence of greyhound racing or speed coursing as we know it today.

THE GREAT COURSING YEARS

Despite the introduction of the Plumpton, open coursing continued to flourish throughout Victoria in the period from 1881 until the outbreak of World War 1. The Chirnside brothers expressed the opinion that the sport would “gradually fall into disrepute” because hares would be held in captivity, the competition conducted within an enclosure and betting would escalate. Plumpton coursing, with good prize money and vigorous wagering would experience its share of controversy and impropriety. It was said that when Mr. W. Cooper’s *Capri* won the Cup in 1882, £40,000 (\$4m) was taken from Bookmakers. The first prize money of £500 (\$49,000) was the equivalent of three years salary to the workingman.

The popularity of Plumpton coursing is demonstrated by a study of the National Coursing Club of Victoria’s coursing fixtures for 1908. From 8th April to 15th September 1908, the National Coursing Club of Victoria held 272 days of competition and on one alone Saturday thirteen clubs programmed meetings. During a similar 20-week, period the modern AFL would hold 320 games, nationally. No rural city, town or outer area of greater Melbourne was without a strong coursing fraternity. The necessity for all competing greyhounds to wear either a red or white collar required much knitting from the women of coursing families.

The control of the National Coursing Club

The quite incredible growth of clubs and participants saw the introduction of many safeguards. Whelpings had to be reporting to the National Coursing Club within two months or fines were imposed. Non-pedigree greyhounds were barred under rules, which were consistently updated and in 1895, reviewed comprehensively. The importance of official records was shown when the National Coursing Club appointed Secretary John Munday as the first Keeper of the Stud Book in 1888.

Coursing remained popular during and after World War 1 although it no longer boasted the hundred clubs of the period between 1890 and 1910 when the sport rivaled horse racing in interest and prize money.

However, the beginnings of problems associated with the keeping of greyhounds were emerging in populated areas. The farmer and bushman experienced few problems. Between attending coursing meetings, he could course his hounds in open paddocks with rabbits, which were considered vermin, as fair game. Hares would provide good training and experience but, as quarry, would generally prove much too elusive on their own territory.

For city dwellers it was different. An early morning coursing enthusiast who slipped his greyhound in Albert Park was unaware of the presence of small dog being exercised by a local female resident. The resultant mangling of the pet brought adverse publicity in its wake and almost certainly led to the registration fee for greyhounds being set by civic authorities at four times higher than other canines. Arguments, which continue to the present day, were made in an attempt to educate the public about greyhounds: that their savagery was selective and was confined to the pursuit of game and that attacks on humans were virtually unknown throughout history. All this was to no avail, and the perceptions of the greyhound were being set in a way that would make later attacks on the sport, based on the 'Ferocity' of the greyhound, very easy to mount.

Soon there were requirements that greyhounds be kept on leads and be muzzled when seen in the streets. This only served to reinforce the impression of the greyhound as dangerous, as it was the only dog under this constraint.

Until the 1930s, greyhound coursing was conducted in one of two forms. Open coursing, the traditional form of the sport, involved pairs of greyhounds coursing live hares in open country or the Plumpton, the enclosed form, where pairs of greyhounds coursed trained hares in an enclosure.

While generally considered an amateur sport, there was big money involved in the Waterloo Cup. In July 1931, the Waterloo cup was held at Benalla with a crowd of

2000 and a Cup worth £200 (\$17, 600) for the winner. The Herald reported that the winner of the previous year's cup, Fathers Footsteps, had been purchased for 250 guineas. A 1930s guinea is approximately \$88 in today's money, making Father's Footsteps worth around \$22,000. Betting was an important element of the Waterloo Cup with wins as big as £2000 (\$180,000) had been recorded at the meeting.

As a result of dissatisfaction with some bookmakers who were unable to settle wagers made on the call of the card, there was a proposal before the government for a portable totalisator for the Waterloo Cup. The submission to government, made by the president of the Victorian Coursing Club, Senator Guthrie, was a move to protect the interests of the betting public. This demonstrated not only the importance of the issue (in Senator Guthrie's mind at least) but also the political muscle that could be brought to bear in the interests of greyhound coursing. Betting on a totalisator meant that the amount a winning dog would pay was limited by the amount of money invested thus guaranteeing the pay out to the punter and is similar to modern betting on the TAB.

The Waterloo Cup was an elimination process, like that used in Grand Slam tennis, with 128 dogs racing in 64 courses in the first round. With each round half the remaining dogs would be eliminated. The "call of the card" was conducted in a hotel the night before the start of the Cup. Bookies would call out the odds on each dog and the "connections" were given first chance to take these odds. After the connections had placed their money, betting was thrown open to the general public. Outsiders could get 100-1 and well-trained and well-bred dogs 10-1. A win by a relative outsider could leave a bookie badly exposed and some became what was known as "wild ducks", a bird that cannot settle.

One aspect of the call of the card throws some light on the tensions that were to develop between the owners and trainers on one hand and the proprietary clubs on the other. At the call of the card, the dog's connections were given first option on the odds offered by the bookie, recognition of importance of the ownership of the dog. When Speed Coursing was introduced, no such privilege was extended to the connections. A bookie would put the odds up on their board and it was "first in, best dressed" Now anyone could take the good odds on offer, often leaving the owners

with shortened odds, if a punter had made a big plunge. The frustration of seeing the good odds on your dog, taken by a stranger must have served to heighten the sense of injustice at the poor prize money being put up by the clubs.

The history of greyhound coursing in the early 20th century was dominated by the National Coursing Club. The NCC is dominated by two figures A L Flint and Roy Maidment who was the Secretary of the NCC. Both were coursing men by nature but would be the major influences on the NCC as it struggled to deal with the emergence of a new form of the sport, speed coursing.

It was Maidment's view that the growth of Speed Coursing in Victoria was inevitable, and that the National Coursing Club should take control of it. Perhaps Roy Maidment had an advantage over his country coursing colleagues in that he had witnessed at first hand the suburban growth of Melbourne. He was aware that future greyhound participation would involve new generations of Victorians who would have no appreciation or interest in Open and Plumpton Coursing as he and his colleagues had known it. The NCC, concerned to protect the traditional sport against the expansion of speed coursing, saw an increase in opportunities for betting to be undesirable both in the interests of the sport and in view of the attitude of the government.

The NCC realised that unless it was able to control the sport and eliminate practices that brought it bad publicity and increasing disrepute, the Government would take control. To this end, they sought to have voluntary acceptance of NCC authority rather than government legislated control. They were increasingly concerned that government intervention was likely. The ideal was to have the government legislate control of the sport to the NCC. However, throughout the 30s and despite deputations to parliament and endorsement by individual parliamentarians, successive governments would show no inclination to rest control with the NCC. The NCC was able to exercise considerable authority over the sport. In area of registration, it was able to ensure that unregistered dogs did not race at NCC clubs, virtually ensuring that all greyhounds were NCC registered. It would be able to use this power to exert considerable influence, but ultimately, not control, over the sport.

Chapter 2: The Advent of Speed Coursing

Changes were coming to greyhound coursing in Victoria that would change the face of the sport forever as well as lay the foundations for the modern industry. Speed Coursing, which involved racing on a track behind a mechanical hare, had its origins in the USA where Owen Patrick Smith invented the mechanical hare in 1912. Smith was opposed to gambling and it wasn't until his business partner encouraged him to allow bookmakers on the track that the sport took off. Speed Coursing had several advantages over Open and Plumpton Coursing. The amount of land required was smaller. Open coursing required a large open space with a plentiful supply of wild hares and the Plumpton required an enclosure measuring some 400 by 800yds and a plentiful supply of trained hares. This meant that both Open and Plumpton Coursing were essentially rural activities. Speed coursing, by contrast, needed a circular or U-shaped track of around 400yds, a requirement that could often be met in urban areas.

A city location meant city crowds, city dog owners and city betting. It proved a powerful combination. The second meeting of the Greyhound Racing Association in the UK in 1927 saw 16,000 people come through the gates, by the next year this had risen to 70,000 a week and shares in the company had risen from 1/- to £37/10/-, the equivalent in today's money of a \$1.25c share increasing to \$2950 in just over a year.

So when American Judge Swindells, introduced the concept of mechanical hare coursing at Harold Park in Sydney, it was a huge success. Moving to Victoria in 1927, he inspired greyhound enthusiasts to follow suit. Following the meteoric rise in shares of a Speed Coursing company floated in Sydney; there was a general stampede by speculators to secure shares in the Victorian Electric Coursing Association. The Association was formed with subscribed paid up capital of £60000 (\$4.5m). The 100,000 shares were quickly snapped up and with no more shares available, 100% profit was being made on the day of allotment. This was despite the fact that the Hogan government made no secret of the fact that legislation would be introduced to forbid mechanical hare coursing. Undeterred, the Victorian Electric Coursing Association prepared to spend a huge sum to purchase land and thousands of pounds for equipment including building a railway siding a short distance from the enclosure.

The Victorian Electric Coursing Association examined many sites before finally settling on land close to Melbourne in Tottenham, which was owned by Fred Watkins, a local butcher. They named the venue White City following after the racing track of that name in London.

Two more clubs opened in quick succession but with mixed results. A straight track with expensive electric lighting was opened at Aspendale. At the time of the opening, the usual Christmas carnival was on and as a result there was not sufficient electrical power to light the track. Despite an attractive program and thousands of people coming to the popular racecourse, the track opened and closed on the same night with the venture proving too expensive to be viable.

Another was opened at Craigieburn on the Melbourne Coursing Club ground where speed coursing after a live hare was introduced for the first time in Victoria. The meetings at Craigieburn were conducted in the afternoons and later under electric lights. The lighting failed in several occasions and the club was unable to carry on. The club ceased operations in 1932 and moved to Melbourne where it settled at Napier Park.

White City held its first and last mechanical hare meeting, with betting, on Saturday 10th December 1927. Contemporary reports put the attendance at 26,000. The Association was to receive a body blow, perhaps almost a knockout punch, when the State Parliament of Victoria introduced legislation outlawing betting on any coursing that involved a mechanical lure.

Four days later, the Act prohibiting betting on races behind a mechanical hare became law. It seems highly probable that the Parliament of 1927, like all its predecessors, would have included a number of traditional coursing men, who had virtually boycotted the new sport. The greyhound fraternity saw something much more sinister in the Government's decision alleging it was influenced by John Wren. A wrestling match at Wren's stadium had been poorly attended on White City's big opening night and it was said that an infuriated Wren brought all of his considerable political influence to bear on the appropriate Minister. It was also believed that Wren had

offered to buy a 50% share in the Victorian Electric Coursing Association but it had been rejected.

Devastated by the prospect of heavy losses, White City carried on without betting. But the whirr of the lure and the competition of the greyhounds failed to compensate for the absence of betting. Many novelty attractions including motorcycling and foot racing were tried but the costly project seemed doomed to fail.

With a substantial investment and the promise of big returns, the commercial interests behind White City were not prepared to give up easily. This ingenious idea of using a live hare and a pacemaker ensured the survival of greyhound racing in Victoria. Why the government, which had banned betting on racing behind a mechanical hare, allowed betting on this new form of racing, remains a mystery.

Racing behind a pacemaker involved the dogs chasing a pacemaker greyhound, which in turn, was chasing a hare. The hare, which had been specially trained in much the same way as a Plumpton hare, raced down the track towards the safety of a box on the edge of the track just short of the finishing line. The pacemaker was released with the hare still in sight, and then the boxes were opened while the pacemaker was still in sight, allowing the dogs to chase the pacemaker. The reasons the pacemaker was needed were two-fold. Greyhounds will chase other greyhounds enthusiastically and the size of the pacemaker made it a better lure than the smaller hare.

On Saturday night, 9th February 1929, White City played host to the first Speed Coursing meeting in Victoria behind a pacemaker and so began what were to become known as “the pacemaker days”. That meeting marked the dawning of a new era and the increasing crowds at White City meetings meant that meetings were held once, twice and then three times, a week. Over the next twelve months, the club and the new sport prospered. Stakes in 1929 had totalled £5000 (\$400,000) and by 1940 had risen to £70000 (\$5,000,000). Attendances in 1929 had totalled 50,000 and by 1940 the figure was in excess of 1.2m, although wartime restrictions would soon lead to a sharp decline in numbers. However, with more nominations than acceptances at White City, it was clear there was room for more clubs in Melbourne.

Much of the popularity of the new sport was due to the fact that it was run at night. The workingman could attend the races and bet and any man who could afford it could keep a greyhound with the prospect of a fair return for his money. During the depression, the lure of the rewards in greyhound racing was strong and punters were lured by tales of success. The most successful greyhound in Australia at the time was Silver Chief whose owner had turned down £400 (\$35,000) for the dog. Silver Chief was a Waterloo Cup winner and also held records with Plumpton and speed coursing. Overseas, the famous British greyhound, Mick the Miller had won an estimated £23,000 (\$2m) for its owner.

More clubs followed White City, Maribyrnong Speed Coursing Club opened in January 1933 and the Napier Park Speed Coursing Club followed in September of that year, the site on Pascoe Vale Road now being occupied by the Strathmore High School. The Sandown Park Coursing Club opened in September 1935 on a site now the venue for metropolitan horse racing at Sandown. Gracedale Park Speed Coursing Club opened in April 1938 on Springvale Road. Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Traralgon, Wonthaggi, Sale and other rural cities and towns would soon provide venues for the new sport. The location of the tracks for greyhound racing had to take into consideration the government legislation that forbade betting at meetings held in any city or town but permitted it within a shire. All grounds were just within the boundaries of shires and, where possible, close enough to the city to enable punters to be able to travel to the tracks.

From the beginning of Speed Coursing in Victoria, the tensions that would dominate the sport for the next eighty years were already beginning to simmer. Primarily, these tensions were between three separate but related interest groups all of which sought to extend their influence over, and ultimately control, the sport. **With control went the ability to schedule meetings and derive profits from the sport.**

The first, and many would have said natural, claimant to this right was the National Coursing Club (NCC). Until the late 20s, the NCC had conducted and controlled Greyhound coursing in Victoria. It had done this through a voluntary association of the coursing clubs. These clubs were essentially amateur in both practice and philosophy despite it being a strong wagering element associated with their activities.

The new proprietary clubs would now join the NCC. Owned by shareholders and with the primary goal of making money through the new sport of speed coursing, their interests were not always those of the NCC.

The NCC exercised considerable power over both coursing and speed coursing through its requirement that all dogs should be registered. Dogs that were not registered with the NCC could not race at an NCC-affiliated club, which now included the proprietary clubs providing racing opportunities nearly every night of the week. Owners who raced at non-affiliated clubs would be de-registered and lose the right to race at any of the NCC clubs.

Proprietary club representatives had no hesitation in using the NCC to further their commercial interests. The most important contribution that the NCC made to the proprietary interests was to limit the number of clubs that could be registered to conduct speed coursing thus granting the existing clubs a virtual monopoly. This cosy arrangement was kept in place by an agreement on the part of the proprietary clubs to abide by the NCC race schedule.

There were also overlapping memberships, which may have led to conflict of interest. One Mr. A Heap was the judge at Napier Park but also the Treasurer and Executive Officer of the NCC. Such connections meant that the views and interests of some proprietary clubs would always be well represented at the NCC. This led to a widespread, and probably unfair view that the NCC was simply a front for the proprietary clubs. It was more likely that the NCC continued to be dominated by the rural coursing clubs who regarded proprietary speed coursing, with its strong emphasis on betting as debasing the traditions of a noble amateur sport.

The third group with “an interest” was the Owners, Trainers and Breeders Association (OTBA), which was formed in 1929. Unlike the proprietary clubs, the OTBA was not a member of the NCC because it was merely an association and not a club conducting coursing. While owners and trainers could be represented through their clubs, their voice was diluted. This group provided the dogs that were the life-blood of the clubs, particularly the proprietary racing clubs. The next two decades would be marked by

conflict between the OTBA and the owners of the proprietary clubs primarily over the issue of prize money.

Without the members of the OTBA, there could be no racing, no admission fees and no wagering, all of which lined the pockets of the owners of the proprietary clubs. It is little wonder that this group resented the small prize money on offer and the loss of the preferential betting system of Plumpton and Open Coursing.

The OTBA conducted an unstinting campaign to increase the prize money offered by the proprietary clubs. In the ongoing battles between the proprietary clubs and the OTBA, the National Coursing Club endeavoured to act as arbitrator. However, in this and in other issues, it had little power to enforce its views and its track record in managing conflict in the industry ultimately made it obvious to everyone, including the Government, that it was not the body to govern and control the burgeoning industry.

The OTBA's most important, and eventually successful, goal was to replace the proprietary clubs with non-proprietary clubs controlled by a government-appointed board that would include, naturally enough, OTBA representation. It took 23 years but finally the OTBA was rewarded with the legislation banning proprietary racing in Victoria in 1955.

The problems inherent in the efforts of the NCC to regulate and control the industry first surfaced over a seemingly innocuous issue surround the Waterloo Cup.

Open and Plumpton Coursing were controlled by the NCC which scheduled the major meetings, including the Waterloo Cup and the Derby, for the clubs. Beyond these blue ribbon events, the geographically isolated clubs operated independently of each other. In addition, it allocated race times to the metropolitan Speed Coursing clubs.

However, with proprietary Speed Coursing well established in Melbourne, conflict quickly arose over the scheduling of meetings. This key issue would divide the sport in the 1930s and would continue through to the advent of Sky Channel. Certain race times were better than others. Night meetings would attract the working man and

night meetings held on pay days would provide greater on-coursing betting and hence revenue for the clubs. With many workers working six-day weeks and strong social and legal prohibitions against betting on Sundays, nighttime racing provided maximum potential for revenue generation. It was inevitable that the new Maribyrnong club would apply to use certain nights when White City raced. The White City management argued that this was unfair, as they had done the hard work to establish those nights as viable greyhound nights. The bitterness of the debate was increased by the perception that certain elements within the NCC had commercial links to both Maribyrnong and Napier Park and that decisions by the NCC favoured these two clubs.

Race times and dates were, and continue to be, a key element in commercially viable racing. When the field-coursing season opened in March, the NCC decided to restrict Speed Coursing so as not to interfere with the older form of coursing, which had, after all, eighty years of history in Australia. The restrictions limited Speed Coursing to two nights a week with only one meeting during the weeks of the Waterloo Cup.

The Maribyrnong Speed Coursing Club and the Napier Park Speed Coursing Club were happy to live with this restriction. However, White City was not and decided to hold meetings in defiance of the NCC ban on meetings during the Waterloo Cup. White City was tossed out of the NCC and any owner racing at White City would be de-registered along with the offending animal.

The NCC then decided to allocate White City's racing times of Wednesdays and Saturdays to Maribyrnong and Napier Park so that its own members would have a chance to race at both of those times. The NCC regarded itself as being in a very strong position. It controlled registration of greyhounds in Victoria and could demand that the two NCC registered metropolitan clubs; Napier Park and Maribyrnong, only race NCC registered dogs. This position was strengthened by the fact that the government was not going to issue new greyhound racing licences, effectively giving the two NCC clubs a monopoly to race registered greyhounds.

The matter was further complicated by the Sandown Park connection. NCC secretary Roy Maidment had established the Sandown Greyhound Racing and Coursing Club

with a Committee loosely connected with the National Coursing Association. Like Napier Park, White City and Maribyrnong, Sandown was a proprietary club. The Secretary was Jack McKenna, who had been recruited from Tatura where he had distinguished himself as a coursing administrator conducting several of the Classics at his Plumpton Club. McKenna, who was to prove a fierce champion for Sandown, knew about the protection in place for Maribyrnong and Napier Park through NCC registration and argued that Sandown Park should be permitted to operate at night. He argued that the two city clubs would not be disadvantaged by the distant Sandown Club. The NCC was in a difficult position. It realized the Government was keen to reduce the number of night meetings and that its claims to be able to control the sport would not be enhanced by allowing more meetings.

However, by seeking to reduce the number meetings, there was bound to be on-going conflict with White City and now Sandown. There was a distinct feeling at White City and Sandown that the proprietary interests of Maribyrnong and Napier Park were well represented within the NCC Executive. Chris Flint argued strongly in support of the Sandown and when objections were raised over the fact that he was Sandown Park's solicitor, he tendered his resignation to the Executive of the NCC. The "Sandown connection" was to continue to be an issue for both Flint and Maidment as they sought to manage their NCC responsibilities and the Sandown interests.

The first breakaway meeting at White City drew a good attendance and the press reported that the club had an auspicious start with the crowd almost as large as the usual midweek attendances with all the regular White City the bookmakers there. All the dogs and owners that raced that night were promptly disqualified by the NCC.

This meant that dogs and owners racing at White City were deregistered and banned from all NCC endorsed meetings. This opened a bitter and acrimonious split in the sport that continued until the late 1940s when White City rejoined the NCC fold. The split had profound ramifications for all dog owners who now had to choose between the NCC and the opportunity to race at Maribyrnong and Napier Park as well as all other NCC approved country meetings or at White City, with its big crowds, big betting ring and bigger prize money.

In the five years since racing started at White City, £30,000 (\$2.7m) in prize money had been on offer and it was expected that £8000 (\$730,000) would be offered in 1934. Many owners chose to go with the breakaway White City and the daily papers, The Age and the Sun, regularly contained lists of disqualified dogs and dog owners who had made that choice. Prize money was clearly an issue in commanding the loyalty of the owners, many of whom belonged to the OTBA, which by 1934 was holding its own meetings at the banned track. The other clubs hit back offering £1000 (\$90,000) stakes for both the Centenary Cup to be held at Napier Park and for the Centenary Carnival to be held at Maribyrnong.

The NCC had been placed in a no-win situation. However, its decision may have had little practical effect. In 1936, it was reported in the Sporting Globe that there were probably between 700 or 800 greyhounds outside NCC registration. There was also evidence of widespread "ringing-in" of dogs that were run under different names at different tracks.

In 1929, a meeting of the newly formed Owners and Trainers Association (OTBA) at the Temperance Hall expressed concern that this practice of "ringing in". Ringing in NCC registered greyhounds racing at unregistered meetings was rife. In addition, there had been repeated efforts to ring in unregistered greyhounds at the Maribyrnong and Napier Park courses. While the NCC had few resources to deal with this, it meted out harsh punishment to anyone it could catch. James Walters was disqualified for life by the NCC for trying to ring in a greyhound at Maribyrnong, whereas, by comparison, John Sullivan was disqualified for only three months for having administered a prohibited drug to his dog when racing at the same track.

However, the hottest issue for the OTBA was prize money and the members decided that drastic action should be taken unless stakes were improved at the clubs. **That month**, the OTBA endorsed a decision to withhold nominations from the two clubs racing under NCC patronage. This meant that the OTBA members were on strike and that approximately 400 dogs would be withheld from these two clubs.

The response of T J Confoy, who was the Chairman at Napier Park, was to go to the country, buy 50 dogs, register them with the NCC and race them at Napier Park.

Despite lasting 26 weeks, the strike had only limited success and the OTBA decided to take their dispute to the NCC. Writing more than 50 years later, the president of the OTBA at the time, Dave Henneberry, said, “We could never find out who gave the NCC the power to control greyhound racing but we did find out that the proprietary clubs controlled the NCC.”

Ultimately, the OTBA made little progress towards its goals. Both Napier Park and Maribyrnong raised their prize money, first prize going from £5 (\$370) to £6 (\$444) second from £1 to £2 and third increasing for 15/- to £1. The basic wage at this time stood at £1/4/- (\$89) per week.

It also took strong exception to the handicaps fixed by the clubs and with the method of grading the races. Grading was the means by which dogs were placed in races. The grader would look at the times a dog had run in trials and (theoretically) grade it into an appropriate race. This was to provide evenly matched races so that bookies would be encouraged to offer good odds and the punter encouraged to bet. The problem was that owners suspected graders would grade a fast dog into a race with seven much slower dogs and then use this privileged information for in the betting ring. The grader also controlled the handicapping system, whereby the starting boxes were staggered, rather than being in a straight line, adding yet another means to influence the result. The whole problem was compounded by the fact that the grader was normally the club manager, directly responsible to the club owners, most of whom raced dogs and expected preferential treatment.

As well as fighting the proprietary club owners, OTBA tried unsuccessfully to gain representation on the NCC executive. However, membership was limited to registered racing clubs and OTBA was an association of owners, trainers and breeders. In order to gain representation on the NCC and to be able to attend the Annual Conference where rule changes could be made, the OTBA had to form a Field Coursing Club and hold meetings. They held their first meeting Digger’s Rest behind the Oval Hotel. Fifty years later, the OTBA much transformed, would be racing at Olympic Park and the NCC would have been consigned to history.

This continuing tension between the NCC and the breakaway clubs continued with allegations from the NCC that a few men in Melbourne were trying to get full control of coursing solely for what they could get out of it. It was alleged that one man had said he was going to spend £10,000 a year (\$900,000) to crush the NCC. The breakaway clubs were advertising that dogs registered with the NCC, who competed at non-NCC registered meetings, need not fear disqualification. The NCC had to insert advertisements in papers denying the statement. The problem for the NCC in enforcing the ban was that White City and Gracedale were unlikely to report registered greyhounds racing at their unregistered tracks. There was also a distinct possibility that ring-ins were not well policed at these two tracks.

The impact of this dispute and of the importance of Speed Coursing to the NCC is seen in the NCC finances. In 1934, the NCC reported its most profitable year in its 60 years of existence. A profit of £179 (\$16,000) had been made during the year and the NCC also had £1500 (\$126,000) in cash and fixed deposits. Unfortunately, the profit had been wiped out by legal costs of £179 in connection with writs issued in the Supreme Court. It also received £245 (\$20,500) from fines and disqualifications from persons who took part in unregistered coursing. However, the greatest source of income was £263 (\$22,400) received from Speed Coursing registration.

The battle lines were drawn in many different ways, city versus country, landed gentry versus city working man, amateur sport versus professional sport. The first shots in the wars between proprietary clubs, the OTBA and NCC had been fired.

Another contentious issue, ultimately related to control, was who had the right to derive profits from the sport. Large sums of money were to be made from ownership and control of the tracks where speed coursing was held. Similarly large sums were to be made from betting on the races often by the same people. The fact that much smaller sums were available as prize money to the owners and trainers was an ongoing source of conflict between the OTBA and the track owners. However, this was not the main game. Governments have always had an ambiguous relationship with the gambling industries. On one hand, there was the moral concern on the part of Government to limit, not only the opportunities for betting in Victoria, but to exercise some control over the socially undesirable, and criminal elements, associated with

gambling. This concern on the part of Government for the moral wellbeing of the citizens was combined with an increasing awareness that wagering was a potentially rich source of Government revenue. All this served to sharpen the government focus on the sport.

Away from the internal politics of the greyhound fraternity, other battles were being fought in the public arena. When interests from the now-defunct Craigieburn club formed the Maribyrnong Club in 1933, they opened negotiations with the Broadmeadows Council to establish a track. The council realized it had no power to interfere with the establishment of the new speed coursing ground and granted permission for a stand to be built. It also agreed to by-laws preventing any other coursing club starting in the Shire thus guaranteeing the Craigieburn club immunity from competition in the local area. However, the establishment of the club was not popular with many in the community. The noise of the dogs, the betting, the drinking and the "undesirable" element attracted to dog racing did little to impress local residents. One councillor, who objected to the club, said that he'd been to a meeting at Maribyrnong and seen four men fighting over three bottles of beer. What was a matter of simple arithmetic had become symbolic of the evils of greyhound racing.

There were deputations to the government from the residents of Essendon and Broadmeadows asking for the removal of speed coursing tracks from residential areas. They objected to the filth of the dogs and the undesirable human element that attended the meetings and the trials, which covered five nights of the week. Their objections were based on the noise of the dogs training but also on the use of live rabbits, which were thrown to the dogs for food and torn to pieces in front of school children. Rev A M Capper expressed the view that the morality of this class of coursing was highly objectionable and it was regrettable that such an undesirable element had come to Essendon. The Chief Secretary agreed and said he thought it was quite wrong that this "so-called sport" be carried on residential areas such as Essendon and Broadmeadows. Councillor W. H. Henshall also deplored the fact that the Essendon and Broadmeadows tracks which had become the haunt of the "Bourke-street loafer".

Any control over the sport required an amendment to the Police Offences Act to prevent betting on speed coursing meetings. Although the legislation was drafted in 1933, it was not introduced into parliament in the final session of that year. The legislation had been primarily designed to head off the establishment of more courses during the parliamentary recession including one that was being conducted at the Richmond racecourse. The other side of the debate was put in *The Argus* in December of 1933, when a writer pointed out that racing people, who were men of the highest standing in the community, had recently invested £40,000 (\$3.7m) in White City and now that payable results were coming through it was wrong to use the Police Offences Acts against the sport.

On 13th December 1933 following letter appeared in *The Argus*:

"Sir, I visited the Maribyrnong track on Saturday evening last to ascertain for myself what does occur, and was shocked to see a struggling mass of people gambling with impunity and loud screeching in the bookmaker's enclosure. The din was almost unbearable and could be heard by residents a mile away. At intervals of 15 minutes adults celebrated chasing a frightened hare that is given a good start and a sporting chance to save its life. I'm a sorrowing mother with two sons just entering manhood, who until 12 months ago spent their evenings set upon the street of healthy recreation: but now their evenings are occupied going to the dogs, which they truly are doing fast, for at each weekend they are in debt. In my opinion the government should not permit this racing to go on for one moment longer. Yours, disgusted."

In response to public opinion, the government indicated that the legislation would be introduced in the next session to control betting on speed coursing outside the metropolitan area.

While White City was too remote to be a source of annoyance in the way that Maribyrnong and Napier Park were, there were also complaints in the papers about White City saying that people who could not afford it, gambled their earnings away and that mothers with babies in their arms attended and left the children to sleep in the grandstands until the meetings were finished. The clubs responded strongly saying

they took strong exception to such statements. "A nauseous verbal picture has been painted by one disgruntled party," replied Mr. A Flint, secretary of the NCC and apologist for the Sandown club.

The only powers that existed to control unregistered racing were under the Police Act and that related to betting on a Sunday. Nonetheless, the NCC continued to wage war on the many unregistered meetings being held around Melbourne.

The Sun Pictorial (7/12/32) reported that Mr. R. Cooper, the NCC stipendiary steward, carried out a one-man raid on a meeting hidden away in the scrub at Mont Park. It was the third meeting that the indomitable Mr. Cooper had raided in one month. There were approximately 200 people and 20 cars at the meeting where the dogs were chasing a hare skin drawn up a track by a milk separator machine.

"Many of the big crowd present made a big rush for cover and feverish efforts were made to lift greyhounds into cars or pull them into the bordering scrub"

Improvised meetings of this sort were not uncommon with unregistered meetings also being held at Richmond Park on Sundays much to the annoyance of the residents of Toorak and Kew. Greyhounds were also being seen as a public problem. It was reported that one Haydon Hook was charged with having exercised greyhounds in the street without having them properly muzzled as required by Section 22 of the Dog Act. Hook slipped the greyhounds, which were straining at the leash and let them course a small fox terrier lying on the footpath outside a nearby residence. When the terrier began to run, the greyhounds caught and mauled it. Hook called off the dogs while his companions were laughing, immensely enjoying the joke. In court, Hook said he let the greyhounds go for a run and denied that the small dog had been hurt. The magistrate said this is the first case of its kind and the majority of the bench thought a small fine would serve as a warning and fined Hook 5/- with £1/3/6 as costs (a total of \$110). It was reports like this that would harden attitudes to greyhounds for decades.

Control of the sport and its revenues continued as a bedrock issue and several groups tried to position themselves to gain control of the sport. This further complicated the tangled politics of the sport. *The Herald* (8th August 1933) announced the foundation of the Speed Coursing Control Council, an initiative of White City Speed Coursing Club and the Victorian Whippet Club. The company was limited by guarantee and designed to administer speed coursing, as distinct from Open or Plumpton coursing, in the State working, naturally in harmony with the NCC

In the same month, four clubs Maribyrnong, Essendon Warrnambool and Mildura formed the Victorian Speed Coursing Association to control speed coursing under the NCC. This was in response to the formation of the White City sponsored Association.

Matters were further complicated by the attitude of the NCC. While fundamentally consisting of coursing men, the NCC was attracted to the idea of being a major player in the lucrative speed coursing game. By 1936, the NCC was considering running speed coursing meetings in its own right in competition against its own members, Napier Park and Maribyrnong. It was only hindered by small detail of the lack of a track to run them. The NCC sought to establish their own ground at Fawkner and then with Sandown, moves that if successful, would have brought inevitable conflict with the other proprietary clubs.

To make matters more complicated, White City, a club with a long and bitter conflict with the NCC, offered to retire and lease White City to the NCC to save the non-proprietary racing group. The deal was for the NCC to run on any night other than of Wednesday or Saturday at a surcharge of 6p (\$2.50) a person together with £15 being paid for ground staff. An alternative was for the NCC to rent White City for £120 (\$12,600) a week on the condition that the ground be made available one night a week for the Victorian Whippet club free of charge and that some White City staff be taken on by the NCC. The Whippet racing turned out to be a sticking point in the end and by early 1937 the NCC had lost the opportunity to lease the White City track and had also lost a chance of getting a track in Fawkner.

In 1938, the Chief Secretary was approached by dog racing interests to recommend to Cabinet that the totalisator should be allowed at dog racing meetings. The advantage for the government was that the totalisator paid 5% of all investments to hospitals and charities whereas bookies paid nothing. The dog racing companies had estimated that £500,000 (\$44m) a year would pass through the totalisator in on-course betting. This meant that the government would receive £25,000 (\$2.2m) a year for hospitals and charities from dog racing. In 1937, the turnover on horse racing was £3.78m (\$333m) and the government had received £189,000 (\$16.6m) from totalisator percentages on horse racing.

In 1939, *The Herald* carried an article entitled "Victoria going to the dogs - fast" commenting on the increasing popularity of speed coursing. It reported that 30 new dogs are being registered daily and this was an amazing increase in the public interest over the previous 10 years. There were now more than 30,000 registered greyhounds in Victoria with smaller numbers associated with Plumpton Coursing, which was a more costly sport involving travelling expenses and a high scale of racing fees. *The Herald* reported that there were 15 speed coursing clubs in Victoria and about 60 to 70 Plumpton courses as well. Despite the legislation prohibiting betting on dogs racing behind the mechanical hare, the use of the pacemaker had led to the increasing popularity of the sport. Australia was the only country in the world that ran speed coursing behind a live hare and pacemaker. It was to continue like this for another 15 years.

Chapter 3: The War Years

The 1940s saw the continuation of the issues of the 1930s, legislative control of the industry, and the ever-vexed issue of stake money. While the pacemaker was a godsend that rescued the industry in the early '30, its use was dogged with problems. In addition, wartime restrictions on both car and train travel were to have a severe impact on the industry. The industry was also beset with a complex set of tensions between the factions competing for control of greyhound racing: the renamed NCC, now the National Coursing Association of Victoria (NCA), the metropolitan proprietary clubs aligned with the NCA, the metropolitan proprietary clubs not aligned with the NCA, rural coursing interests and the OTBA.

The 1940s began with legislation before Victorian Parliament that would ban speed coursing on any track where it was not conducted before the 1st July 1940. Not only would this preclude the NCA from its long held desire to have a track of its own but it would also entrench the monopoly of the proprietary racing clubs and the men who controlled them. This last provision was a testament of the considerable political pull exercised by well-connected businessmen such as T J Confoy, the owner of Napier Park.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December of 1941 was to bring about many changes to life in Australia. Many would be detrimental to greyhound and horse racing in Victoria. No one was immune. Australian and American servicemen took over the Caulfield racecourse, the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Lakeside Oval at South Melbourne as training grounds and army barracks. When the army took over the Sandown track as a training ground, the Sandown Park Coursing Club had nowhere to race.

In addition, there continued to be deep-seated prejudices against professional sport and greyhound racing in particular. The social divide between thoroughbred racing and the greyhounds was highlighted in September of 1942 when the president of the Victorian Trainers Association, Mr. D. McNamara said "all racing men are anxious to assist the war effort, but I must regard Cabinet's decision to reduce horseracing on a corresponding scale to dog racing, as an insult to the Sport of Kings."

Wartime restrictions allowed Governments, both State and Federal, to place a number of limits on greyhound racing. As a result, many of the Clubs were finding that wartime restrictions made it increasingly difficult to run full programs. The country clubs were hardest hit. Sale was only able to hold five races a year, Warrnambool six and Traralgon seven. One exception was the mining town of Wonthaggi, which was in the fortunate position of having regular employment and many greyhound owners employed in the essential coal mining industry.

To enforce wartime blackout conditions, the Federal Government banned outdoor lighting. As most clubs were only licensed to race between 7:30 p.m. and 10:30 pm, this effectively ended night-time speed coursing. Sandown, which raced in the afternoons, was the only club able to operate in the metropolitan area. But even this advantage was eliminated when the army took over the track, leaving Sandown nowhere to race.

The Clubs that raced at night (Napier Park, Maribyrnong and White City) sought the approval of the Chief Secretary to race between 5.30 and 8:30 p.m. and on Saturday afternoons as well. Without this, Greyhound racing in Melbourne was in danger of being wiped out. The *Sporting Globe* reported that as many as 2000 greyhounds were in danger of being destroyed unless the venues were found for them to complete. By April 1942, restrictions on dog racing had intensified with the State Parliament reducing dog racing from 70 to 52 meetings a year for each of the metropolitan clubs and later reducing it again from 52 to 26 meetings for each club.

In 1942, dog racing interests wrote to Prime Minister Curtin asking for the status quo in terms of meetings to be maintained. Victorian clubs had cut meetings by one third and the ban on night racing was a double whammy. The clubs had drawn many thousands to night meetings but since night racing was banned as part of the plan to conserve coal, attendances had fallen to less than 500 each Saturday afternoon. The clubs woes continued when, in 1942, the Railways Commissioners banned the carriage of racing dogs on suburban railway lines. While this would not affect the Maribyrnong club, it was to affect those clubs close to railway stations. The owner of Napier Park, T J Confoy, whose club was close to the Essendon station, said that most Napier Park supporters worked in war factories, trained their own dogs and many of

them would now have to walk their dog miles to race. White City, located close to the Tottenham Station was similarly affected.

The impact of this ban can be assessed when the importance of rail travel in Victoria is placed in context. By the 1940s, 25% of all jobs were in urban factories. In 1944, when car ownership was not high, the 1.2m people of Victoria made 196m train trips, which was around 164 trips per person per year. In 2007, the *Herald Sun* reported that the 4m people of Victoria had made 178m train trips at around 44 trips per person per year.

The ban on transport of greyhounds was taken extremely seriously by the Wonthaggi Coal miners. They were preparing to call a stop work meeting as a protest against the regulations. The Secretary of the Miners Union, Mr. J. McVicars, prepared to present a monster petition against the ban. He said that speed coursing was the only sport the miners had and threatened a stop work if the bans were not lifted. The miners had given up their holidays and worked long hours in the war effort but they were not going to allow the sport to be taken away by ridiculous legislation, said Mr McVicars. He also claimed that continuing racing was important because the sport made the miners fitter to hew coal. There were even rumours that the miners in New South Wales would also go on strike over the issue. By January 1943, the ban on transporting greyhounds had been lifted, although it still applied to electrified tracks in Melbourne to the detriment of Napier Park.

To make matters worse, it appeared likely that greyhounds would have to sacrifice eating beef for the war effort. The Commerce Department decided to ban the selling of beef for greyhounds when it was informed that greyhounds were most voracious beefeaters and supplies of beef were urgently needed for the Allied Forces serving overseas. This was partly necessary because the Americans had not been able to cultivate a taste for mutton.

The pressures from wartime restrictions brought compromise on the issue of the status of White City. In May 1943, the NCA finally decided to readmit White City and register it with the Association. This would give the NCA 200 new greyhound registrations and mean that the Association now had all clubs, both field and speed

coursing under its control for the first time in 10 years. Despite this, there were deep divisions within the NCA, particularly between the owners and trainers, who were primarily interested in metropolitan speed coursing, and the rural coursing men who still believed the sport's heart and soul was coursing. During heated debate over the handicapping system, Mr. T. Gannon had referred to the OTBA as "a lot of rabble". This drew a strong response from OTBA President Dave Henneberry. Undeterred, Gannon responded that the owners and trainers were "fine fellows individually but collectively they were rabble."

Many in the industry began to look to the success of the sport in New South Wales and Tasmania, both of which used the mechanical hare and had abolished proprietary racing. The OTBA continued its pressure for government control and non-proprietary ownership. By now, New South Wales had formed a Greyhound Control Board and Dave Henneberry argued strongly that public support for greyhound racing had improved in other states as result of government control of the sport.

With the end of the war and the removal of restrictions on racing, the clubs were back in business and the popularity of greyhound racing surged. By 1947, it was reported in the papers that the post-war revival of Greyhound breeding in Victoria had produced an annual influx of about a thousand racing greyhounds and that this was now becoming a problem for track graders and handicappers. The five meetings in Melbourne each week only required around 360 greyhounds and naturally the handicappers favoured the better dogs. While some dogs were racing two and three times a week, a large number of dog of lesser ability were not able to get a race. It was suggested that part of the problem was convincing the owners of low-quality dogs that they were actually very little interest to the public. Many of these greyhounds were unsuccessful in winning even a maiden event.

In 1946, there were reports in the newspapers that the ban on racing behind a mechanical hare was to be lifted by the Dog Racing Control Bill, to be introduced in August 1946. The reintroduction of the mechanical or tin hare was seen by many as a means of stopping the cruelty to hares. Considerable media attention was being focussed on examples of cruelty during training where the practice of using live animals as bait was widespread. In fact, replacing the pacemaker with the mechanical

lure would have little impact on the occupational health and safety of the hares which were rarely caught by the pacemaker and normally safe and secure before the racing greyhounds were released. However, the use of the mechanical lure and the issue of non-proprietary racing were to become inextricably linked as the panacea for the ills of the industry.

There were powerful forces at work to ban the use of live animals as bait in greyhound racing and there was also a strong undercurrent of opinion that favoured the banning of the sport altogether. In November 1945, Inspectors of the Victorian Society for the Protection of Animals and the Fisheries and Game Department brought a prosecution against two greyhound owners who were each fined £2 (\$100) for having dangled a live rabbit from a rope as bait for greyhounds. The prosecution also argued that most of the cruelty would be done away with the use of the mechanical hare. The Chief Inspector for the Department said he saw no justification for the existence of coursing as a sport and would have no objection to it being abolished. One trainer said that cruelty would disappear 100% if the mechanic hare were to be used. He denied that trainers would use cats on the lures because dog owners prized their dogs too much to risk damage from the cats' claws if the cat fought back.

Examples of animal cruelty in the greyhound industry were highly publicised. *The Herald* reported the appearance of one Rory Headley in the Brunswick Magistrates' Court where he was charged with being in possession of protected game, namely three possums. Headley said he found the possums in the bag in the boot of his car but did not know who would put them there. His lawyer argued that it was prejudicial to jump to the conclusion that the because Mr. Headley was a greyhound owner that it necessarily meant the possums were to be used during the training of Mr. Headley's greyhounds. The magistrate was unimpressed and fined Mr. Headley £2 (\$100) for each possum.

In 1947, Sydney Baker writing in *The Herald* reported that New South Wales was considering a ban on live hare coursing as a result of a Plumpton meeting where 59 hares were reported to have been killed by greyhounds. A campaign to put an end to this slaughter was immediately launched by the RSPCA. Clearly there was going to

be a corresponding campaign in Victoria. The writer did stress the fact that it was not usual for so many hares to be killed during the Plumpton with only three hares being killed in 149 courses at a recent meeting. He argued that many hares raced during the Plumpton season without being caught by the dogs and many learned the location of the escape traps on the course or were able to avoid the dogs even when cornered. However, no hare in Plumpton had a guarantee of a long life. Every race was ultimately a race against an untimely death.

One of the ironies of the ban on greyhounds coursing and killing small animals was that when the greyhound track in Geelong, Nelson Park, became a breeding ground for rabbits during the Second World War, it was not able to use greyhounds to eradicate them when instructed to do so by the Geelong Council.

In 1946, the NCA approved penalties for dog owners who maltreated rabbits and other animals on Victorian racing courses. It had long been common practice that the greyhounds were thrown live rabbits in the killing pen at the end of a race. This was designed to train the dogs to race more keenly in anticipation of the "kill" at the end of the race. Under the new rules, the killing pen, which was just past the winning post at each track, would disappear and anyone who allowed a greyhound to attack a live animal would be disqualified to 12 months. However, the NCA rule was not to apply to field coursing where live hares would continue to be used as quarry.

In June 1948, an eyewitness reported that 40 hares had been torn apart at the Victorian Coursing Derby. Coursing officials denied the number was accurate although admitted that the cold weather had affected the ability of the hares to run and, as a result, many were caught by the dogs. One hare was so weak when released that officials restrained the slipper from releasing the dogs. A man on a motorcycle chased the hare, which fell over exhausted, and was put out of its misery by the motorcyclist. The greyhound racing fraternity clearly had no idea of how events like this would play in the media, nor the extremely emotive arguments that would be mounted against it. One correspondent commented, "Penalties for animal cruelty should be extremely high. Even the lash might be considered." The founder and director of the Victorian Animal Welfare League, Mrs C E Lort-Smith, who claimed to represent thousands of animal lovers throughout Victoria, said she would protest

against a sport that allowed animals to torn to pieces. She said the Australia would soon be placed in the same category as bull-fighting Spaniards.

Victoria was now the only place in the world where the use of the pacemaker continued and the use of the hare and pacemaker system presented technical problems for the industry. Ideally, the hare would be released followed by the pacemaker and then the dogs. The hare would disappear into a chute and the pacemaker would lead the dogs around the track.

Sometimes things did not go to plan. The racing dogs would catch the pacemaker and start fighting with it. Sometimes, the hare would stop and sit down in the middle of the track and have to be encouraged to finish its race by "gee-men" positioned along the track. Often, there was the ludicrous spectacle of the hare doubling back on its tracks and heading back towards the starting boxes, pursued by the attendants. There were also a number of practical reasons for the change to the mechanical hare. One problem with releasing a hare was that the dogs in the starting box would often be pawing at the front of the box endeavouring to escape and chase the hare. During the delay between the time the hare passed the boxes and the pacemaker was released the dogs became increasingly agitated and unsettled. Given this agitated state, it became a matter of luck whether a dog was set to race when the box opened. It was argued that once dogs had become used to the distinctive sound of the tin hare passing the boxes, this problem would be eliminated. The boxes could be opened almost immediately and skilled lure driver could keep mechanical lure just far enough in front of the dogs to keep them racing at top speed.

The industry had been plagued by problems of the leading dog catching the pacemaker, thus throwing the result of the race into doubt.

As the pacemaker was always a dog that was too slow to be racing, this was not uncommon. One of the constant causes of aggravation for the punter was the "all-in" rule in Victoria, which provided for the first dog to pass the winning post to gain the decision irrespective of whether the race had been upset by the pacemaker being caught. When this happened, the dog leading the race would start fighting with the pacemaker and destroy its chances of wining as the other dogs swept past the

altercation. Backers of the leading dog would often be deeply aggrieved, especially when there was suspicion that pacemaker selection may have been rigged to ensure that the fastest dog in the race would probably catch it, thereby destroying its chances of winning.

It was widely argued in such situations the race should be declared a “no-race” and be re-run. However there were a number of practical difficulties to this. The first was that a re-run on the night would mean the dogs would be racing twice in one night and this was likely to favour the stronger rather than the faster dogs. Holding the race at a later meeting would preclude them from entering other races on that night.

In Melbourne, the power to order a rerun rested with the stewards who had to be satisfied that the race was not a “true test of speed”. However, catching of a pacemaker was exempt from this rule. There are a number of arguments about how the rule should be changed, all them unsatisfactory and with varying levels of comprehensibility: "A rule to provide automatically for a re-run in the case of the pacemaker being caught say within 50 yards of the winning post and the decision being allowed to stand only if the dog leading is at least a clear length from his nearest opponent catches the pacemaker within that distance and is still first past the judge" was only likely to increase confusion.

The rules that related to dogs fighting during races were equally problematic. The current procedure was to disqualify the dog that was fighting but not upset the result of the race. When the leading dog caught the pacemaker and started fighting often some of the following dogs would join in. This result was that a badly placed, and cowardly, dog was likely to win the race. If a dog fought and won the race, the result was allowed to stand. If it fought and lost the race, it was disqualified. It was no wonder that tempers often frayed at the dog races. Frayed tempers often led to fights and well-publicised riots such as when punters at Napier Park, angered at the results, attacked the judging box tried to shake the judges out of it. All of this did little to enhance the public image of greyhound racing as a sport.

Harry Heggart, the director at White City and Gracedale, was soon to break ranks with the other clubs and abandon the "all in" rule. The fact that he could act

unilaterally on this issue was a further indication of the need for unified control of the sport.

The new Dog Racing bill was also going to include the establishment of authority to supervise and control the sport throughout the state. In November 1946, the bill was approved by cabinet and was scheduled to be introduced into the Parliament by the end of the month. The bill would establish a controlling authority, prohibit midweek day dog racing but allow midweek fixtures at night meetings in Melbourne and at all times in the country and would require the introduction of totalisators at dog racing courses.

It was in 1949 that the new Chief Secretary Mr. Leggat made his famous statement that "Greyhound should be classed as vermin" and if he had his way, he would destroy them. This produced a predictable response from the greyhound industry but also drew a rebuke from Mrs Lort Smith who stated that greyhounds should not be punished for what men did with them. Mr. White, a member of the Country Party attacked, Leggat saying, "I took strong objection to your statement, which caused a great hostile reaction throughout Victoria and Australia. Some of the highest people in the British Empire have been great and keen coursing enthusiasts."

Defending the industry against Leggat's attack, Chris Flint, the NCA Vice President, said "I was rudely astonished when I heard you say that coursing is not a spectacle, but one more vehicle for gambling. Coursing is a beautiful spectacle. In the Mother country, you need to be a baronet at least to be a member of the British Coursing Association." He added that Mr. J. Arthur Rank the British millionaire cinema magnate was one of the greatest of British coursing enthusiasts. "I feel a thrill when I see a Greyhound coursing ahead and I feel that every man with red blood in his veins must feel the same," Mr. Flint added. Relations with the new Chief Secretary appeared to have got off on the wrong foot.

The Chief Secretary went on the defensive saying "no matter what you say, I don't like greyhounds. That is a personal opinion". He went on to say the remark was made in a jocular way was not meant to represent government policy. He also expressed his concern for preventing cruelty to animals in the training of greyhounds. He pointed out that allegations have been made by the RSPCA and the Fisheries and Game

Department that cats, rabbits and possums had been thrown to greyhounds during training. He later said that he would go to a coursing meeting but that he did not expect it to be a pleasure, but rather a duty.

The late '40s saw the continuation of the OTBA campaign for better stake money. The OTBA made a submission to the Victorian Council of Greyhound Racing that represented the proprietary clubs requesting increased stake money. In particular, the OTBA ambit claim wanted the stakes at Napier Park Maribyrnong and White City increased from £250 to £350 (\$11,000 to \$15,000) per meeting with lesser increases for the other clubs. If their demands were not met, they would boycott the meetings. The manager of White City, Mr. F. Watkins responded by saying that his club had paid shareholders £4500 (\$195,000) the previous year. The owners were asking an extra £2600 per year (\$112,000) and that represented nearly 60% of the profits. The Council indicated that the clubs would not open the tracks until the boycott was lifted and racing was continued under the old stake money arrangements. The OTBA decided to continue the boycott.

In December 1947, a meeting of the OTBA unanimously agreed to continue to boycott the clubs who refused to increase the stakes. The president was also instructed to seek from the government early introduction of legislation for a Control Board with full authority over coursing.

In January 1948, the OTBA met at the Temperance Hall in Russell Street. More than 300 members of the Association attended the meeting. The meeting became so unruly that the President, Mr. Dave Henneberry, threatened to call the police. The uproar occurred when one member urged acceptance of the £50 (\$2100) offer from the clubs on the grounds that "one slice is better than none". The vice president of the Association, Mr. D. McKay said that the offer was too paltry even to warrant consideration. A motion that the offer be accepted was defeated with only three supporters.

In January 1948, the dispute between the metropolitan tracks and the OTBA was settled a conference between the two parties. The dog owners had sought increases in stake money totalling £100 (\$4000) in stakes across each of the five metropolitan

clubs. As a result of their action, Napier Park increased by stakes by £26 (\$1000) per meeting, Sandown increased by £29 (\$1200), Maribyrnong by £16 (\$650), White City £26 (\$1000) and Gracedale increased by £22 (\$880). Despite having achieved only 25% of the ambit claim, it had been a significant victory, and an indication of the growing power of the OTBA.

Throughout this dispute, it became increasingly clear that the NCA had little actual power over the racing clubs mainly because the clubs were licensed by the government and not the NCA. It was also clear that any control over the racing clubs would have to be achieved by a government appointed and recognized Control Board. Both the NCA and the OTBA were active in lobbying any opponents to the new Dog Racing bill. By late 1949, a number of deputations met with the Chief Secretary Mr. Leggatt who indicated his support for non-proprietary racing, a control Board and the use of the mechanical hare.

In August 1949, the NCA took another deputation to Chief Secretary Leggat. The deputation which was supported by MPs from all parties and two former ministers, sought to give full control of coursing activities in Victoria to the NCA, to lift restrictions on the use of the tin hare in speed coursing and to introduce totalisators at courses. MLA and former Minister for Agriculture, Mr. G Mackenzie, told the Chief Secretary that "you would be delighted to see men enjoying such a good clean well-run sport at the weekends". Mr. Stoneham, a Labour MP, said "the type of men who engage in coursing are of a very high character indeed. Their main concern is not gambling but a love of greyhounds".

The Chief Secretary said he would submit the deputation's recommendations to cabinet and saw no reason why the restrictions on the tin hare should be kept. He remained silent on the question of control by the NCA.

The president of the OTBA Mr. D. Henneberry also met the Chief Secretary to support the setting up of a Control Board for speed coursing in Victoria. His argument was that the owners of the private tracks in Victoria were not paying sufficient prize money and they took too much for themselves. In Victoria, prize money would be about £250 (\$11,000) a meeting but in the states where non-

proprietary courses operated the prize money was £400 (\$18,700) a meeting and in Sydney it was as high as £600 (\$26,000).

He argued that the decline in racing in Victoria was not only a result of the war but also the poor prize money that was being offered by the proprietary clubs. Both the OTBA and NCA argued that setting up a Control Board would give credit to the owners and trainers. When told that the NCA wanted to establish its own non-proprietary club, but had not been able to get its own track, the Chief Secretary said it was not certain that the government would revive another license and that the NCA would have to try to persuade some club to sell out.

By the end of 1949, the Dog Racing bill was ready for introduction in the Legislative Assembly by the Chief Secretary. Daytime midweek dog racing was to be banned within a radius of 40 miles of the GPO. Control the sport was to be transferred from the NCA to the newly established Dog Racing Control Board, the use of tin hares instead of live quarry was to be compulsory within a 20-mile radius of the GPO. From the beginning of 1951, all propriety dog racing clubs would be acquired by the Control Board, which would conduct the sport on an entirely non-proprietary basis. The installation of totalisators would also be compulsory. The number of dog racing meetings would be reduced from 70 to a maximum of 52 in addition to three charity meetings a year. Clubs were to be compensated for the value of land, buildings and improvements but there was to be no compensation for goodwill. The government had collected £40,000 (\$1.7m) in revenue from dog racing in the previous year and the new control structure would see that amount increase. The new Dog Racing Control Board would comprise five members including an independent chairman and members representing NCA, the dog racing clubs, Plumpton coursing clubs and the OTBA.

The Minister for Agriculture and Treasurer of the NCA, Mr. MacKenzie, urged the NCA to lobby the opposition because the government was not prepared to risk defeat by bringing the bill forward. He believed the Government supported the NCA having a role analogous to that of the VJC in thoroughbred racing. In this he was to be proved completely wrong. He also believed that men in the Country Party favoured the Dog Racing act. Again, he was wrong.

The heavy legislative program meant that the Bill did not go forward in the 1949 session of parliament. In December 1950, the Premier John Cain Snr. informed Mr. Henneberry that the government would not persevere with the Dog Racing Bill in the current session. It seemed that the OTBA and NCA were to be denied once more.

Chapter 4: The End of Proprietary Racing

The new decade began with an incident highlighting one of the more ridiculous aspects of the ban on the mechanical hare. On New Year's Day 1950, spectators at Napier Park were presented with the spectacle of an attendant with a stuffed rabbit skin dangling behind him racing down the track as a lure for the pacemaker. The club secretary said that the club had run out of hares because a ferret had found its way into the home paddock and destroyed them all. Fortunately for the attendant, the pacemaker was not released until he left the track, accompanied by catcalls on the crowd. The steward at the ground was uncertain about the rules but thought a human lure was okay because it was not mechanical. This was probably only the second meeting in Metropolitan Melbourne that did not use a live hare, the first being the 1927 meeting at White City which was the first to be conducted behind a mechanical, as distinct from human, lure.

The decade was to be dominated by three issues: the first was that many of the practices in the industry were seen as crooked and the administration, corrupt. The other two were inextricably but illogically linked: the use of the mechanical hare and the role of proprietary ownership of greyhound tracks. The ownership issue went to the heart of the question of who should control greyhound racing and who should reap the financial rewards. The GOTBA was, naturally, of the view that the spoils of greyhound racing should go to the owners and trainers who were the lifeblood of the sport. The owners of the tracks, men such as T.J Confoy and Harry Heggart, represented by the Victorian Council of Greyhound Racing, believed that those who invested the capital to build the tracks were entitled to a good return on their investment. This return came from race registrations, gate receipts, trial fees, bookies fees and revenue from the sale of food and beverages.

Ownership of the tracks also brought other revenue streams as the owners controlled both grading and box draws. Grading was the process by which dogs were put into races. Owners could nominate a distance they wanted their dog to race over but not the specific race. The grader, usually the club secretary or manager, decided which race a dog would go into. However, it was possible to arrange for a dog to be well graded and then to also get a good box draw. Box draws were meant to be public but

racing legend Bill Pearson remembers that, despite all his efforts, he was always just too late to witness one. All this resulted in some races being a “one-goer” where one good dog had been graded into a race with seven hopeless ones.

There was a relatively standard arrangement if you wanted your dog graded well and placed in a good box. The club manager would get to keep the stake money, normally somewhere between £6 and £10, (\$280 - \$460), if your dog won. The owner of the winning dog would sign for the stake money but would not collect it. With the stake money going to the club official, it was necessary for the owner to get good odds from the bookies to make money. The bookies were always wary of an owner making a plunge on their own dog, making it difficult to “get on” with big bets. To get around this, owners needed friends and relations to place the bets, preferably all at the same time, in small amounts and with different bookies.

The proprietary clubs were not keen to re-invest in the industry, particularly in relation to prize money. This refusal had been a bone of contention between the club owners and the OTBA. That this parsimony extended to other matters was shown in September 1950, when two stands at the White City track were condemned on the basis they were about to fall down. It was reported that one of the cloakrooms in the stand was made of brown paper. This situation was not helped by the knowledge that proprietary racing was set to be abolished when the Dog Racing Act was finally passed and proprietary racing clubs abolished.

The neglect spread to the racetrack. *The Sun* newspaper reported in 1950 that two heavily backed dogs racing at White City had caught the pacemaker while running first and second. When the pacemaker slowed, the first two dogs began fighting and were overtaken by another dog, which then won by several lengths. The race had begun badly with the starting boxes occupied by the two favourite dogs collapsing on top of them.

In addition to this general decay, there was a darker side of Greyhound racing was seen when a dog trainer refused to divulge to White City officials the identity the person who had offered him £200 (\$12,000) to pull up his dog up in a race at the ground.

There were other aspects of proprietary racing that highlighted the need for greater control. Passions ran high at Napier Park when the placings for a race were posted and then taken down and a dog that had not originally been placed at all, taking first place. A crowd surged around the judges' box demanding the results be changed back. When this was not done, they began throwing bottles and then attempted to push the judges' box over. When the box stood firm, they tried to break into it but police barred the way. When the bookmakers' supervisor left the box, the angry crowd surged around him protesting about the judges' decision. It was some time before order was restored but the results were not changed.

This occurred before the photo finish camera was widely used in Victoria (it was first used in America in 1936) and the judges were required to make a call on the when the dogs crossed the line at speeds of around 20m per second. This was no easy task and was not helped by the fact that they were surrounded by a large number of punters, everyone of whom regarded himself as having better eyesight than the judges, but all viewing the finish from slightly different angles. Suspicion over the accuracy of the calls was not helped by the fact that there was also no way of ensuring that the judges or their associates were not betting on the race.

The GOTBA continue to lobby parliament to introduce non-proprietary racing, racing behind the mechanical hare and the tote. While it appeared likely that members of parliament would support the changes they sought, there is no guarantee that the legislation would be brought forward. On 11th September 1952 Chief Secretary the Hon. K. Dodgshun M.L.A. received yet another deputation, this time from the NCA. It was to be a fruitless exercise as the Government changed hands yet again with Labour returning to power just three months later.

The Sporting Globe's Tom Morley thought the adverse publicity relating to the use of live animals might at last convince the government to lift the ban on the mechanical lure. He suggested that part of the approach to government would be to argue that cruelties at tracks would be eliminated with the installation of the mechanical lure. He was sure that the "tin hare" would bring about efficient speed racing as had been

proved in New South Wales and Tasmania, not to mention the U.K. and the USA. Journalists would agree with Tom Morley and write about the need for the "tin hare".

Mechanical hare racing was now the accepted form of track competition around the world but had been outlawed in Victoria since 1927 after just one successful meeting. It was now being brought home to the government that Victoria was the only place left in the world where speed coursing, as distinct from mechanical hare coursing, functioned.

The Chief Secretary, Mr. Dodgshun, agreed that reforms in speed coursing were long overdue. He would recommend the mechanical lure and Totalizator facilities for speed coursing to the new Cabinet. In the matter of non-proprietary speed coursing, he felt that, if brought about, compensation would have to be paid to the current proprietors. He did not favour the proposition that the NCA be granted official control. A bill would provide for a Control Board, in his opinion the ideal method to be followed, taking a lead from overseas and other Australian States.

The Chief Secretary told the Legislative Assembly that the government would consider bringing down the necessary legislation to abolish propriety dog racing in Victoria. Three years earlier, he had been the Chief Secretary in a previous government, which had abolished proprietary horse racing clubs. The news was a bombshell in coursing circles particularly for the owners of the proprietary clubs. However, the idea continued to have widespread support in the industry particularly the legislation relating to the tin hare.

The Bill was approved during the autumn session of Parliament and although January 1st 1956 was set as the date of effect, the government appointed Control Board came into being immediately holding an informal meeting on May 26th 1955 with Chris Flint as Chairman; the other four members being Eric Herbert, Frank Kelly, Dave Heneberry and Roy Maidment.

The term "speed coursing" was about to fade in favour of "greyhound racing" the name used overseas and interstate for racing behind a mechanical lure. Speed

coursing was about to be consigned to history with many now referring to the period as “the pacemaker days.”

The Act provided for two metropolitan greyhound track licenses, one issued to the NCA and the other to the OTBA, which would add “greyhound” to its name and become the “Greyhound Owners Trainers Breeders Association.” As with the National Coursing Association, the GOTBA was seeking a venue, targeting the North Melbourne football ground as a possibility.

The GOTBA needed a track-racing arm to establish a club to hold the license and the Melbourne Greyhound Racing Association (MGRA) was born. With the Bill granting the two Metropolitan licenses to the NCA and the GOTBA, the long struggle against proprietary greyhound racing had been won. It must have been of some great satisfaction to Dave Heneberry that, as Chairman of the GOTBA, he now sat on the controlling body of greyhound racing in Victoria and that the GOTBA had one of the licenses. After so many years struggle, the GOTBA was now able to deal with the NCA on equal terms.

Whilst awaiting finalisation of the NCA venue and MGRA negotiations with North Melbourne, the clubs leased Maribyrnong. With a new license, but unable to afford the £35,000 (\$1.2m) for the purchase of the White City track, the MGRA needed a home. Its decision to approach the Melbourne City Council to race at the North Melbourne Football Ground could not have been made at a more propitious time. The Melbourne City Council was showing a substantial loss at the venue and facilities were primitive.

At the General Meeting of August 1956, the members of the MGRA were advised that negotiations for the move to North Melbourne were completed. When racing began at North Melbourne, it was estimated that a crowd of 18,000 people attended the meeting. However officials will not be able to confirm the record as a turnstile mechanism, which counted the crowd, broke down at 12,000. Many missed the first race in the struggle to get into the ground. The official party, including the Lord Mayor and the Chief Secretary, missed the second race. When the official party was

led into the ground by a side gate, about 400 people swept in after them pushing aside the officials and the police. Later in the evening, races were delayed by 20 minutes when two power blackouts plunged the betting ring into darkness and cut off power to the totalisator.

Despite all this, North Melbourne was soon attracting regular greyhound punters, amongst them football legends Dick Reynolds and Jack Titus. During the filming of “On the Beach” Gregory Peck was a regular punter at horse racing whereas the shy Fred Astaire would be seen at North Melbourne in a rolled necked sweater slipping in and out of the betting ring.

The NCA / Sandown interests had been preparing for the abolition of proprietary racing for some time and had decided some five years earlier that Sandown Park, an area adjacent to the current venue at the race track, was the next best option to purchase to position itself for the change to non-proprietary racing.

In January 1950, it was announced that the Sandown Park Speed Coursing Club was in negotiations with Lightview Pty Ltd to purchase a 23-acre site in Lightwood Rd. for a new Greyhound track. The new track would be right opposite the Sandown Park railway siding and only a quarter of a mile from the Springvale township. It would cost £5,500 (\$195,000) with an initial deposit of £2,500 (\$89,000) and the balance to be paid over ten years in half yearly instalments of £150 (\$5300) plus interest at the rate of 6% per annum.

Work on the new track was to start immediately and it was hoped that the greyhounds would be up and running in six months. Grandstands and other amenities that required building materials and labour had to wait until the current housing situation had eased. Grandstand arrangements would be primitive for the start and the club arranged for the old stand at the racecourse could be moved to the new site. Much of the equipment at the racecourse including the kennels would also be removed to the new track.

The Club understood the need for haste. While legislation for the abolition of the proprietary clubs appeared to have stalled in Parliament, it was clear that its passage

was near inevitable. The owners of the Sandown Park Speed Coursing Club clearly saw the possibility of transferring the licence to the NCA, where they had considerable influence, and continuing business as usual. The NCA was also mindful that the Chief Secretary had told them that if they wanted a licence, they would need to get a track from one of the current licence holders. It appeared to be a happy conjunction of events for the NCA and the Sandown Park Speed Coursing Club.

After hearing from valuers and studying the figures produced by Jack McKenna, the NCA decided to purchase the Lightwood Rd. property. McKenna was confident the track would be ready by late January 1956 and that accommodation would be available for 2,400 patrons. He was also confident of raising the money required.

It what was to be a well organized operation, the proprietary owners of the Sandown Park Coursing Club, would sell the club for £75,000 (2.7m) to NCA which would operate as a non-proprietary club controlled (for the time being) by the NCA represented by C. J. Stewart (Chairman), Bob Cooper, Chris Flint, Fred Callil, Archie Pyke, Eric Herbert, John Bennett and Pat Killeen, with McKenna as secretary. It looked very much like business as usual. The only change from proprietary to non-proprietary ownership was to deliver a profit of nearly £70,000 (\$2.5m) to the original proprietary owners who still maintained control over greyhound racing at Sandown through the NCA of Victoria. Jack McKenna indicated that the club had already raised £25,000 (\$89,000) in debentures and anticipated receiving another £5000 (\$177,000) within two weeks and that this would be enough to finance the project.

The NCA, on legal advice, was now split into two companies. The first was the NCA, which was the registered body that would control the Sandown track. The second was the NCA of Victoria, which would be responsible for the registration of greyhounds and initially held the license to race at Sandown. The registration of bookmakers, owners and trainers moved from the NCA to the Dog Racing Control Board. The decision to split the NCA in two sowed the seeds for the demise of the NCA as a force within the industry. The interests of speed coursing (or greyhound racing as it would soon be known) on one hand and the traditional sport of coursing on the other were diverging rapidly and this would soon be manifest in increasingly bitter and acrimonious relations between the two sections of the NCA.

While there was considerable optimism about racing behind a mechanical hare, the financial situation of the industry was very tight. The NCA had an interest bill of £100 (\$3500) a week on the debenture money raised to finance the new track. The only source of income was from racing at the Maribyrnong track, which it had leased for 26 weeks at £200 (\$7000) a week until the new Sandown track was completed. However, the income from this was practically zero and the Maribyrnong operation was being kept alive by the 54 bookmakers fielding there, each paying £4/4/- (\$140) a night, one month in advance. Declining attendances had made it unlikely that these bookies would renew their bookings at the Maribyrnong track. Many hoped that Sandown would bring a revival the sport. Others thought that a track 15 miles from the city and nearly a mile from the nearest railway station might find it hard to pay its way.

Things began well for the new enterprise, with the first tin hare racing since 1927 attracting a record attendance of 6500 people on Saturday night. The meeting was held at the new Springvale track, which provided outstanding facilities and racing behind mechanical lure. It appeared that racing was likely to emerge from the doldrums. The track had new lighting, new starting boxes and a night photo finish. There was also a totalisator with provision for straight-out place and quinella betting which was the first in Victorian Greyhound racing. One of the highlights of the meeting was the use of the "jumping hare" used in hurdle races and which was attached to an elastic band, which lifted it over the jump just ahead of the greyhounds. The only hitch was the adverse weather conditions, which left many motorists stranded in the parking area, in some cases up to their hubcaps in mud.

Not everyone was enthusiastic about the new sport. Pressure from concerned citizens continued with the Brunswick City Council, where greyhound registrations were amongst the highest in the metropolitan area, considering laws that would ban greyhounds from public parks. This followed hundreds of protests from angry mothers complaining that the racing dogs were fouling the parks where their children played. The Brunswick Council passed by-laws limiting the keeping of greyhounds and sought to control the dog registrations.

Life for the new Control Board was similarly fraught. The Act that established the Dog Racing Control Board made no provision for finance despite the increased revenue flow the government received from the tote. The Board desperately needed finance in its early stages but a deputation to Government was unsuccessful, Premier Cain's reply being "not one thrupenny bit for dog racing", an attitude at odds with the initial assistance given to the Trotting Control Board. Roy Maidment immediately advanced a personal loan of £500 (\$18,000) to the Board, interest free, to see it through.

The Liberals were back in power and greyhound administrators would, for many years to come, deal with Premier Henry Bolte and his deputy Arthur Rylah. Bolte, a farmer, had great empathy for greyhounds and coursing in particular. The Chairman of the Board, Chris Flint and Secretary Roy Maidment were successful in approaches to the Chief Secretary for the amendments to the Act to make the Board viable. The 1% of gross revenue formerly collected by Government would be allocated to the Board. This grant was recognition of the important role the Board would play and would increase over coming years to ensure the success of the industry.

With the new Control Board in place and non-proprietary racing established in Victoria, field coursing began a slow but inevitable decline. This was to be hastened by the debate that would ensue over animal cruelty in the 1960s. With track racing now established in many regional centers, it became increasingly difficult to maintain interest in field coursing. The twenty-one delegates representing 11 coursing clubs which met for the 1957 annual meeting of the NCA was a far cry from the gatherings of the halcyon coursing years at the turn of the century when there were 41 clubs in Victoria. The meeting didn't last long. The gathering re-elected all its office bearers and lowered its quorum requirement from 20 to 10 having reduced from 50 to 20 in 1953. The 1958 annual meeting involved only 17 delegates who were able to meet at the NCA office. It seemed that field coursing had all but surrendered to the track arm of greyhound racing.

In considering the plight of field coursing clubs and appreciating the need to foster the sport and encourage country breeding, the Board decided to subsidise coursing in

1958 to the tune of £1000 (\$25,000), which, although half the amount requested, was accepted with gratitude.

Things went well for the MGRA at their new venue at the North Melbourne football ground until, on 14th June, 1961, the Melbourne City Council decided on a rent increase from £7,000 (\$170,000) a year to £9,500 (\$232,000) a year. The response of Chairman Harold Matthews and the MGRA Board was swift and decisive. Within weeks, negotiations with the Olympic Park Committee of Management had begun for racing to take place on the Olympic Park No. 2 Oval. Preliminary talks were held with the State Cabinet headed by Acting Premier Arthur Rylah. Early in September 1961, State Cabinet approved a MGRA plan to spend £50,000 (\$1.2m) on converting the No. 2 Oval for greyhound racing.

In July 1962, trials began at Olympic Park with races over 560 and 800 yards. The MGRA announced that 68 bookmakers would field at meetings and that 30 selling windows would service totalizator punters for win place and quinella betting. Parking would cater for 1000 cars. Gents would pay 8/- (\$10) admission with ladies 5/- (\$6). Having borrowed £60,000 (\$1.5m) to build the track and provide amenities, every effort would be made to gain and retain patronage. On Monday night 20th August 1962, a crowd of over 6000 braved cold weather for the opening and witnessed Chief Secretary Arthur Rylah cutting a white ribbon after the third race.

Life had not proceeded so well for the NCA. In winning the long fight to gain a license to conduct greyhound racing in the metropolitan area and then purchasing a site at Sandown, one might have thought that relationships between the Association and those involved at Sandown would be cemented for ever. Carping rumours drifted back and forth. Although he denied it when questioned, Jack McKenna, originally a Tatura coursing man, was said to be "running down field coursing". The interests of greyhound track racing were no longer those of the coursing fraternity. The acrimony between the NCA and Sandown, which would fester for the next three decades, had begun.

Agitation had begun regarding the composition of the Sandown Board, with the professional or track-racing arm of the sport arguing that field coursing was over-

represented. The NCA still held the license and negotiations over lease arrangements were difficult. At one stage, the parent body began to negotiate to lease the North Melbourne venue, which had been vacated by the MGRA. Such a move would have left the Sandown club without a license. The situation was becoming increasingly untenable.

It was resolved by one of the most Machiavellian and brilliant moves in the industry's history. McKenna was responsible for the annual license renewal in the name of parent body, the NCA of Victoria. When he filled in the renewal form, he omitted the crucial words "of Victoria", effectively transferring the license to the Sandown based arm of the NCA. The plot was widely believed to be the brainchild of Henry Harrison and John (later Sir John) Dillon. The success and speed of the coup left a lasting legacy of loathing and contempt between the Sandown club and members of the NCA.

With the license issues solved at Sandown and MGRA installed at Olympic Park the industry was about to embark on two decades of expansion.

Chapter 5: The Great Cruelty debate

When a New South Wales bill to abolish live hare coursing was passed in 1953, Victorian coursing administrators realised that it was only a matter of time before hostile forces south of the Murray would seek to have Victoria follow suit. The abolitionist lobby had been straining in the slips since the 1930s but now the quarry was being forced to run and time would show that the NCA and the coursing fraternity had little of the guile or speed of a well-trained hare. Lining the course was the throng of public opinion, with the press as cheerleader, applauding every time the abolitionists turned the hare and scored a telling point.

The campaign in Victoria came as expected but it took the protagonists a full decade to run the full course before closing for the kill. The point at issue was that the 1956 Animal Cruelty Act which made it illegal to cause or provoke the release of any animal "in such circumstances that it will be pursued, injured or killed by any dog". However, the Act specifically excluded greyhound coursing, conducted by the NCA, from this provision.

The dogs were slipped when the Herald published an article from a Sydney correspondent pointing out that the NSW State Labor government had banned live hare coursing in New South Wales in the 1950s. The sport had been outlawed in November 1953 with a fine of £50 (\$1800) and a gaol term of up to six months for a subsequent infringement. The ban had been a result of well-orchestrated public protest by the RSPCA, the leading newspapers and animal activists. The course of the Victorian campaign was set to run in the same way.

When live hare coursing was held at Rooty Hill in NSW, the greyhounds would kill 20 to 50 hares in a three-day meeting. City newspapers had published graphic pictures showing the savagery with which the hares were being killed. There were also strongly worded editorials and vividly written news reports describing the brutality of the sport.

An Opposition spokesman said he was certain that 99% of the citizens of the state supported the banning of live coursing and that the sport was a "relic of bygone times and a blot on the standards of Australia and civilization." Those opposing the

legislation argued that the introduction of muzzles on the dogs some 12 months earlier had meant that only five hares had been killed during that time and they were accidentally struck by the muzzles on the dogs. By comparison, more than six racehorses had been killed by accident at Randwick during the same period.

During the 1960s, the RSPCA mounted a campaign to have Greyhound racing abolished and in this it was supported by large sections of the press and a range of public groups which were not normally associated with greyhound coursing including the Country Women's Association, the National Council of Women, Lions, Apex and a wide range of other community associations. The main difference between live coursing and the course of this public debate was that in coursing, the dogs competed against each other, but in the public debate they worked as a pack.

In 1964, the RSPCA in Victoria approached the Chief Secretary to repeal the section of the Police Offences Act that allowed live hare coursing. However, the coursing fraternity in Victoria had many friends in Government especially those representing country areas.

Like the judge following the course on horseback, Chief Secretary Rylah was keen to give the hare a fair run. He was quoted in the media as saying that he would see what the other side (the NCA) had to say and repeated the standard defence that the hares had the chance to escape, thus indicating some sympathy for live hare coursing fraternity within the parliament. However pressure was building in the media and cases of animal cruelty, particularly the use of live animals to train greyhounds, were given great prominence.

The Victorian Society for Protection of Animals was very active in its attacks on live hare coursing and had been recording complaints involving the alleged use of live possums, rabbits and cats in the training of greyhounds since 1936. The sport was vulnerable on two fronts. The first was the use of live hares in Plumpton Coursing where the hare was often caught and killed by the greyhounds. The second was the practice of "bleeding" by providing greyhounds with a "kill" during training. This often took the form of tying a live animal, cats chickens and rabbits were popular, to the mechanical lure used in training and allowing the greyhound to eat the animal as

the lure slowed down at the end of the trial. This meant the greyhound associated racing with the kill and this sharpened its appetite on racing day.

While the abolitionists pursued relentlessly, it often appeared that the NCA hare adopted a strategy of running in exactly the wrong direction and attempting to jump into their pursuers' jaws. Throughout the debate, utterances from the greyhound hierarchy, the NCA, indicated that they were significantly out of touch with public opinion on the issue. Statements by Henry Harrison from Sandown and Syl Doyle from NCA who said that "there was no more humane way for a hare to be killed than by greyhound" appeared to miss the point completely. The industry was to prove far more astute, when in the 50s, it had argued that the best way around the problem would be to ban the chasing of live hares and replace them with the mechanical hare that had been banned in the 1920s. A ban on the use of live hares would also benefit Speed Coursing, which used the hare and pacemaker system where the hare was never caught. However, such a ban would effectively end the traditional Open Field and Plumpton Coursing where the hare was often caught and killed.

With newspapers began giving prominence to cases involving cruelty to animals and a number of cases began to appear in the courts. In the Magistrates' Court, an officer of the Fisheries and Games Department produced a box containing 36 skulls, mostly possums, but some cats, which he had gathered in the vicinity of a metropolitan greyhound racetrack. He said possums were favoured by dog trainers because they were "tenacious of life". There were also prosecutions of owners whose un-muzzled greyhounds had mauled and killed small dogs on Melbourne streets. All this publicity served to cement in place a picture of the greyhound as highly trained and ruthless killer.

However, prosecutions in court had a limited effect. While the fines imposed by courts were limited under Section 61 of the Police Offences Act, no less a person than Chief Secretary Hyland thought that fines were dismissed by big betting dog trainers as trifling. Attorney General McFarlan reported that he would support the Chief Secretary should a new act go to cabinet banning the use of live hares. It was clear the issue was attracting attention at the highest political levels and influential voices were now being raised against the use of the live hare.

The pursuit were closing and snapping at the flanks of the hare. Miss Victoria Carter, a long serving secretary and administrator of the RSPCA, said that everyone in the community had a duty to exert their will to get better conditions for animals. "It is about time" she said "we stopped sitting about in our gladiatorial ring in an age when we are putting a man on the moon".

Dame Mabel Brookes in her role as President of the Animal Welfare League of Victoria said, "We do all we can to save life and prevent suffering and then turn around and set dogs on to hares. This sort of thing should never enter our way of life".

The Reverend Sir Irving Benson, Melbourne's leading Methodist got into the act describing live hare coursing as "barbarous, wretched and inhuman". He hoped the Government would only take a few minutes to pass legislation banning the practice.

In addition, church groups joined the throngs of opposition to coursing and petitions hit the desks of local members and Chief Secretary Arthur Rylah. *Truth* newspaper had a field day with emotive headlines describing the "sickening savagery" of the sport as "barbaric, slaughter, hideous and fiendish".

In an attempt to counter the criticism and sensing the hounds were closing, the NCA passed rules banning cruelty, disqualifying offenders for not less than twelve months and fining offending clubs not less than £5 (\$180). Deregistration of a club found guilty was another option for the executive. All this was to no avail. The press continued to publish articles that were extremely damaging. In 1964, *The Sun* reported that a hare had been killed at the Tynong Cup at Lang Lang. The article was accompanied by pictures of the hare being torn apart by two dogs. The president of the NCA of Victoria, Syl Doyle, said that "accidents do happen" and that a dog catching a hare was merely an accident. Insert photo

In August 1964, the Herald reported that two hares were killed by greyhounds at a coursing meeting at St James in northern Victoria. It noted that the first prize of event was £25 (\$670) and a trophy given by Mr. Trewin who was the MLA for Benalla.

Clearly there was some support within the parliament for live hare coursing. In addition, a senior constable who attended the meeting in uniform saw no evidence of cruelty and commented that the hares had every opportunity to escape.

In another incident, *The Herald* also carried a graphic account of the death of a hare and showed a picture of two dog handlers endeavouring to rest the limp body of the hare from jaws of two dogs. The paper reported that this took about two minutes and published a picture of the handlers, the dogs and the rabbit. **The newspaper is the Herald of the 14th of August 1964**

Later the same month, *Truth* reported that one of its photographers had been attacked outside the Cheltenham court by a man who was attending a court hearing on a charge of cruelty to rabbits. He pleaded in court that it was common practice use live rabbits for greyhound training and this only added fuel to the fire. *Truth* indignantly suspended the publication of greyhound racing results and refused to set greyhound racing advertisements as result of the attack on their photographer.

The newspaper adopted the view that the MGRA, and in particular Harold Matthews, should find the “muscle men” who attacked its photographer and “do something about them”. It seemed that now the greyhound industry, in addition to running for its life, was to be held responsible for its tormentors’ welfare. The newspapers were full of letters calling for a ban on live coursing, abolition of the sport and the flogging of offenders.

Truth later had a field day when the Greyhound industry presented its views to Chief Secretary Rylah. A picture of Syl Doyle was captioned “Doyle argued killing hares was not cruel. There were no hares to argue back.” In his response, Doyle appeared to adopt a tactic akin to a hare doubling back and attempting to jump straight into the jaws of the oncoming hounds. He argued that there was no more humane way for a hare to be killed than by greyhound and stressed that coursing men did not like to see hares being killed, adding “they cost up to £5 (\$150) each.” He also pointed out that death came instantly as dogs jaws closed across the hare’s shoulders. Henry Harrison said that hares used for coursing lived off the fat of the land while being prepared for

the course. "No animal in the world is better treated, " said Harrison echoing Doyle's view that there was no more humane way for a hare to be killed than by dog.

Unfortunately, the paper had previously printed pictures and reports showing dogs tearing hares to pieces making the comment of both Doyle and Harrison appear insensitive to say the least. Roy Maidment said that although many of those opposed to coursing had often attended meetings, there had never been an unfavourable report, a statement that the various Societies hotly denied.

The odds on the survival of live coursing were shortening. Pressure was building in the media and cases of animal cruelty, particularly the use of live animals on lure arms continued to be reported in the newspapers.

By November 1964, it was widely reported that the State Cabinet was about to amend the Act and outlaw live hare coursing. The chairman of the Combined Animal Welfare Organizations of Victoria Mr Lauer said, " it was obvious that live hare coursing could not be tolerated. It is an affront to the intelligence of the people." Syl Doyle responded by saying that the move by Cabinet to ban live hare coursing was a "very un-Australian approach" to the issue and that "there is no sport more Australian than coursing." Within days, it became obvious that Cabinet had suffered an attack of cold feet and was not going to move ahead with the recommended legislation.

The newspaper is the Herald of the 14th of August 1964

In response to this delay, the Herald published a selection of reader's views under the heading "horror of a hunted hare." They overwhelmingly supported the banning of the sport and the supporters of coursing could only argue that the death that the hare suffered was a quick and merciful death compared with the agonies of the death from myxomatosis. One coursing supporter argued that a hare being torn in half by two greyhounds was not in any pain.

In an endeavour to open the gap on the pursuing the animal welfare groups and to gain some breathing space for the flagging NCA, Roy Maidment announced in late

August that the NCA would not be scheduling any more coursing meetings for that season. This was by far the NCA's smartest move in whole course of the debate. The announcement was welcomed by the animal welfare groups, but most importantly, it took pressure off the Government to act.

In 1965, the Chief Secretary announced that the government had dropped its plans to ban live hare coursing in Victoria because the NCA had none planned for that year. He said that if the sport revived the government would reconsider the legislation. Perhaps the end of the live course was in sight but Maidment had brought the NCA enough time to find the escape hatch.

It was clear that the government was divided on the issue. The Country Party voted at their annual meeting to keep live coursing, because it was considered no more cruel than shooting wild ducks. "Coursing men don't want their hares killed," added the member for St James, "they cost too much". **Check the other reference to cost**

It was only to prove to be a momentary lull. The pursuit was again closing for the kill.

Victoria Carter of the RSPCA was growing in confidence, urging introduction of the legislation to outlaw the sport in Victoria. She paid tribute to *Truth* and *The Herald* for the major roles those papers had played in publicising the cruelty of live hare coursing. She said that the newspapers had increased public indignation to the point where new legislation could no longer be ignored by Government.

In a last ditch stand, an NCA delegation met with Premier Henry Bolte. Bolte admitted that, with his country background, he loved live hare coursing. But then he pointed to two piles of documents on the table. The pile from the abolitionist lobby dwarfed the other. "Look at the two piles gentlemen," he said, "I'm a politician". Bolte was a great sympathiser with live hare coursing and many in his coalition must have been saddened at the final demise of the sport. In the battle for public opinion, the hare had been no match for the greyhounds, but it had managed to escape, as good coursing men would have predicted, but had run its last course.

The coursing clubs of Victoria would fade from the scene and continuing to struggle for existence. A drag lure has replaced the live hare and the competing greyhounds still wear the red and white collars. A slipper is still a part of the sport and the judge still raises either the white or the red flag to declare the winner. The Waterloo Cup and other time-honoured races are still conducted annually with 67 dogs competing for the Waterloo Cup at Lang Lang in 1999. Competition between the clubs to host the old classic is still very keen.

Chapter 6: The Totalisator

The sixties was another decade of great changes, which were symbolic of the shift in power within the greyhound industry. The NCA became mired in the ongoing debate over animal cruelty. The industry had argued that animal cruelty would end with the legislation for the introduction of the mechanical hare. By the 60s, it was clear that this legislation had not covered coursing, where live hares were still used and this would unleash unprecedented attacks on the industry. But it was yesterday's issue that the stalwarts of the NCA, Maidment, Doyle and Flint were left defending. The animal rights groups were straining in the slips and there was to be no escape for the NCA at the end of the course.

If the introduction of the mechanical hare and the abolition of proprietary racing were the momentous changes in the 50s, the introduction of TAB coverage and off-course betting on greyhounds were the giant leaps of the 60s. The flow of funds from the TAB would revolutionize the industry over the next four decades. Driving these changes were the new men of the industry, Henry Harrison from Sandown and Harold Matthews from MGRA. The 60s would see the decline of the NCA and coursing and the rise of Harrison, Matthews and mechanical hare racing at Sandown and the Olympic Park.

The introduction of the mechanical hare had removed many of the niggling problems arising from poor starts and poor standard pacemakers, both of which introduced uncertainty through the "no race" system. There was frequent media coverage of races being called a "no race" because the pacemaker was caught or the boxes failed to open uniformly.

The totalisator had been introduced through the Totalisator Agency Board (TAB) and legalized off-course betting had become available to Victorian punters, although not on the greyhounds. Legalised off-course betting was a move on the part of government to bring wagering on races into a taxation system and under government control.

Australia is one of the few countries where bookmakers are allowed to operate on-

course offering starting price (SP) betting. This was legalised in 1882 and 1896 in an attempt to stamp out off-course SP bookies, who paid out on prices being quoted on the racecourse. Unlike their on-course counterparts, the illegal off-course bookie paid no tax. Successive governments were increasingly aware of the revenue lost through illegal SP bookie operations.

The system was relatively simple. The odds being offered on-course in the betting ring were transmitted to a betting service, which then circulated them to the off-course SP bookie. Before the telephone, on-course prices were signaled with flags. The advent of the telephone, especially the mobile phone has been a godsend for the illegal bookmaking industry. The mobile meant odds could be phoned from the betting ring without even needing access to a landline.

Legislation had not stopped illegal SP off-course bookmaking. It is said that every second Australian household in the 1880s and early 1900s would bet with an illegal SP bookie. On every Saturday afternoon, the average punter went to a local pub, corner grocer, barber or milkman and placed a bet with their SP bookie.

Often the publican was his own SP bookie. Frank Murphy remembers that, in his dad's pub, the horses and prices were on a board next to the bar. Two men ran the price service in Ballarat and a man on a bike would deliver the overnight prices and then the opening market would be rung through twenty minutes before each race.

From 1916, the bookies competed against a 'totalisator' machine, known as the 'tote', invented by George Julius, an engineer working in Western Australia. The machine calculated changing odds and the paying of dividends to winning punters. As the world's first automatic totalisator manufacturer, Julius's company designed and supplied racecourse betting equipment throughout the world.

However, Victoria was slow to adopt this technology and even when it did, off-course betting continued to be conducted by illegal SP bookies. In 1983, nearly 20 years after the introduction of off-course totalisator betting in Victoria, the Connor Inquiry into Gambling estimated that turnover in SP bookmaking in Victoria was \$1b (\$2.6b), representing a significant erosion of taxation revenue for the government.

The SP bookie was an important part of the social fabric of Australian life.

The influence of illegal gambling reached to the highest offices in the country.

It is now generally accepted that Robert Askin, who was NSW Premier from 1965 to 1975 was closely linked with major criminals, and had intimate connections with the notoriously venal NSW racing industry. It has been claimed that Askin (himself an illegal SP bookie in his youth) was taking bribes of at least \$100,000 per year, equivalent to about five times that amount today, and that his "cut" included a huge payoff once a month collected by a bagman from the city's leading illegal SP bookies at the City Tattersall's Club.

In Victoria, Keith Heggart came to SP bookmaking with impeccable credentials. He was the grandson of Harry Heggart, the owner / manager of White City and Gracedale Park and the son of Stan Heggart who trained dogs for the two racetracks. Like his grandfather and his uncle Cedric, he adopted a very business-like approach to being an SP bookie. The key to success in the business, according to Keith, was to have lots of contacts, to be able attract clients and to be able to manage the risk.

He subscribed to a "price service", which he contacted by phone and which would quote the prices before the race started. The punter could then take the going odds or wait until the end of the race and take what was called the starting price, the last odds before the race started. Keith would take bets over the phone and through four agents who worked in pubs. The agent's job was to take the bets and phone them through to Keith who could then hold them or, if they were too big, lay them off with another bookie before the race started. The agents collected the money and Keith took the risk. The SP bookies paid 10% on all losing bets to the agent who took the bet for them.

Keith looked after his staff. A good agent working for Keith would make \$1000 (\$7000) in an afternoon. There were down side risks for agents. Rapid access to the phone was imperative. An agent, who was not able to phone the bet through, had to hold that bet and pay out if the horse or dog won. Keith recalls an agent called Matthews getting caught with a large winning bet and having to pay out on it. Keith

was later convicted for illegal SP activities and fined \$7000 (\$50,000). His police contacts later told him that the disgruntled Matthews had doxed him in to the police.

He also understood the importance of protecting his employees from workplace hazards. When the police caught one of his agents taking bets, Keith felt duty bound to pay the going price, \$300 (\$2100), to bribe a policeman to get him off.

Clearly, good relations with police were also a critical success factor. One day, he got a tip that he was about to be raided and his wife Joan escaped out the back with the books. By the time the police arrived, the evidence had disappeared and Keith set about convincing the police that he made his money milking cows.

There was big money involved. On any given day, Keith would carry up to \$40,000 (\$280,000) and could, on average, expect to pay out 90% and keep 10%. A large part of Keith's success as a bookie came from understanding the odds and minimising risk. He never carried large bets but would lay them off to other bookies. If Keith had a large bet of \$1000 at 5:1, he was exposed to a potential loss of \$5000. To cover that risk, he would bet \$800 of the \$1000 on the same dog with another bookie reducing his exposure to \$1000 (5 x \$200). If the dog lost, Keith kept the \$200 and got 10% commission for a losing bet from the other bookie, a total of \$280. If the dog won, he paid \$1000 and recouped the remaining \$4000 from the other bookie. It was all about numbers and Keith Heggart knew how to work them.

Money was paid by mail or on "settling day" which was normally a Friday when Keith would go round to his clients and collect the money. One bank manager complained to Keith that he was unable to conduct meetings on Fridays because the staff knew the Keith was coming round and left work early.

Keith doesn't recall having many problems collecting money but he would sometimes have to "carry" a punter up to a limit of \$10,000 (\$70,000) but with the understanding that all bets would be in cash from then on. If the punter had a win, Keith would keep about 60% as a further repayment. It was a clever scheme. The debt did not represent money Keith had actually lent the punter, so he was never out of pocket. He now had a payment scheme, a cut of the future winnings and a punter who must keep betting

with him to try to reduce his debt. It was an early and very effective customer loyalty plan.

He only stayed in the business for three years and was only caught the once when he was fined the \$7,000. But after this he noticed that the police had started following him. Then one day, he had a visit from an Assistant Commissioner of Police who made it clear his number was up. He closed the operation and retired. In his three years, he had made \$300,000 (\$2.1m) and invested that in a small business, financing himself into a comfortable retirement.

Birth Of A Totalizator Agency Board

Off course betting in Victoria was always huge but until 1961, it was illegal. Legal gambling opportunities away from racecourses were limited to the time-honoured ticket in Tatts.

Fines did not deter those who were prosecuted until legislation was passed to jail third offenders. However, that legislation was followed quickly by the availability of cellular mobile telephones making it virtually impossible for illegal operators to be raided by police. Consequently, no one can be sure as to the present extent of such betting in Victoria.

In the years prior to the introduction of a legal off course betting system in 1961, the illegal operator provided a very necessary facility for the army of punters unable to attend courses and tracks. These would include Saturday afternoon cricketers, footballers and spectators who liked to have “an interest”. It also provided a facility for people in hospital, the old and for many who could not afford the high price of admission to racecourses, especially during depression years.

A man who would achieve great wealth as a business and sporting entrepreneur made his initial mark by establishing his own illegal Totalizator in Collingwood. John Wren’s Tote was a genuine parimutuel operation from which the “house” took 10% with the remainder being divided amongst those holding winning tickets.

Parimutuel betting (from the French *pari mutuel*, mutual betting) is a betting system in which all bets of a particular type are placed together in a pool; taxes and a house take are removed, and payoff odds are calculated by sharing the pool amongst winning bets.

The parimutuel system is used in gambling on horse racing, greyhound racing, and on sporting events of relatively short duration in which participants finish in a ranked order. Parimutuel gambling is frequently state-regulated, and offered in many places where gambling is otherwise illegal. Parimutuel gambling is often offered at "off course" facilities, where players may bet on the events without actually being present to observe them in person. Parimutuel betting differs from fixed odds betting in that the final payout is not determined until the pool is closed – in fixed odds betting, the payout is agreed at the time the bet is sold.

In a race of 8 dogs, each dog has the following amount bet on it.

Dog 1	\$70.00	Dog 5	\$55.00
Dog 2	\$47.00	Dog 6	\$40.00
Dog 3	\$30.00	Dog 7	\$12.00
Dog 4	\$110.00	Dog 8	\$150.00

Thus the total pool of money on the event is \$514.00. Before the start, the odds (based on the amounts being wagered) are continuously updated. Following the start of the event, no more wagers are accepted. The event is decided and the winning dog is the one with a total of \$55.00 wagered. The *final payout* is now calculated. First the *commission* or *take* for the wagering company is deducted from the pool, for example with a commission rate of 14.25% the calculation is: $\$514 \times (1 - 0.1425) = \440.76 . The remaining amount in the pool is now distributed to those who wagered on Dog 5:

$$\$440.76 / \$55 = \$8.00 \text{ per } \$1.00 \text{ wagered.}$$

Thus dog 5 is said to pay \$8.00. If Dog 7 (a rank outsider) had won it would have paid

$$\$440.76 / \$12 = \$37.00 \text{ per } \$1.00 \text{ wagered.}$$

The hierarchy of Victoria's racing industry was aware of the enormous amount of money being gambled with illegal off-course bookies courses. Not only did this represent lost revenue for the Government, it was also lost revenue for the racing clubs who were naturally keen to get their hands on it.

However, the industry faced great opposition from church groups and others in its quest to reap the harvest by establishing legal totalisator betting in suburban shopping centres. These groups were strongly opposed to increased opportunities for gambling. The argument for the establishment of the off course tote was that there would be substantial revenue flows to both the State Government and the racing industry and also that it was unlikely to increase the total amount being gambled. Implicit in this argument was that the racing industry would benefit to the same tune that it benefited under current on-course arrangements.

The off-course tote would involve betting shops being set up in town centres and taking bets for meetings across the state. Like the illegal SP operation, it would mean that punters would not have to go to the track to place a bet. While this was eventually to become a financial boon for all codes of the industry, it was to be the nail in the coffin of attendance at the tracks.

The case for the tote was put by Victorian Racing Club Chairman, Sir Chester Manifold of Camperdown in 1951. At this stage, the minor codes of Harness Racing ("Trotting" at that time) and Greyhound Racing were not part of the consideration. The racing industry was not in a good financial position, Manifold was certain that a legal off course facility would provide a much needed blood transfusion to thoroughbred racing. It was estimated conservatively that a figure in the vicinity of £90m (\$2.7b) was being invested through illegal operations and that the bulk of this would flow through the legal off course system.

Opposition to the proposed TAB from the council of churches and others was tempered by the support of the press. Throughout the 1950's, the Government remained reluctant to introduce it, even for thoroughbred racing. It had been a hard fought victory for Sir Chester when the TAB finally began off-course betting on March 9th 1961.

On the first day of operation, a pleasing sum of £140,000 (\$3.4m) was invested, and from that day on the off-course TAB would become a combined fairy godmother and tooth fairy for both the Government and the thoroughbred racing industry.

The metropolitan thoroughbred racing clubs underwrote the TAB venture and Harness racing, although not required to underwrite the operation, was admitted to the TAB immediately. Greyhound racing would now have a new fight on its hands to gain entry to what some now called "the TAB family". Off course facilities were limited to the horse racing codes for five long years.

Henry Harrison was now Chairman at Sandown and, with his fellow metropolitan Chairman Harold Matthews from the MGRA, Harrison approached the Government. They argued to Secretary John Dillon that Sandown and Olympic Park greyhounds should be included in the TAB's off-course offering. This would give punters an opportunity to bet on the greyhounds and also give the greyhounds a proportion of the lucrative off-course betting market. It was quickly made clear that to have any chance of gaining TAB coverage on greyhounds, bookies fielding at country greyhound clubs and conducting Saturday afternoon betting would have to give up betting on off-course horse racing. Horse racing interests did not like the greyhound clubs eroding their Saturday afternoon "take". Chief Secretary Dillon said that without this concession, the odds on the Greyhounds getting TAB betting on the dogs went from even money to 250:1. The message was clear. The Government would protect the interests of the powerful horseracing lobby. What was quite remarkable was that Harrison and Matthews were able to make any progress on the issue at all.

Matthews and Harrison put the position to country delegates. They pointed out that the distribution of TAB money gained by all clubs would far outweigh the revenue lost by giving up off course betting on the horses. They said the sport would benefit

by about £150,000 pounds (\$3m) a year from the TAB. Although the country tracks would not get off course betting (only Olympic Park and Sandown would), they would get a proportional distribution to compensate for the loss of off-course horse racing betting. The other advantage of the move was that greyhound races would also be broadcast as a result of TAB coverage. What Harrison and Matthews didn't explain so clearly was the extent to which the two metropolitan clubs would be by far the greatest beneficiaries of this largesse.

There were some misgivings. The Ballarat club said that the bookmakers were the backbone of their club having brought the club back from bankruptcy when the club switched to afternoon meetings allowing off-course betting on the afternoon horse races. Many country clubs doubted their clubs would survive as attendances and the strength of the betting ring declined. The clubs were right in this and the betting ring would decline over the next three decades as off-course betting and the advent of televised races eroded attendances. However, Harrison, ever the master strategist, also understood that without off-course betting the greyhound industry would struggle.

Off course turnover was approximately 3 times as much as on-course betting. With the greyhounds running 104 meetings a year, it was expected that there would be a significant increase in revenue flow to the Greyhound industry. It was anticipated that an additional £2000 (\$40,000) a week in stake money would be available. There was an added advantage. Off-course betting would put pressure on the Greyhound industry to clean up its act and show that the punters were getting a fair deal.

Greyhound racing in New South Wales had already been admitted to the TAB and was benefiting from distribution of funds, despite that State having only 26 agencies at the time. Victoria was to have 226 agencies with 174 situated in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Country delegates were persuaded by the advocacy of Harrison and Matthews who gave assurances of a financial boom to all clubs in the future.

There was intense lobbying. Harrison used his friendship with Manifold to argue for a fair go for greyhounds and even gave Premier Bolte a greyhound... The Bolte Government finally passed a bill permitting the TAB to operate on greyhound racing with betting beginning at the Sandown meeting of 3rd March 1966.

As a condition of coverage, greyhound racing was required to pay 10% of the distribution earned to Thoroughbreds and Harness over the first five years of operation. The argument was that the poor relation was being admitted into a going concern and needed to put something back, despite the fact that Thoroughbreds' underwriting had been notional and Harness had made no contribution whatsoever. The total cost to greyhound racing in lost distribution amounted to \$344,641 (\$2.1m). Ultimately, it was a small price to pay. The greyhound industry now had a "seat at the table" in matters concerning racing in Victoria with the Dog Racing Control Board Chairman now having a seat on the TAB Board, alongside the Thoroughbreds and Harness. However, the Totalizator Agency Board membership was heavily weighted in favour of Thoroughbreds and it was always possible for the racing bloc to outvote both Greyhounds and Harness.

Coverage of greyhound racing by the TAB was slow. Initially, only the two metropolitan meetings were involved each Monday and Thursday night and six years after metropolitan admission, country meetings had received limited coverage. With the TAB outlets open on a Friday night to cover harness racing, the greyhound world could see no sense in not being able to wager on the Geelong or Warragul greyhounds which raced on the same night. Naturally, the Thoroughbreds thought that this would erode their take on a Friday night. The refusal to allow non-metropolitan clubs into the off-course system denied a lot of revenue for the greyhound racing and ultimately to the TAB. But the TAB Board was dominated by thoroughbred interests determined to keep greyhound racing in what they saw as "its place".

Wagering on greyhound racing was in time recognised as being very different from horse racing where the great majority of bets were made on win and place. With a maximum of eight runners in a greyhound race, 'exotic' betting would soon equal win and place wagering. Greyhound punters were more confident of their ability to

select quinellas, trifectas and quadrellas from the smaller fields as against the larger fields of the horse sports.

The effects of the introduction of TAB betting were dramatic. In July 1966, the Globe reported that TAB investment at both Sandown Park and Olympic Park continued to break records. A single night's betting on Sandown totalled \$86,000 (\$570,000) while on Olympic Park the amount was \$73,000 (\$480,000). The Dog Racing Control Board received \$44k (\$280,000), Sandown and Olympic Park received \$29,000 (\$185,000) and \$25,000 (\$170,000) respectively while each of the country clubs got \$1300 (\$8300).

In March 1967, the NCA at Sandown had reported a surplus of \$4000 (\$26k) on revenue of \$232,000 (\$1.5m) up by approximately \$40,000 (\$256,000) on the previous year. The new revenue item was the off course TAB distribution of \$29,000 (\$185,000).

The die had now been cast. Greyhound racing was part of a substantial government tax revenue system and the machinery of big betting. The advent of SKY channel would further cement greyhounds into what would become an uneasy relationship with the thoroughbred and harness interests.

Chapter 7: Crisis at Sandown

Throughout his years as a Board member and in his continuing role as President of the NCA, Silvester Doyle often raised his concern about the management of finances at the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club. Doyle's interest was very understandable. He had played a central role in both the purchase of the Lightwood Road site and the initial administration at the new club. He had also refused to agree that the NCA licence be transferred to Sandown. As the years passed this became the source of the bitterness that was at the core of differences between him and Henry Harrison. When the issue was resolved, the Sandown Board was never happy about the licence arrangements whereby 5% of the gate was paid to the NCA. Nonetheless, Doyle, an old NCA coursing man, continued to feel bitter about the way the license had been transferred to Sandown.

In his study of annual reports and financial statements of both Olympic Park and Sandown, Doyle noted the very different presentations of the two metropolitan clubs. Olympic Park was most specific and presented a lot of detail whereas Sandown provided very little detail, especially regarding expenses. Ron Snell of Sandown would defend his club's yearly presentation by comparisons with the reports of large corporations such as BHP.

Doyle felt that the operation of the Sandown licence should be the subject of a Royal Commission but Snell would maintain that criticism of his club's financial management emanated from "perceived historical grievances". When he considered how the metropolitan clubs were run, NCA stalwart Noel Banks often wondered whether the long fight to end proprietary greyhound racing had really achieved anything. Henry Harrison represented the new and increasingly powerful non-proprietary interests. To veteran coursing men like Doyle and Banks, the new metropolitan clubs must have had striking similarities to the old proprietary interests.

Matters came to a head in 1987, when a group of owners and trainers raised concerns about Sandown's financial affairs. The expenditure of club money on Hollywood stars, lavish entertainment and spectacular promotions had not gone down well in

some circles. The owners and trainers felt strongly that these activities were at the expense of the prize money that was their lifeblood.

The group's spokesman, Mr. Tony Collins, was later to tell the Administrative Appeals Tribunal that prize money at Sandown had diminished steadily over the last 10 to 12 years. Mr. Collins alleged that, "We're looking at several million dollars being squandered in a manner which contravened the Company Code of Victoria and the Constitution of the club". He also claimed that the club had debts of more than \$6 million at the end of the 1988 financial year and that members' equity had reduced from \$1.8 million to \$135,000 in 10 years. Board chairman, Bill Collins had replied that, "Reports of club debts of \$6.8 million were not completely accurate".

In response to the allegations, the Control Board commissioned an investigation by the Board Accountant, Pradeep Rastogi who was qualified as both an Accountant and an Auditor. Rastogi submitted two disturbing reports to the Board. He reported on employees with false names, personal purchases charged to the club, and evasion of tax in the employment of part time employees. He also found that valuable prizes donated for races had found their way into employees' homes.

The Board then engaged the chartered accountants, Price Waterhouse, to investigate the financial management of Sandown. The confidential Price Waterhouse report said that Sandown Greyhound Racing Club's day-to-day operations were inefficient, unaccountable and unprofessional. The report indicated the club was "technically insolvent" before an independent administrator was appointed in November to take charge of its financial affairs.

Price Waterhouse found nepotism rife and that club reserves had been depleted by \$1.3m in the four years to June 1988 and that by the end of June 1988, the club was in debt to the tune of \$315,000. The major reasons this was the director's failure to recognize the financial impact of the interest costs relating to extensive ground improvements and construction of the Henry Harrison grandstand. The Price Waterhouse report also highlighted inefficient and unprofessional operations. It also noted that expenditure of a private nature by some directors and some staff that not appear to have been reimbursed.

The report also noted that a recent grant of \$3.3 million from the Greyhound Racing Ground Development Board in 1989 had considerably strengthened the club's finances. The club also received a grant of \$490,000 from the Racing Gaming Division of the Department of Sport and Recreation. Clearly, the Government was not going to let Sandown go under.

The Price Waterhouse opinion was that the Directors at Sandown should be removed with an administrator appointed by the Board to take full control. This position was supported independently by Michael Dowling QC. The Control Board that would agonise over the crisis had been reduced to five in April 1988 with the sudden death of the popular Sandown Director, Keith Bravo. Relationships between Keith Bravo and Sandown Chairman Harrison had not been smooth during Bravo's Board tenure. Harrison regarded Bravo as a Sandown representative on the Board whereas Bravo saw his primary responsibility to the Board. Such distinctions were important when Sandown's finances were being examined.

Harrison would have realized that having a Sandown voice on the Board during the time leading up to the inquiries was crucial. Bravo was not to be that voice and he must have aware of the "Bennetts v The Fire Commissioners of New South Wales" Supreme Court decision in 1967 which ruled

Once a group has elected a member, he assumes office as a member of the board and becomes subject to the overriding and predominant duty to serve the interests of the board, in preference, on every occasion upon which any conflict may arise, to serving the interests of the group, which elected him.

This was not Harrison's view and he challenged Bravo's position. He was told that Bravo was not a representative of Sandown and need not represent Sandown interests. It was an important point during a process, which was indicative of the increasing willingness of the Board to exert its control over the clubs.

By the time of the crisis broke, Henry Harrison was no longer Chairman at Sandown, having failed to gain the percentage of members' votes required of a candidate over

seventy two years of age. He was immediately appointed as a consultant to ensure that any approaches to Government would benefit from his years of experience with politicians and departmental heads. Harrison's son-in-law, Geoff Dawson was now Chairman and three new Directors, Mick Gibilisco, Bob Smith and David Gleeson, had been elected.

It soon emerged that the previous Sandown Board had little knowledge of the financial operations of the club, these being a matter between Chairman Harrison and senior administrators, Ron Snell and Margaret Scarlett. As a result, the revamped Sandown Board considered a new committee structure to ensure better governance of the club's finances.

The two administrators who, with former Chairman Henry Harrison, had run Sandown for the past twelve or more years were "not prepared to accept changes indicated by the Committee" and were "not prepared to work under increased pressure". Both Margaret Scarlett and Ron Snell decided to take termination packages.

NCA General Manager John Stephens was immediately recruited as Chief Executive. It was a difficult time to take over, with the club under investigation but Stephens was able to establish a rapport with the Board's investigating Accountant Rastogi. Between them they worked hard to unravel the club's financial affairs and Rastogi was then recruited as Sandown's Accountant.

As time passed, John Stephens realised that Rastogi's position was untenable. He had been the one who had produced two of the disturbing reports on Sandown and he was now that club's Accountant. Vicious telephone threats advising him to "stop digging" were upsetting the young Rastogi who was married with two small children.

As Chairman of the Control Board, Bill Collins was in a difficult position as were his four colleagues. On the one hand, the Board had Rastogi's report along with unequivocal recommendations from Price Waterhouse and a Queens Counsel that the Directors be dismissed and an administrator appointed. On the other hand, many influential voices argued in support of avoiding a scandal or any bloodletting. These

included local Sandown area Labour members, Jan Wilson and Tony Norris who probably contacted Sports Minister Trezise who may, in turn, have spoken to Chairman Collins. Victorian Government Director of Racing, Phil Power was almost certainly in favour of a diplomatic path being found out of the crisis. Sandown Solicitor John Dillon was an impressive advocate before the Board in recommending an alternative to the dismissal of the Directors. It was certainly true that dismissal would have been most unfair to the Directors especially those recently elected who could not in any way be held accountable for financial mismanagement of the past.

Board Chairman Bill Collins had a long professional association with Sandown, having promoted the club meetings through the media. He reported a rumour that the formidable Dr. Cliff Pannam QC was waiting in the wings to seek an injunction in the Supreme Court on behalf of certain Directors, should they be dismissed.

A compromise was reached whereby the Sandown Board would request the appointment of a head of administration with full power but leaving the elected Directors in place. The Board was divided on the issue. Ron Nestor and David Mann supported this compromise, but Joan Rodda and John Foster found stood firm in their belief that the reports and opinions commissioned by the Board should be followed to the letter. They were outvoted on Collins' casting vote. Both Rodda and Foster, who had only served one term each, were not re-appointed by the Minister for Bill Collins' second term.

At Sandown's invitation, Control Board Assistant Secretary Hec Caruana was appointed head of administration with full powers. As a professional Accountant and Auditor, Pradeep Rastogi was uncomfortable about being involved in what could be perceived as a cover up and departed the greyhound world.

Hec Caruana's administrative role at Sandown was not prolonged. With John Stephens, he quickly established that Sandown's principal financial difficulty was the grandstand building project and high interest paid while waiting for funding from the Development Board. He advised that Sandown would recover quickly if the project could be financed at a lower interest rate. This assessment was to be confirmed later by Price Waterhouse.

With John Stephens, he quickly established a financial picture that satisfied the Control Board. The efforts to settle the Sandown matter without a scandal are easy to appreciate. The club's role in the sport was immense. In addition to the regular metropolitan race meetings, it hosted a thriving Veterinary Clinic. Within a few years it would provide a venue for a Tabaret.

The casualties in the crisis were minimal to the extreme disappointment of those who had brought the matter to light. No charges were laid. The advocacy of Sandown's Solicitor John Dillon had been critical but in the final analysis the persuasive diplomacy of Board Chairman Bill Collins and his Board's choice of Hec Caruana as administrator were the catalysts to the result that was favoured by powerful influences.

Chapter 8: The Seventies

The 70s was a period of continuing prosperity, growth and success for the greyhound industry. This would see the industry enjoying unprecedented popularity with widespread media coverage and large crowds attending the meetings, particularly at the Metropolitan clubs. The off course TAB coverage had brought greater number of punters to betting on Greyhound racing. The advent of widespread radio and later television coverage would continue this trend.

With this increasing popularity came increasingly wide exposure to the general community. The industry would now be subjected to greater scrutiny and be expected to conform to the standards of the wider society. This had been made extremely clear in the cruelty debate of the 60s. The Greyhound fraternity was no longer a small group, sufficient unto itself, that would be allowed conduct its affairs as it wished. A number of events in the next decade were to demonstrate this.

The decade also marked 100 years of greyhound coursing and racing in Victoria. In 1873, the first greyhound coursing event had been held at William Clarke's property in Sunbury and in 1973 the centennial celebrations were held. Events were touched with sadness with the death of Roy Maidment in June 1973, 3 months prior to the celebrations. He was 87. The centenary dinner was attended by the governor of Victoria, Sir Rowan Delacombe and numerous dignitaries. The Centenary Waterloo Cup was held at Geelong and the Governor presented the cup to S Richworth whose black dog Gadoni won from a 122 entries. The events of the week revived many nostalgic memories of the days of live hare coursing.

Another event at Geelong would provide a watershed for the racing industry. For many years, the Board had handed down summary justice to errant owners and trainers. The strong policing role of the Board was a reflection of the appointment of a number of ex-police men to positions in authority in the industry. It was also reflected in the Board's title, it was a "Control" Board. Events at the Geelong Greyhound Racing Club were about to test the limits of that control.

Wayne Freedman was a director of the Geelong Club. A successful punter on the greyhounds, he was also the son of a prominent Geelong businessman and licensed

bookmaker, Stan Friedman and the nephew of Horrie Capron, who was the chairman of the Geelong club.

Friedman was alleged to have bribed the race starter, David Geall, to open the starting boxes early or late according to instructions Friedman had marked in Geall's race book. The matter was heard by the Control Board and Geall was fined \$75. When Friedman's case was heard by the Board, one member of the Board, Bert Byrnes, was not present on the day when the charges were laid. Board Chairman Petty decided to exclude him from subsequent hearings. It was a critical error. Friedman was found guilty and warned off for five years. There was one dissenting voice from the decision, that of Reuben Halliday, a country representative from Portland. The innuendo suggested that Halliday had dissented solely on the basis of his friendship and long association with Horrie Capron and the Friedman family. Clearly things were shaping up for an almighty blue.

The Friedmans, who were unhappy with the decision, sought the opinion of Dr. Cliff Pannam Q.C. and then appealed to the Supreme Court. Peter O'Callaghan Q.C. was appointed with Board Barrister Brian Halpin, later to become Board Chairman, as his junior. Wayne Freedman's guilt or innocence would pale into insignificance beside the question of whether or not the Board in general, and its Chairman in particular, had dealt fairly with Friedman at the hearing two years before.

In what was to become known as the "Friedman v Petty and Ors" case, Friedman's appeal against his suspension was upheld on the basis that the Chairman of the Board, Charles Petty, had erred in preventing Byrnes from sitting. This had denied Friedman natural justice and on that ground alone, Wayne Freedman's suspension was overturned. The judgment hurt Charles Petty deeply.

The GRCB, and in particular Petty, felt that justice not been done in the Supreme Court. However, on advice, they chose not to appeal. Instead, the Board sought to gather support for an independent body to hear appeals that would be less costly and not distracted from the larger issues by what the Board saw as specious points of law. The Friedman case served to highlight the fact that the Board's judicial processes were not above the law. When due process was not followed, what appeared to be natural justice in the Friedman case, went out the window.

The GRCB decided to press for an independent racing tribunal. The other two racing codes were canvassed and whilst harness racing was in support the Victoria Racing Club was strongly opposed. In the official communication, the VRC indicated its support was not warranted because of "insufficient common ground between the respective sports".

In 1982, the new the Minister for Racing, Neil Trezize, decided it was time for a Racing Appeals Tribunal that would hear appeals relating to all the racing industry. It would be headed by a County Court Judge with two advisors, with expertise in particular cases. This was a great success for the GRCB, which had campaigned for the Tribunal without significant support from the other codes. The first Greyhound case before the tribunal proved to be symbolic. The Board had refused its Chief Steward legal assistance to defend an appeal by a trainer. The trainer was represented by the formidable Dr. Cliff Pannam, QC. The steward, despite being helped in the presentation of his case by both Pannam and the judge, suffered a comprehensive defeat. The irony of the situation was that shifting the appeals to a specific racing tribunal did not solve the problems exposed by the Friedman case. Without good and transparent processes, the GRCB would continue to get rolled on appeal.

This was to establish a pattern of defeats that would go unbroken until the 1990s when new GRV CEO John Stephens improved the preparation for appeals. Stephens dealt with problem on two fronts. One simple rule that he instituted was to be as smart as the opposition, if the appellant turned up with a QC, then the Board would have a QC. If the appellant had no legal representation, then the Board would not either. The other rule he instituted was that due process of law and natural justice would be applied to the Boards processes and investigations.

Another continuing feature of the 70s was the attention paid to greyhound racing by the tabloid paper, *Truth*, which had earlier waged a virulent attack on coursing and greyhound racing in general. Many in the industry felt that the newspaper had become the self appointed guardian of public probity and morality in all things greyhound. *Truth* continued to fight the good fight with a headline "Greyhound horror: Chicken used as live bait". *Truth* reporter Martin King had gone to the Cranbourne Park

Greyhound training centre where he had seen and photographed live chickens being tied to the lure arm used to train greyhounds. *Truth* then published pictures of dead chickens and dead rabbits in heaps around the track. The newspaper had been tipped off by the irate wife of a trainer involved in the live baiting. The chairman of the GRCB, Mr. Charles Petty outlined the Board's position and was quoted as saying, "Anyone who commits this offence, and it has happened in the past, will be dealt with by the courts. After a conviction has been recorded in a Court of Petty Sessions and the trainers convicted by the court, we can suspend his license for between 12 months to 15 years. We are not a police force."

A later *Truth* article ran "Crowd applauds as rabbits die in agony" which reported on some of the more gruesome details of an illegal live coursing event held at Heathcote where defenceless rabbits were torn apart to the cheers of a 100 strong crowd. *Truth* claimed to have been tipped off by a woman who said that the members of the Whippet Racing Club of Victoria would be meeting in Heathcote at 10 o'clock on a Sunday morning. The *Truth* photographer and reporter who went to a farmhouse in Heathcote could not have believed their luck. They had managed to gatecrash an illegal, invitation-only coursing event held by members of a club who did not see fit to question the presence of two complete strangers, one of whom was armed with a camera. Following publication of the article and pictures showing greyhounds mauling rabbits, the reporter phoned the President of the Whippet Racing Club of Victoria, who, not unexpectedly, denied any knowledge of the meeting.

In a "Where there's smoke, there's fire" article, *Truth* headlines on the 19th August screamed "Punter Threatens to Kill Top Dog Official". The report read, "A punter has told *Truth* he would assassinate the Chairman of the Stewards of the Metropolitan Greyhound racing club". The punter believed that the chairman and three bookmakers were parties to doping a greyhound. The punter said he had lost \$4000 on the dog, which finished fourth. He also claimed that if he did not shoot the Chairman of Stewards, he would bomb his home. Chairman of Stewards, Tom Hunt told *Truth* he was not taking the threat seriously. The caller said, "I've been diddled" and went on to describe how he believed the fancied runner had been given 4 ounces of ground beef and 2 ounces of milk before the race. This had made the dog "wobbly" on its feet as it was led to the gates. The dog, which had won well at its previous

starts, finished fourth. The caller said, "If I don't get Hunt someone else will. I will bomb his house or I'll shoot him". Unperturbed, Mr. Hunt said he did not intend to notify the police. However, the Victoria Police took the threats against his life very seriously and provided him with protection for a period. In November 1972, Tom Hunt resigned his post and accepted the position of Manager at Sandown Park. Hunt had been on sick leave for some weeks prior to his resignation and it seems that the strain associated with the role of Chief Steward had clearly taken its toll. None of this curbed the surging popularity of greyhound racing and the period saw the emergence of two distinct groups of serious trainers: the hobby trainers and the big professional trainer. The continued interest of the hobby trainer was a reflection of the appeal of the sport to a wide section of the population who saw an opportunity to combine a hobby with a chance to make some serious money.

The hopes of hitting the big time were fuelled by articles such as the one the Australasian Post ran an article on the ABC of buying a greyhound as a result of the interest in the fabulous New South Wales dog, Zoom Top.

Zoom Top was rated by many as one of the best and most versatile greyhounds ever. Hec Watt spent \$170 on the stud fee for Zoom Top who was valued at \$100,000 (\$700,000) at her best racing form. Watt was of the opinion that anyone had a chance of finding another Zoom Top. Zoom Top went on to win \$59,000 (\$410,000) in prize money – a 350% return on the original investment and the stuff of dreams.

The suburban battler was only allowed to keep one or two dogs because many local Councils had regulations and restrictions on the owning of greyhounds. These owners would often keep two dogs in their small suburban backyard. When it was hot, they used a hose to cool the dogs down and for exercise the dogs went to the local park. They had no galloping tracks or walking machines like the bigger trainers. *The Herald* ran an article on Ivan and Eleonore Banadinovich who were two such battlers. In 1968, Ivan and two workmates bought a broken down dog for \$75 (\$460). "We went all over the country tracks with her and she kept running fourth," he said. "We didn't know she had a dropped muscle in one of the back legs and that at the first trial had dropped another. That is usually death for a racing dog." Five months after they bought her, she won at Geelong and then a week later she won again at Olympic Park. "That's about the best luck that we've had," said Ivan. It cost Ivan and Eleonore about

\$10 (\$60) a week to feed the dogs because they were unable to buy in bulk like the bigger trainers. There were also the other expenses of travelling, going to the vet, trialing fees and vitamin supplements. Both Ivan and Eleonore worked, otherwise said Eleonore, "We wouldn't be able to afford to keep the two dogs." But Ivan thought it was all worth it. "I don't think I had lived until I was associated with dogs. There are many disappointments, but a win puts you on top of the world." They both dreamt of one day being able to become full-time owner trainers.

The larger professional trainer was also emerging. In 1974, *The Sun* ran an article on Pat Haas, wife of owner-trainer Karl Haas. She was training 30 greyhounds and was one of the leading Greyhound trainers in the business in Victoria. She was also a close second in the standings for the leading owner in Victoria. She maintained that she didn't have any real champions "just a lot of good average dogs that are honest triers." "Don't believe what you hear about greyhounds being vicious and savage," said Pat. "They make marvellous household pets and are better pets than other dogs because they are so docile. They are fantastic house dogs." At 7am every morning, Pat and Karl took the dogs for walks in relays. After the hour-long road walk, the dogs were put on walking machines where they walked for about 20 minutes. Later, they would be tethered to a large machine driven rotary clothesline in the backyard. Here they would exercise for about 30 minutes and cover around 2 miles. Pat said it was an expensive business keeping greyhounds and cost around \$20 a week to keep each dog and more if they were sick or injured. Greyhounds were prone to tonsillitis and it cost \$25 (\$150) for an operation to remove the infected tonsils. The Haas dogs travelled in luxury to and from the races in specially built trailers with padded compartments and had classical music piped in through an intercom system. "Karl likes classical music. He thinks it soothes the dogs," Pat said.

Greyhound racing was booming in the early 70s because, unlike thoroughbred racing, it was not a rich man's sport. More and more people were breeding and buying greyhounds. This produced stiff competition for the starts where only the best dogs were able to race regularly. For many years, there were too few meetings and too many dogs. Since 1967, the number of greyhound litters registered had gone from 535 to 1200 per year. It was said that if you could afford a house dog, you could afford a racing dog. There was also the additional benefit of the chance to make some

money. As a result, the number of small owner trainers who might only have one to two dogs was increasing.

One of the side effects of this increase was that there were soon many poorly bred dogs that were simply not good enough to get a race. This placed pressure on club graders who often had far more nominations than were needed. As more owners were unable to get a start, mutterings about favouritism could be heard and the GRCB began receiving complaints from disgruntled owners. The GRCB saw one of the solutions in central grading. The clubs saw the need to limit breeding.

The sport also had increasing appeal for the punters. By the early 70s, total gambling investments in Greyhound racing had passed \$100m in a 12-month period. These increasing funds made it possible for the Government and the Board to consider granting four new licenses. In some cases, applications came from thoroughbred clubs who were struggling to survive and saw the greyhounds as a financial lifeline. In these quarters, this must have been a bitter pill to swallow. The new licenses were recommended for Traralgon, Horsham, Shepparton and Baxter. When the Government approved all three except the one for Baxter, it became clear that Cranbourne was emerging as the Government favourite. Cranbourne had the advantage of existing facilities used by trotting and thoroughbreds. In addition, there was opposition to the Baxter proposal and some political pressure being applied by a group that was described as "a bunch of wealthy Frankston and Mt Eliza snobs who look down their noses at Greyhound racing." The decision was finally made when Under-Secretary John Dillon ruled in favour of Cranbourne. The establishment of four new clubs, one on the city limits and the others in regional Victoria provided racing opportunities for many owners, particularly those who did not want to race their dogs in the more competitive events at Sandown and Olympic Park. When prize money equalization came into effect, racing at these regional clubs became increasingly attractive for many owners.

The early 70s saw the first TV broadcast of greyhound racing. In 1971, Channel 7's Saturday night "Penthouse Club" returned from recess three weeks early with live broadcasts of the Greyhounds instead of the Trots. It was an experiment that would cover special Saturday meetings. Bill Collins negotiated the deal with Sandown

Chairman Henry Harrison who said, "This will bring the sport into the homes of people who've never before seen greyhounds in action. I'm very happy about that."

Bill Collins was to call the races for TV and the entertainment would be provided by Mike Williamson, with Mary Hardy, Smacka Fitzgibbon, Judy Jack, Shirley Clancy and Ivan Hutchinson's orchestra as regulars. Television coverage had arrived at greyhound racing.

The shift from Thursday nights to televised Saturday nights at Sandown proved to be a bonanza. TAB investment showed an appreciable rise and attendance at the track increased. But this was also an indication of the power of television to dictate the timing of Greyhound racing meetings. The Greyhound fraternity was enthusiastic about the possibility of direct television broadcasts and they did not hear the death knell tolling quietly in the background. Within a decade, direct television broadcasts by SKY channel would cut attendance at Sandown Park alone to around 200 a meeting.

In 1977, there was a changing of the guard at the Board. Sylvester Doyle, who was now 70, left the board although he would continue as president of the NCA for another 15 years. He continued unswerving in his opposition to tin hare racing and made no secret of his dislike of Henry Harrison being quoted in the press as saying: *"Bureaucratic thinking is more likely to be influenced by the dollar than the sporting outlook on which competition between greyhounds was originally established".*

"There is one in our midst that would make the fictional John West of Carringbush look like a missionary".

In Doyle's view, Sandown was wasting large sums on high salaries, trips, amenities and grandiose public relations exercises, whilst the country clubs raced for small stakes and the Plumpton clubs were denied any assistance whatsoever from either the distribution scheme or the bookmakers turnover tax fund. Money, and the way it was distributed, was becoming an increasingly important issue for the industry. The situation that must have irked Doyle most was that TAB revenue went directly to the clubs that had the greatest off course betting: Olympic Park and Sandown making it difficult for the Board to exercise any control.

Tensions also emerged between the two city clubs over the distribution of TAB funds. Sandown, which was in the fortunate position of owning its land and track, paid a total of \$43,000 (\$97,000) in rates, taxes and a small levy to the NCA. This highly favourable position was the result some very clever manoeuvring by the wily Henry Harrison some years earlier when he had managed to maintain private ownership of the land. By comparison, the MGRA, which was on Crown Land, paid a total of \$360,000 (\$808,000) in rent to the Olympic Park Committee of Management but also managed to pay nearly \$100,000 (\$2.25m) more than Sandown in prize money. A proposal to take TAB funds away from Sandown and distribute it to the country clubs was strongly opposed by Harrison who suggested feeding the Board's Chief Executive Ned Wallish "to the sharks". After much negotiation, it was decided to maintain the status quo. Sylvester Doyle wanted a Royal commission into Sandown's financial management. He must have felt some vindication, when some time later, the financial management of the Sandown club was the subject of a series of unflattering financial audits.

Another issue that began to take on increasing importance was central grading. The GRCB began hinting that it was time to centralise and standardise grading, the process by which dogs are graded or placed in races. The aim of grading was to ensure greyhounds compete against dogs of similar caliber. The established practice was that this was to be done by each club for its own races.

Central grading would involve the Board rather than the clubs grading dogs into races. The right to grade races was jealously guarded by the clubs who felt they should decide who would race and when. There was deep resentment over the possibility that some bureaucrat in the city should take away a process that many clubs had been managing for the last 40 years. Grading was critically important to a dog's chance of success, second in importance only to the dog's racing form.

Local grading practices were subject to great variation. Some graders liked to give as many dogs as possible a start, which sometimes meant running dogs in races where they had little chance. Sometimes a grader had to ask owners to help make up race numbers with dogs that were not prepared to race. One country owner/trainer

recounted that he would often get a call from the local grader asking if he could make up the numbers for a race. Keen to keep the club viable he would often supply as many as 6 unprepared dogs for a single race. All to keep the club viable. Knowing who was unlikely to win, was as good as knowing who was likely to. One kind-hearted grader would give a local man, who was down on his luck, an easy race and a good chance of winning. With off-course betting across Victoria, such local practices could only damage the industry's reputation for transparency.

Even with the best will in the world, it was going to be impossible to maintain a consistent approach across the industry unless grading was done centrally. There could be no denying that the betting public would be looking for that consistency. However, the opposition to central grading was widespread and deep-rooted. In an attempt to forestall GRCB intervention and head off central grading, a joint meeting of the MGRA and the Sandown, chaired by Harold Matthews and Henry Harrison had offered all country Greyhound clubs a sum of approximately \$5,000 to appoint their own grader/ manager. Matthews made the point that TAB turnover was such that the clubs needed to move past honorary positions to a more business-like administration, particularly in relation to grading.

This generosity on the part of the city clubs sheds light on the financial structure of the industry. At that time, the TAB distribution to the two Metropolitan clubs was \$500,000 (\$2.9m) with the country clubs each receiving around \$20,000 (\$115k). While the \$5,000 was a significant boost the country clubs, it was not much of a sacrifice for the metropolitan clubs as the total payout to the seven country clubs would only be \$35,000 of the 500,000 Olympic Park and Sandown received. The idea however was fundamentally flawed. The graders would be employed by the Board of each club, most of whose members were actively racing Greyhounds. It was widely suspected throughout the industry that some Board members brought pressure to bear on graders to secure favourable races for their dogs.

Grading was an issue of great concern to the clubs and to the Board, if for diametrically opposed reasons. Harrison and Matthews hoped that paying graders would lead to a more professional approach and less criticism although did not elaborate on why a more professional approach was needed. Throughout the debate

on central grading, many of the issues surrounding grading were not made explicit until Board Chairman Brian Halpin articulated the issue of transparency of club grading processes. The outcry from the clubs was immediate and hostile.

Harrison and Matthews may also have thought that providing funding for country graders would swing the country clubs in behind the metropolitan clubs in the looming battle over the whole issue of central grading. The two metropolitan clubs were as keen as the country clubs to maintain control over grading and for much the same reasons.

Central grading continued to be strongly opposed by the country delegates. Mr. Charles Petty, Chairman of GRCB announced that many dog owners and trainers were dissatisfied with grading and made public a number of letters that had been sent to the Board, mainly the usual complaints from owners and trainers who did not get their dogs selected to race.

Local grading was a problematic and there were two distinct arguments about the nature of the problem. The first was that many dog owners felt they did not get a fair go when their dogs were not given a start or were put into races where they had little chance. Underlying this was the suspicion that local grading was flawed through parochialism, favouritism or just plain overwork.

McKenna explained the other aspect of the problem. The industry was over-breeding and there were too many owners and too many dogs for the number of races. This was combined with the problem that many dogs were badly bred and below racing standard. He also voiced the opinion that if grading were to be taken over by the Board this would cause havoc and that it would be impossible for the Board to do all the grading in office hours.

In 1982, a new chairman would be appointed to the GRCB. Brian Halpin, who had served as the Board's lawyer in the Friedman case, represented a departure from the normal run of retired policeman. Halpin later regarded the main achievements of his three years at the Board as the introduction of country twilight meetings and his work to establish the central grading system, which absorbed a large proportion of his

energies. He had long been committed to central grading since his early days as a trainer and as a result of his involvement with the GOTBA.

However, the existing system was fiercely defended by the clubs. Clubs believed that the move central grading was an attack on their independence and indeed, upon their integrity. Halpin was aware that it was possible for some trainers to fall foul of a local grader and have a less than an even chance of being graded into races. There was also anecdotal evidence that committee members of the clubs expected to be given preferential treatment when their dogs were graded. One new Club manager/grader recalled that after his first night of grading races, a committee member handed him a substantial sum of money. The committee member's dog had won, strangely enough, on its merits. Accepting the money would have re-established a time-honoured practice. The money was declined and a new era began at the club. The same manager was later to observe that when central grading was introduced, many top trainers did not appear to be able to get a win.

However, there was a far more deep-seated problem with decentralized grading. The local grader was often a member of a relatively small and closely knit rural community and likely to be subjected to significant social pressure in terms of his or her grading decisions. There was always the temptation to give a loyal club member, friend or relation, a better than even money chance. With the public visibility of country greyhound racing through off course betting, radio broadcasting and Sky television, grading needed not only to be impartial but also to be seen to be impartial. Halpin saw centralized grading as the only way to achieve this and the Board moved to introduce central grading in March 1985.

In a diversionary skirmish, the National Greyhound News complained that no effort had been made by GRCB to inform the industry exactly what the mechanics of the system would entail. There had been no real argument put forward nor had anyone indicated how it might work and the Board had failed to ease confusion, the News complained. It reported that the reaction of the two city clubs and a majority of country clubs was one of "pure amazement". Jim Bourke who was president of the Country Clubs Association said, "the grader is the lifeblood of the club and grading is the most important facet of clubs operations. The grader acts as a public relations

officer and is the promotion of the club." There were also the mutterings of refusal to cooperate.

Matters reached a stalemate. When approached to mediate, Sports Minister Neil Trezise said he had no legal basis on which to interfere with the Board's decision to centralise grading. It also appeared that a delegation to the Board had been unable to get any reasons for the change to the centralized system. An article published in the Greyhound Adviser, the Board's official publication suggested that some of the graders were unethical. The article was written by Board Chairman, Brian Halpin. This drew protestations of innocence from the graders.

Halpin called a meeting of all clubs at Olympic Park. It was the best-attended meeting in the history of the sport and the opposition to the idea of central grading was overwhelming. It was to take ten years before the Board would take control of the grading process.

The 70s should best be remembered as the golden period for greyhound racing in Victoria. Racing turnover was increasing spectacularly as was greyhound ownership. Monday at Olympic Park and Thursday nights at Sandown regularly drew crowds of upwards of 5000 eager punters. Until 6 o'clock closing was abolished in 1966, a greyhound racetrack had been the only place you could have a bet and buy a beer at night in Melbourne.

The management of the two metropolitan clubs introduced a huge element of glamour to Grey hound racing. At Sandown, Henry Harrison regularly captured front page headlines with celebrities such as Robert Stack, Elke Sommer and Greg Norman attending race meetings. Both Clubs continued to invite leading footballers, boxers and sportsmen to make themselves available for photographs at meetings. At Olympic Park, Ken Carr engaged Melbourne's leading models as race night hostesses and many were photographed holding the trophy on the presentation dais. This proved to be a particular successful ploy until one night he mistakenly employed a very good-looking lady of the night as a hostess, a fact that was gleefully covered in the local press.

Increases in TAB distributions between 1969 and 1970 had been staggering. In 1968, Greyhound racing had received \$770k (\$4.6m) and in 1969 received \$860,000 (\$5m). The MGRA had received \$348k (\$2m) up from 248k (\$1.5) the year before and Sandown had received \$349,000 (\$2m) up from \$265 (\$1.6) the previous year.

In 1970, *The Herald* reported the opening of the second longest bar in Victoria at Sandown Park. It was 250 feet long and could serve 50,000 glass of beer in an evening. John Sorrel wrote that the wood-panelled, air-conditioned bar was easily the most luxurious drinking facility in a sporting arena in Australia and that it left the members bar at Flemington for dead. The idea behind making the bar so big was to give the punters instant service so they could get back to the betting. All this symbolized the giant strides that the dog racing industry, once a Cinderella sport, had made in Victorian recent years.

The catering of the new bar was done by Jack O'Brien and his brother, Neil. Their company were now one of the three biggest sellers of food and drink in Victoria. They had started as kids earning pocket money selling trays of peanuts and lollies as the Collingwood football ground. "I think the appeal of the dogs is that with 10 races, it's non-stop entertainment. The fields are small, you have to pick one out of eight to get a winner. And it's the first dip into the pay packet on a Thursday night at Sandown." Punters were urged to come early for the first night because for the first half-hour from 6.30 onwards the beer was going to be on the house.

By the end of 1971, was clear that the spectacular growth in Greyhound racing in the late 60s was continuing. Stake money in Victoria had reached \$1m (\$5.3m) for the first time. Stakes at Metropolitan meetings had risen from \$250,000 (\$1.4m) in 1966 to nearly \$700,000 (\$3.95m) in 1971. Betting turnover had now doubled since the TAB coverage of the sport, Attendances at Metropolitan meetings had totalled 550,000 and 197,000 at the country meetings and betting on city meetings was \$28.5m (\$160m), a 14% increase over the previous year. Greyhound racing dividends to the clubs were up to \$948,000 (\$5m) from \$857,000 (\$4.5) the year before.

Chapter 9: The Modern Era

By the beginning of the 1980s rivers of cash from off-course betting on the metropolitan clubs were flowing to the industry. MGRA alone generated oncourse revenue of \$10.2m, off course revenue of \$23.8m and \$27m from bookmakers, totalling \$61m (\$161) while the comparable figures for Sandown were \$7.6m oncourse, \$22.6m off course and \$24.8m from bookmakers totalling \$55m (\$146m). The GRCB registered 137 bookmakers, over 5000 trainers, and 4790 new greyhounds. It also recorded that 21 Plumpton coursing meetings were held and made a payment of \$38,000 to the NCA to continue litter branding. The Board was still very much a policeman, disciplining recalcitrant trainers but it was to use its new control of the flow of funds into the industry as a means for exerting increasing control over the clubs and to begin addressing the larger issues of positioning the Greyhound industry in the increasingly competitive wagering and gaming market.

In 1981 the "Report of the Committee Studying the Greyhounds in Victoria" made no fewer than 97 recommendations, one of which was reducing the Board to five members and disqualifying paid employees from membership. This meant the departure of Ron Snell the accountant from Sandown and Noel Banks who was the NCA secretary and a world recognized authority on matters concerning the Greyhound. This change made it completely clear that members of the board could not even to be seen to be representing special interests but would sit on the board to govern in the interests of the industry. The report also recommended that the registration and naming functions be transferred from the NCA to the Control Board, effectively removing any real reason for the continued existence of the NCA. The distribution of TAB funds was to be removed from the Development Board and passed to the Control Board.

The world was changing and with it the role of GRCB. In 1985, the Board considered the cost effectiveness of purchasing a computer and after an investigation by committee, decided it was a good idea. In many ways, this decision was indicative of the beginning of transformation of the sport into an industry. Within two decades, information technology would be the driving force behind the prosperity of

greyhound racing. An immediate benefit of the new technology was to provide a database for central grading, which was scheduled to begin in 1986.

There was also an increasing trend to centralisation and control as the Board, now distributing TAB funds, began requiring monthly financial statements from the clubs. Previously, clubs such as Olympic Park and Sandown had exercised considerable autonomy, because they received the TAB distribution directly.

Another indication of the winds of change was the observation by the Board that some club committee members were working voluntarily at the meetings while others required payment. Over the years, there had been a division of opinion on this issue within the Board, particularly on the question of whether Board members should claim expenses for items such as travelling to country clubs. One view was "I'm not in it for the money", the other "Not out of my own pocket". The implication was that somehow expecting to be paid was inappropriate. At the heart of the matter was the inevitable transition of the clubs from volunteer to professional organizations.

Many club members must have wondered why a volunteer should work next to a paid employee on race nights. For others, many of whom had worked voluntarily for decades, accepting money from the club would be anathema.

The changing nature of work was indicative of the increasing professionalization of employment in the industry. Many clubs were now significant businesses in their own right, employing people as bar staff, groundsmen and graders. In time, there would be all the trappings of the modern corporation, human resource policies and practices, equal opportunity policies, staff training, career and superannuation planning.

In 1982, radio station 3UZ lobbed a bombshell into the industry when it announced it would discontinue its coverage of country meetings. The radio station was placed in the invidious position of receiving two sets of industry delegations: one recommending that the coverage of country meetings should be extended and another arguing that it should be discontinued completely. Accusations of misrepresentation and dishonesty flew backwards and forwards. The matter was finally resolved and 3UZ advised the Board that it would stand by its decision to cease broadcasting country Greyhound racing.

Then came a surprising announcement. Radio Station 3DB was to receive \$1.2m (\$2.7m) a year to cover all TAB Gallops, Harness and Greyhound meetings in Victoria. The Minister for Youth Sport and Recreation, Neil Tresize, announced a three-year agreement between the Government, the racing industry and the TAB. This was a remarkable turnaround for 3DB, which had also announced two weeks earlier that it was ending its racing services. The new deal meant that 1350 meetings would be broadcast each year delivered 3DB exclusive rights to broadcast racing. The annual fee of \$1.2 million would be "self generating" coming from increased turnover and "present racing sources." Exclusivity had been an issue for both radio stations and 3UZ now indicated it would mount a legal challenge to the granting of an exclusive license to 3DB. The minister announced that, "It had been estimated the TAB would lose approximately \$18 million in betting turnover on Harness racing and Greyhounds if the present coverage continues." It was clear who was going to be footing the \$1.2 million bill.

The minister stressed that 3DB hadn't been given exclusive rights and commented that 3UZ could continue to broadcast in competition with 3DB. It was clear that Trezise saw radio broadcasting as critical to maintaining TAB turnover on country meetings. He stressed that 3DB had got the contract because 3UZ had been unable to give them a guarantee that the station would maintain its coverage. The Racing industry was now worth \$750m (\$1.6b) a year and the government was clearly determined to ensure its viability.

The significance of the 3UZ affair went beyond the immediate issues of broadcasting of Greyhound races. It represented two major developments in the management of the industry. In contrast to the Government's arms length stance over central grading, it was now clear it was prepared to take an active interest, particularly in the financial health of the industry as revenue from all codes of racing was becoming a significant contributor to government coffers.

The second major development was the trend towards managing the industry as a whole and the increasing centralization of control to the Board. The emphasis had moved away from the dominance of the industry by the interests of the two Metropolitan clubs to a wider emphasis on the overall success of the industry. One

manifestation of this was the Board's direct involvement in funding capital improvements in all clubs. Kennel blocks and administration offices would be upgraded, tracks would be improved and where possible, clubs were funded to relocate venues that had shared facilities with the other codes. There was an increasing awareness that the industry was now a business competing for the wagering and gaming dollar. This shifted the focus from the regulatory role that the Board had traditionally played to one of managing a large corporation where strategic planning and market positioning became increasingly important.

As part of the wider vision, the Board prepared to introduce a breeding incentive scheme, noting that the other codes have government funded incentive schemes. On this and on many other fronts, the industry struggled for recognition and equal treatment in relation to the other two codes. The Board also became increasingly proactive in the defence of grass roots owners attacking oppressive municipal Council regulations and the increasing fees demanded of greyhound owners. It formed the Local Government Committee to provide trainers and owners with advice on dealing with local government.

The Board incurred significant expense publishing the fields for meetings in newspapers. Fields for thoroughbreds and harness were regarded as news. Greyhound fields were not news but advertisements and therefore had to be paid for. Part of the response to this was an announcement of a liaison with Greyhound Form Propriety Limited, run by Bill Pearson, which would publish a form guide for the mutual benefit of both parties.

In 1986, Board chairman Brian Halpin saw his dream of central grading slip away. There was still significant resistance and the Board compromised to enable clubs to recommend fields for consideration by the Board's grading supervisor. The technical difficulties of introducing the computing system at the same time as dealing with the political problems of central grading had also not helped the cause. However, there was increasingly support for central grading and this was helped when the original grading supervisor resigned and a new grading supervisor, Mark Saunders, appointed. Saunders had previously held a similar position in Queensland. Technology sped up the acceptance of change when the Board was able to provide a

service for telephone nominations that replaced the need to fill in forms that needed to be lodged with club secretaries. Eventually, the telephone nomination system would be handling 150,000 calls a year.

There was some collateral damage from the introduction of central grading. Board Secretary Ned Wallish tendered his resignation after a dispute over the use of casting votes. Sports Minister Tresize would replace Brian Halpin at the end of his first term and the charismatic Bill Collins would become Board chairman.

Halpin had been a strong supporter of the country clubs and with control of the distribution of TAB funds, he was able to ensure that the distribution of funds was changed to increase the dividends paid to country clubs. Board was also able to fund advertising on both radio and television and to upgrade the computer system that was, amongst other things, now producing a cheap, online form guide.

All of this was part of a broader strategy to increase participation in greyhound racing. It distributed TAB funds on the basis of 50% for Metropolitan clubs with country clubs receiving their previous year's distribution costs and increase proportionate to the increase in their stake money. With TAB distributions rising steadily, this provided a huge incentive for clubs to increase prize money and pass the benefits of the rising popularity of greyhound racing back to the owners and trainers who were the lifeblood of the industry. This was aided by increasing radio coverage of country meetings by broadcaster 3UZ.

The board began developing veterinary research and as result of the appointment of Dr. Jim Gannon to the Board began building good relations with vets with regular dissemination of information. Jim Gannon had played a major role in educating owners and trainers on the care of their dogs while running the Sandown Veterinary Clinic.

The Breeding Incentive Scheme was established with \$200,000 to support the "Victorian Greyhound Breeders Stakes". This promotion was indicative of the increasing emphasis on public relations and promotion within the industry. There were TV commercials stressing the 1:8 chances of winning on the greyhounds, a free week of Greyhound racing sponsored by the board designed to stimulate on course

attendants, free ties, advertising in cinemas, an annual award of "Personality of the Year" and a buyout of all tobacco sponsorship with funds sponsored by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.

Against this there was continuing declines in oncourse attendance and bookmakers turnover. This was, however, offset by annual increases in off course TAB turnover. In 1992, gaming machines were introduced into Victoria and the clubs were advised by the board to give consideration to installing them. Only three clubs did so. Sale established its own Tabaret while MGRA and Sandown entered into a joint venture based at Sandown.

If the inclusion in TAB off-course betting was a defining event for the industry as a whole, this decision was of similar importance at a club level. It proved to be a licence to print money because a fixed percentage of all pokies turnover goes to the clubs. Currently pokies revenue to Sandown and MGRA runs at around a \$1m per year, Cranbourne, which entered a three way deal in the Trios Tabaret with gallops and trots in 2002 now receives annual income of \$200,000 in revenue.

The money continued to flow. By the mid-90s, off course wagering exceeded \$200 million for the first time and the market share of the greyhounds had increased by 8% against the other codes despite overall declines in oncourse attendance and tote revenue. This was now proving to be an irreversible trend. It has reshaped the nature of the industry much to the dismay of many who mourn that with the inevitable decline in bookmakers and the demise of the on-course betting ring, much of the "colour" had now gone out of greyhound racing. It was a new era and the image of greyhound racing was changing.

Sponsorship was increasing with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation sponsoring the Provincial Cup and CUB sponsoring the country clubs. The most significant piece of sponsorship was for the Top Gun an invitation-only event for a selected field of eight greyhounds. TAB sponsored the \$50,000 in prize money for the event that was held for the first time at Sandown and resulted in the famous dead heat between Golden Currency and Worth Backing.

In 1994, the Greyhound Owners and Breeders Incentive Scheme was launched. A joint initiative between the government the GOTBA and the Board, GOBIS was designed to provide national promotion for the Victorian Greyhound breeding industry, to increase patronage of greyhound sires standing and Victoria, and to provide incentives and bonuses for Victorian bred greyhounds racing in Victoria. The GOBIS scheme proved to be spectacularly successful with new registrations providing a massive revenue flow of \$100,000 against an investment of \$10,000. Market share continued to increase and distributions to the clubs increased by 20% as a result of the Board strategy to increase offcourse betting. The privatization of the TAB meant that the Board now became fully responsible for functions performed by the Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Board and would now control capital investment in the clubs. Part of this involved providing \$1 million of development funding for the construction of a new track at Sandown, now believed to be the best Greyhound facility Australia.

The increasing sense of identity and independence saw the purchase of a freehold building in West Melbourne to serve as the industry headquarters, ending the combined codes 20-year tenancy at Racing Industry Centre.

The Board was now able to provide additional funding to the Metropolitan clubs to take the stake money for the cup finals to \$100,000.

The industry was dealt a double blow in 1997 with deaths of both Board Chairman Bill Collins and CEO Ken Carr both of whom had terminal cancer.

They had proved to be a formidable combination in the administration of the industry as it moved into the new era of increasing competition and financial responsibility. Both were universally popular and highly regarded for the management skills they brought to their roles. During their time at the helm, the board had become increasingly responsible for the management of two important aspects of the industry, maintaining and developing grassroots participation in the sport and managing the industry in an increasingly competitive environment.

The Board was now developing a strategic planning process that involved industry consultation and was conducted against a backdrop of declining course attendances,

and the recognition that racing was now a televised wagering medium that could be readily packaged for an international market.

The end of the 1990s saw industry agreement on live racing on Pay TV. While this involved rescheduling meetings to the twilight hours, it opened up a new market segment of TV viewers. This saw an increase in market share from 9% to 12.3% and off-course wagering on greyhounds increase by a staggering 45% from \$215 million to \$312 million.

The MGRA transfer to the Meadows was completed and the increase in attendance showed that a strategy that targeted the local community would bring crowd back to greyhound racing. In 1997, the Inaugural Eukanuba International Greyhound Racing Carnival which was to be held with greyhounds from Ireland England and the United States in a series of features with stake money exceeding \$300,000.

Chapter 10: The Greyhound Adoption Program

In July 1977, Ken Norbury of the Herald highlighted a significant problem for the industry when it described the death of the Greyhound whose "only sin is that he was too slow." It was a sad side of a popular pastime of Greyhound racing and it was one that the public rarely got to know about. There had been sporadic reports of dead greyhounds being found with their ears cut off to avoid identification. Ear branding, introduced in XXX identified the litter which had to be registered with the GRCB. He wrote that "you are hardly likely to get many Greyhound owners to admit it. Because it's not good for Greyhound racing." He cited some figures that the Greyhound racing control board had an average of 12,000 greyhounds registered to race in any given year in Victoria. In 1976, there were 1800 litters registered with an average of six to a litter was around 10,000 new dogs a year. While the GCB required litters to be registered, there was no similar requirement for greyhound deaths. Werribee Shire ranger, John Brown reported finding two dead dogs with the ears cut off so that the ear branding could not identify them "apparently there are a lot of cases like this," Mr. Brown said, "they start training them and if they don't come up to scratch they dump them or shoot them."

The ranger at nearby Melton, Eric Haines agreed and said people often asked him to shoot their dogs. Haines would ask "What's wrong with it?" And the owner would say "Oh he's not fast enough." Mr. Keynes claimed to have shot between 100 and 150 greyhounds, in addition to finding about 20 animals dumped in the area, over a two to three year period.

The secretary of GRCB, Ned Wallish, admitted that he had heard of dogs that failed at the track being shot but he admitted, "It's a problem. If their training is not up to standard what are you going to do with them?" The prejudice that exists against greyhounds said Mr Wallish meant not many people were willing to take them on as pets. He went on to draw the parallel between greyhounds and horses posing the question: "Where does a race horse go? They finish up as pet food for domestic animals. It's a hard cold fact." The President of the GOTBA, Roy Duncan had heard of the problem but believed that it was restricted to "fly-by-night" trainers.

It was clear that the Board was not going to become involved in dealing with this issue despite the enormity of the problem. It was also clear that the groups who had been so vociferous in the protection of the hare during the 70s were not going to show the same interest in the racing Greyhound. It is ironic, given the outcry over animal cruelty and that animal welfare was not part of the industry culture nor was there a societal expectation that the matter of the fate of retired greyhounds should be taken seriously.

One man trying to solve the problem single-handed was owner-trainer Les Foran who supplied other tracks with greyhounds. As long as the dog was a good chaser other tracks would take them said Mr. Foran who had been training greyhounds for 25 years. He sent a consignment of 57 to the American Pacific island of Guam where the Americans had just put in a big track.

He also supplied tracks at Rockhampton, Cairns, Mt Isa and Darwin as well as sending 10 to 12 a fortnight to Macao. At Olympic Park, a dog would have to run between 30 and 31 seconds over 511m to have any chance. The dogs Les Foran bought would normally be flat out to run 32 seconds. But if you put eight slow dogs together you get just as good a race." said Mr. Foran. About half the dogs he got were given to him and he paid about \$25-\$50 for the others but he admitted that he had to " Knock off a few who were absolutely hopeless. Some were just plain hopeless." He believed that the needle was a horrible death and that there was only one way to destroy a Greyhound and that was with a rifle.

However, despite his best efforts Les Foran did little other than prolong the racing life of these dogs. There is nothing to suggest that the dogs sent to Macau would receive better treatment than they did in Victoria.

The Greyhound industry, and indeed the racing industry as a whole, simply did not see this as an issue. Greyhound racing had its roots in coursing, a rural sport where dogs were simply working animals like any other farm animal. When their useful working life was over, they were put down. This practical and pragmatic attitude translated easily into the urban environment where greyhounds were bred to race and to win money for their owners. The problem created by large number of dogs who

were not able to make the grade was greatly exacerbated by unrestricted breeding which produced many substandard dogs. This, in fact, was the root of the problem. Ultimately, the solution to this problem would lie, not only in providing for the dogs who were not able to race successfully but also in preventing the breeding of these dogs in the first place.

The Board was also in a very difficult position. In some ways, Greyhound owners were like employees whose activities generated revenue for a business. However, the similarity ends there. Greyhound owners were not bound the way employees are to an employer and the Board had very little effective control over them. The owners were free to decide when, where and whether they would race and how they would treat their dogs. This made regulating any part of the industry, other than the actual races, very difficult for the Board. The opposition to central grading had shown the extent to which Board interference in the grassroots of the industry was resented. In addition, the board had no means for the development and enforcement of animal welfare policies.

The board's involvement in animal welfare evolved, like so many of its activities, from a combination of influences. In this case, it was as an extension of the activities of the veterinary clinic established at Sandown by Dr. Jim Gannon. Gannon had been extremely active in promoting Greyhound health and welfare with grassroots owners and trainers.

The clinic also provided a service for Greyhound owners to have their dogs humanely put down. One owner was so clearly distressed with this prospect that Jim Gannon offered to see if he could get the dog adopted. When one of the nurses at the clinic, Melanie Tochner, offered to take the dog into foster care to train it to live in a family situation before it was sent to a permanent home, the Greyhound Adoption Program was born. Melanie and Anita Smith provided much of the initial volunteer labour that supported the program.

Foster care was a central part of the early days of GAP. The original owner would transfer the dog to GAP together with a \$30 fee and a volunteer driver would deliver the dog to a foster home with the dog would spend approximately 2 weeks before

being moved to a second foster home for a second assessment, in some cases the Greyhound would go to a third foster home if further assessment was seen necessary. The prospective owner was then given a chance to meet the dog and decide whether they wanted to adopt it. If they did, the dog was taken to the Sandown Veterinary Clinic for surgical de-sexing, heartland testing, teeth cleaning, vaccination, nail trim and worming. After the surgery, the Greyhound, convalesced at the Lang Lang foster home with Linda Dempsey before going to their new home.

The steps built into the adoption program was in recognition that greyhounds of those days were trained to chase, attack or kill just about anything that moved, including rabbits, poultry, and small game. While this was illegal, it did occur and there was no way of telling the potential danger of any one greyhound so the debriefing program had to include not only the ability to walk up and down stairs, but also not to attack anything, such as family pets or even kiddie's toy and bears etc. - hence the need to move into several foster homes for re-training under different family circumstances.

Later, after the Board enforced the animal welfare aspects of training, the necessity for the range of foster home transfers also decreased in line with more humane training methods.

Soon GAP, as it was to become known, was regularly placing dogs with volunteers who provided foster care and training before they went to a permanent home. Within a year the volunteer program had permanently relocated 18 retired greyhounds and had another four in training in foster homes. The program had also attracted considerable media attention being featured on the TV program "Talk to the Animals" a segment on "Totally Wild" and "Burke's Backyard". The program also had the support of the RSPCA through Gannon's good friend and colleague, Dr. Hugh Wirth, who also used his radio program to promote GAP.

It also attracted sponsorship from Uncle Ben's who provided dog food for the dogs in foster care as well as a range of promotional goods, with the profits going back to GAP. The program was also supported by initial grant of \$1000 from GRCB. The success of the program meant that it was no longer able to continue as an informal volunteer operation. One unfortunate consequence of success was that

Melanie Tochner who was the sole signatory on the GAP bank account found herself liable for personal income tax on all money that went into the account. As the program expanded, its needs expanded beyond those of the Sandown Veterinary Clinic. Some of these were simple requirements such as faxes, answering machines, separate telephone lines, computers, photocopiers and transport for the greyhounds, but most importantly the program now needed a legal status that allowed it to act as a registered charity that could function as a legal entity and accept donations from corporations such as Uncle Ben's. The GRCB had been highly supportive of the program and in 1997 the GAP program moved under the umbrella of the Board.

The Greyhound Adoption Program was dedicated to finding homes greyhounds that were no longer suitable for racing. GAP was to become one of GRV's welfare flagships providing the opportunity for retired racers, or greyhounds that are not suited to racing, to be re-trained and adopted into family homes. In 1999, in recognition of the success of GAP, the Victorian Government granted an exemption to the muzzling laws for greyhounds that have passed through the Greyhound Adoption Program. Greyhounds awarded the GAP Green Collar can now be walked in public without a muzzle.

There are many barriers to successful programs such as GAP, including misconceptions about greyhounds. The greyhound is a "sight hound" and is aroused by the passion for the chase. Unfortunately, this has given the greyhound a reputation for aggression and hostility reinforced by old rules that required greyhounds to wear a muzzle in public. This is one of the many myths that GAP seeks to dispel. Another is that that greyhounds will need large amounts of exercise. Ironically, greyhounds are typically quite lazy and sleep most of the day.

GAP has now moved to a new 40-acre complex in Seymour which was opened in 2003. The opening ceremony included tours of the facility, face painting, a greyhound fancy dress competition, bush poetry, a jazz band and a whip cracking demonstration. There was also a presentation to Merlin, the 1000th GAP Greyhound. Since then the GAP property has undergone a \$1.2 million dollar upgrade which included the building of an administration block, as well as increasing the number of kennels available to house greyhounds. The new kennels feature state of the art design features, and has doubled the space available to house greyhounds.

The relocation was designed to expand the success of the program and ensure the continued growth and popularity of adopting Greyhound into family environments with a goal of training 300 greyhounds a year. The program has been helped by a change in the public perception of the Greyhound and a wider recognition of their value as pets.

With the opening of the new kennels, it was possible to conduct more extensive tests on the dogs before they were sent to foster homes. A new process called "Temperament Testing" was introduced where the dogs' prey instincts were tested for exposure to other small dogs and finally to cats. Dogs with a strong prey instinct would be deemed not suitable for GAP. Dr. Linda Beard, who is the GRV vet, comments that dogs with a strong prey instinct and not necessarily good racing dogs and good racing dogs do not necessarily have a strong prey instinct so it is difficult to predict which dogs will be successful in GAP.

Much of the GAP has remained unchanged with the foster home program continuing to be run by volunteers. Many people who participate in the foster home program do so to select a suitable Greyhound, deciding to keep the Greyhound rather than offer it for adoption. The dogs that complete the foster home program have their profile put on the Internet where interested families can select a suitable dog for adoption. Dr Beard is very conscious of the need to get the right mix between the Greyhound and the family, so adopting families have the right to return the dog if it does not fit well into the family setting.

There is an ongoing shortage of foster carers to care for the dogs before they go to a family. GRV has sourced some novel foster care alternatives. In the Prison Pet Partnership, run in conjunction with Corrections Victoria, minimum-security prisons act as foster carers on behalf of GAP. Currently this program runs at HM Prison *Durrnghile*, but is due to be launched at HM Prison *Beechworth* and two more low/minimum security prisons. *This innovative program was featured in an article by Miki Perkins in The Age on 24.4.08*

In addition to GAP, GRV has actively pursued the issue of animal welfare. In 2003, a national Inoculation Policy commenced to counter common animal diseases such as distemper, hepatitis, parvo-virus and kennel cough. Victoria led the introduction of mandatory vaccination requirements with greyhounds between the ages of 12-16 weeks.

GRV has developed an Industry Code of Practice in consultation with industry participants, the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Victorian Legal Governance Association, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Bureau of Animal Welfare, the RSPCA and government departments. It has developed a 'Code of Practice' for the greyhound industry which outlines minimum standards for development of kennel facilities, keep and care of greyhounds and registration requirements.

In 2006, GRV established the Responsible Breeding Taskforce (RBTF), which included prominent breeders, Dr Jim Gannon and Dr Hugh Wirth from the RSPCA to address issues with the breeding of greyhound litters. In 2007, the RBTF released 17 recommendations, 12 were directly related to breeding. The others related to increased racing opportunities for slower greyhounds, vaccination requirements for the industry, and the monitoring of establishments that are involved in breeding. The same year, GRV appointed a full-time Animal Welfare Officer, Dr Linda Beer. A veterinarian, Dr Beer is responsible for monitoring the industry, and for developing and implementing Animal Welfare initiatives such as those recommended by the RBTF.

Another part of greyhound folk lore is the film "Dalkeith". Traralgon stalwart Marg Thomas raised and trained a dog named Dalkeith and then donated it to the old folks hostel in Traralgon. The dog raced at Traralgon and was filmed by *A Current Affair*. From this the idea of a film was born and GRV put money into the production. The premier of the film was at the Top Gun night in 2001. The local club was disappointed that the filming had to be done in Ballarat but many of the folk from the Dalkeith home were used as extras.

The movie, which failed to get general release in 2002, has developed a cult following in Melbourne and is regularly shown at the Glen Waverley cinema and well as having been shown in 29 countries.

The film is based on a true story that had its genesis with Marg Thomas and the original Dalkeith in Traralgon. The inhabitants of the Dalkeith retirement home were more likely to die of boredom than of old age until they get a thoroughbred Greyhound as a pet. They start racing the dog and it begins winning so the residents start going to the track and betting on the dog. The trustees of the retirement home object and try to put a stop to the dog's career. An old lawyer, played by veteran actor Ray Barrett, who lives in the home takes the matter to court. The ending is naturally predictable. Not so the fate of Dalkeith who went to live in the retirement home but ate the cat and had to be moved on.

Later Marg Thomas suggested that one of her dreams was that people with disabilities and the underprivileged should be able to own a dog and from this the idea of the 'Great Chase' was born. Brochures were sent out to local organization's involved in the area asking if they like to run a dog. The plan was for the organization to own the dog for 12 months and get half the winnings. The famous dog Slater won \$136,000 for its owners.

The Great Chase started in 2003 after the group at GRV, Lanie Tomming, Emma O'Halloran, Bob Smith, John Stephens, Jan Wilson and Mark Dooley were looking at ways of revamping the old Provincial Cup. Originally called the Charity Chase event was to involve working with charity groups in local communities but with the strong influence of Vic Health, who originally provided \$50,000 in sponsorship, the focus shifted to local groups supporting people with physical or intellectual disabilities was a particular emphasis on involving those supporting children. An interesting spin-off of this program was to encourage all Greyhound clubs in Victoria to ensure that they were meeting their "Access for All Abilities" responsibilities.

The Great Chase is a grassroots based activity. Individual trainers nominated dogs for the Great Chase and will compete for the \$200,000 prize money in much the same way as normal races. The clubs then use a random draw to allocate a dog to each of the groups that want a dog. Some clubs invited the community groups to the allocation of greyhounds, which was conducted using the box draw method. The

community group receives a proportion of the stake money and 10% of the dog's winnings for the next 12 months.

The Great Chase is based around the Dalkeith model. The "ownership" of the dog is designed to give community groups the opportunity to become involved in Greyhound racing and through this to provide entertainment and enjoyment for the members of the group. GRV designed a program to introduce people gradually to Greyhound racing and also to the Greyhound Adoption Program.

This takes the form of seeing the video of the original Dalkeith movie, visits by GAP Greyhounds, visits to the trainers and going to the tracks Maloney for the races but for the trials where the children and adults were given a chance to see the various "behind-the-scenes" aspects of Greyhound racing and given the opportunity to participate in such activities as assisting with the boxing of the dogs, watching the lure driving and race calling where possible. Organizations are encouraged to watch the races and are invited to for the final were there involved in a parading the dogs with a rug bearing the name of their organization which they are presented with the end of the race. Community groups received \$3000 if their dog wins, \$2000 for 2nd place and 1000 for third. The community groups have responded well to the program and have listed the socializing and interaction with the racing club and community, the chance of winning prize money, cheering the dog on the in the heats and the interactions with the dogs as the major benefits.

Participation in the Great Chase is very much representative of the number of dogs in the available in the local area. To begin with the heat are held in the local country club, the semi-finals in the regional centres and now the finals are held at the Meadows. Originally the finals were held at Bendigo, Warragul, Warrnambool and Shepparton but travel distances became an issue not only for the community groups but for the owners as well so the venue for the finals was moved to Metropolitan club. The event has been a spectacular success with 60 community groups involved in the inaugural race in 2003. There are now 150 community groups now involved. There have also been spectacular returns for participants.

Section 2: The Clubs

Chapter 11: The Proprietary Clubs

Napier Park

Napier Park was located on 12.5 acres where Strathmore High is now located. The club first started in 1936 and closed in 1955. In addition to the changed legislation banning proprietary clubs, a new group of people had moved into the area and now owned houses that looked down over the Moonee Pond Creek. They also "looking down" on a greyhound racing track and resented the people who used Pascoe Vale Rd to get there. Things had changed little since the 1930s and 40s when the Reverend spoke out so stridently against the "Bourke Street loafer".

Entry to Napier Park was through a large rectangular front gate in the big car park. On the other side of the car park were the turnstiles and straight through the turnstiles was the betting ring at the back of the grandstands. Originally there were two grandstands, one with a cafeteria underneath it. Later, a third grandstand was built with a generator that ensured self-sufficiency in electricity. In front of the stands were the immaculate gardens, The Confroy's were strongly Catholic family and when a Papal legation visited Australia in the 1950s, the Napier Park Gardens were always immaculate, planted in purple and gold, the Pope's colours. These gardens served as a barrier between the stands and the 500 yd straight track. The circular track started at the end of the straight track with two turns, the first quite gentle and the second a sharp one connecting to the final part of the 500-yard straight track.

Across the straight track and in the centre of the circular track was a large paddock where there were sheep, horses, cows, goats, turkeys, ducks and chooks that often made nuisance of themselves by perching on the railings by the finish line. There is a working area behind the stands and a large barn on the property. Mary-Anne Confroy would observe men stealing in and out of the barn early in the morning and in the evening. Her father told her that they were army deserters and that she should leave the poor devils alone.

Her Irish grandfather TJ Confroy was an entrepreneurial risk taker and a member of the American Millionaires Club. He founded the Southern Cross Assurance Company and the Napier Park Greyhound racing track. Mary-Anne Confroy, his granddaughter describes the Irish as "drinking gambling feckless people" describes TJ himself as a

"generous scoundrel". Dennis Clark, a naïve young sailor, lost all his money playing poker with TJ. To help young man out with his debts, TJ took him to the races at Caulfield. TJ got Clark to lay bets for him on the races and always giving the young man more than he required to be put on the horse, thus enabling the young man an honourable way to pay off his debts.

TJ was not always treated so well himself. He helped finance it Errol Flynn to go to America. When Flynn was famous, TJ wrote to him asking for his money back. He received an autographed photograph and written on the back was "consider yourself well-paid". Both TJ and his son Leo were generous to a fault. TJ was an active philanthropist and the philanthropy extended to family members. Mary-Anne remembers him giving her a pound for getting a feather to clean his cigarette holder. She also remembers her father Leo driving around the poor suburbs of Melbourne in their Austin motor car throwing handfuls of money out to the children in the streets. A deeply religious man, Leo could not pass a Catholic Church without going into to pray.

When Mary-Anne and Trisha were children their family lived under the stand at the Napier Park track, where their father Leo Patrick Confroy was now manager. It was a large and comfortable place for young family to grow up and the girls became used to going to sleep with the noise of a race meeting going on over the head. Leo had been the part-time manager during the war and worked at a munitions factory in Essendon. Mary-Anne and her sister Tricia's most active involvement was on Thursday night, which was trial night. Mary-Anne operated the electronic timing sitting in the judge's box with the judge and the steward. The trials were open and there were often many other owners timing the dogs. Trishia's job was to operate the gramophone, a windup model that played 78 rpm records and required almost constant attention. She also used the committee room as dolls' house much to the embarrassment of her father on some committee meeting nights.

The girls had no official roles on Monday race nights and were certainly not allowed in the judge's box. They were allowed to mingle with the crowd however where Mary-Anne plied her lucrative tipping business. When she was a seven-year-old girl, Mary-Anne used to hold the dogs for the trainers. She would also keep her ears open

is open to listen for who was going to win and who was not going to try. She would then go and place her pocket money, 2/-, with the bookies. She was doing well until the bookies told her father who was concerned that members of the family should be seen to be betting and Mary-Anne was told to stop. However, the resourceful child continued to collect the information and pass it on to some of the adults who were in the stand. If they didn't give Mary-Anne a share of the winnings, they didn't get the next tip. The only exception was a punter who always bought Maryanne books to read in return for winning tips. One of the punters was bookie Chummy Parkes and she remembers as a gorgeous man, a friend of a father and a "rags to riches bookie". The Leo ran the track on his own and his wife took the entry fees for the dogs. He was not interested in gambling, and saw racing is entertainment and spectacle. Part of the spectacle was the rotunda, where the St Joseph's Orphanage band played. While Leo looked after the day-to-day running of Napier Park, his father TJ was running Southern Cross Assurance, was a member of the Melbourne Club, a life governor of the Royal Children's Hospital and on the board of the Prince Henry and St Vincents hospitals. TJ Confroy took no part in the management of the administration of the track: he was the owner and the president.

While not taking an active part in the running of Napier Park, T. J. Confroy wanted to remain in control. He once boasted, "my sons will never work". He and his son Leo had a falling out when Leo patented a draw box that he had invented without telling his father. The box had compartments and balls with the dog's numbers in one side and the colours on the other. After shaking the box, the grader would release the balls two at a time and allocate the dogs their box draw. It was a good and simple device to remove any suspicion of foul play in allocating the box draw. TJ remonstrated with Leo that had he been told about the invention he would've supplied the capital for it. Nothing could have been further from the mind of his son who wanted to break free from his controlling parent. T. J. Confroy died at the age of 60 while shaving. He was remembered in the memorial race the T. J. Confroy Gold Collar.

The Confroy's involvement in greyhound racing came to an end in 1995 with the introduction of non-proprietary racing. It was a very painful time for the family. With TJ now dead, Southern Cross owning the track and with no formal contracts to secure a Leo's continuing employment, the family had to move on. Leo bought a

hotel in Donald and Mary-Anne stayed in Melbourne where she was later to become a nun.

White City

In 1927 the Victorian Electric Coursing Association was formed with subscribed and paid up capital of £60000 (\$3.7m). The Association moved to a site in Tottenham owned by butcher Fred Watkins and Harry Heggart was appointed manager. The track was built and the mechanical lure like that used in NSW was installed. The first meeting at White City on the Saturday night of December 10th 1927 had an attendance of 28,000 people. Well known Collingwood identity, boxing promoter and racetrack owner, John Wren immediately approached the White City management and offered to buy 51% of the club but was refused.

The Association was to receive a body-blow. The State Parliament immediately introduced legislation outlawing betting on any greyhound coursing which involved a mechanical lure. Whether or not the Parliament of 1927, which like all its predecessors, was very well represented by traditional coursing men, was simply keen to protect the more traditional form of coursing or whether there was concern at the prospect of increased gambling is not clear. However, the speed coursing fraternity was convinced that the Government's decision was influenced by John Wren. A wrestling match at Wren's stadium had been poorly attended on White City's big opening night and it was said that an infuriated Wren brought all his considerable influence to bear on the appropriate Minister.

Devastated by the prospect of heavy loss, the White City Club tried to carry on without betting. But the attempt was doomed. Even goat and sulkie racing did not bring the punters in. Clearly there was big money to be made in speed coursing. This had been proved by the opening night numbers and by the phenomenal success of the sport in NSW where racing behind the mechanical lure was legal. At White City, some sharp minds turned to finding a solution to racing without a mechanical lure.

With a substantial investment and the promise of big returns, the commercial interests behind White City were not prepared to give up easily. After some happy accidents and some careful planning, they came up with the idea of releasing a hare, followed by a "pacemaker" greyhound that would chase the hare and then the eight greyhounds that would chase the pacemaker. Urban legend has it that the Heggarts were training

greyhounds after the banning of the mechanical hare when one dog escaped its box well before the other boxes open. It set off down the track with its companions in hot pursuit. With little incentive to race, the pacemaker dog was soon caught. But the idea of the pacemaker was born. The problem was to find a way to get the pacemaker to run at full speed for the whole course. The answer was obvious but also a stroke of genius: slip a trained hare just as in Plumpton coursing and have the pace maker chase the hare and the racing dogs chase the pacemaker. This ingenious idea was to ensure the survival of greyhound racing in Victoria for the next 30 years. Why the government, which had banned betting on racing behind a mechanical hare allowed betting on this new form of racing, remains a mystery. Perhaps other wealthy interests had brought pressure to bear.

On Saturday night February 9th 1929 White City played host to the first speed coursing meeting in Victoria with betting, live hares and a pacemaker. That meeting marked the dawning of a new era and White City meetings were soon being conducted weekly, then twice weekly and finally three times a week. Other clubs were to follow. The Maribyrnong Speed Coursing Club opened in January 1933, the Napier Park Speed Coursing Club followed in September. The Sandown Park Coursing Club opened in September 1935. Gracedale Park Speed Coursing Club opened in April 1938 on Springvale Road. The two years leading up to WWII saw spectacular growth in the popularity and betting revenue of speed coursing.

There was soon to be conflict between White City and the National Coursing Club. The NCC believed it had the God-given right to control Greyhound racing in the state of Victoria. This involved stipulating that the speed coursing clubs could not race during the Waterloo Cup.

In many ways the conflict that was to develop was between the landed gentry coursing interests and the down and dirty urban commercialism of the speed coursing track owners.

The management at White City decided to continue to hold races during the Waterloo Cup and were duly expelled from the NCC. This meant that any owners of dogs racing at White City would lose NCC registration. Without NCC registration, an

owner was disqualified from racing any other NCC registered venue, most particularly Napier Park and Maribyrnong. In many ways, this was to define White City as a racing track. There was also a strong feeling of loyalty towards White City, which had established mechanical hare racing in Victoria. These owners were being forced to put their money where their mouth was.

However, many owners got around this problem by their racing dogs under false names and with mates serving as the owner at White City. They were in many ways the outlaws of greyhound racing and racing at White City soon came to reflect this. At the centre of this Wild West culture stood the larger-than-life figure of Harry Heggart, surrounded by his family.

The Greyhound reported in July 1939 that Harry was one of the most representative men in the course having been interested in the game 20 years before speed coursing had been heard of. He had been a keen enthusiast of both Open and Plumpton coursing where his best dog was Overdale. It was however, in speed coursing that he achieved fame and notoriety. Eighty years after he established White City, his grandchildren still recount being introduced to old timers who greet them “ You ain’t related to those crooks the Heggarts are you?”

He could well claim to be the founder of the speed coursing in Victoria. He was director of the White City Speed Coursing Co. Ltd., which held the first and, for 30 years, only electric hare meeting in 1927. He had been a director of the Maribyrnong club and was on the committee of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Speed Club. He had also been a track manager and an official at Gracedale Park. He was to become a household name in greyhound circles.

His involvement with the Greyhound industry began when someone left a Greyhound at the Heggart home in the 1920s and didn't come back to get it. There was tin hare racing in Sydney at the time and the dog was sent there with the Tom Heggart where they enjoyed some success. At that time, Harry owned Hopkins dairy in Collingwood

and brought milk to Melbourne from Officer. He would return to the farming industry at the end of his career in Greyhound racing.

Heggart was the patriarch of the family and the family ran White City. He was a deeply generous man and bought houses for all of his children. The ownership of the houses however remained in Harry's name and, after the war, when Harry was in financial trouble, he had to sell the houses. The entire Heggart family then moved into the family home at 313 Glen Eire Rd. There was Harry and wife Edith, son Stan and his wife with children Ian and Keith, Cedric and wife Mary and Jack and Una (Harry's daughter) Rockley all living under the same roof. When he got angry, Harry would say to them, "I could live that the Menzies for what costs me to keep you lot here."

There were two sides to the generosity however. As well as providing houses for his children, he also ruled their lives. Grandson Ian believes that Una's first husband, Jack, may have left because Harry expected her to work at the dogs whenever he wanted her to. Given that their home was strategically placed opposite the Gracedale Park track, which Harry owned and operated, this created understandable tensions within the marriage.

Everybody was expected to help, especially his three children, Stan, Cedric and Una. Stan was the quieter of the two boys and primarily responsible for training the pacemakers. Cedric was regarded as the business brains of the two. Bill Pearson described him as "A perfect gentleman. But he would steal the seeing-eye dog from a blind man."

Grandchildren, Ian, Keith and their three cousins were also pressed into service. They would stand along the track to make sure that the hare ran in a straight line at the beginning of the races. Ian also sold the admission tickets and collected the tickets for the trial nights. Auntie Una ran the kiosk at both White City and Gracedale and, by all reports, made good money out of both of them.

Ian would also course the dogs on the Caulfield racecourse, for his father Stan in the days when there were soldiers trained and billeted in the stands and you could still

catch yabbies in the lake. Stan drove the pacemakers to the track in a canvas top Chrysler truck. One of his other jobs was to put money on the dogs for Harry. Harry wasn't meant to be betting because he was the owner of the track, graded the races and did the box draws. This meant he was in an excellent position to know which dogs had the best chance in any given race. It was a combination of opportunities not to be missed.

Training the pacemaker dogs was just one of many facets of racing at White City that was turned to great advantage by the Heggart family. At White City, the pacemaker started from a box positioned in the middle of the starting boxes. The pacemaker, like all greyhounds, would lead either to the left or right coming out of the box. If the dog ran to the left, it was a railer. This meant that the dogs to the left of it, in boxes one to four but particularly the dog in box four, would get first sight of the pacemaker. If the pacemaker ran to the right, then the dogs in boxes five to eight would get first sight. At full speed, a Greyhound covers nearly 20 metres per second. Even from a standing start, a small time advantage could be the deciding factor in reaching the critical first turn. As dogs run very consistently, it was always easy to pick a pacemaker that favoured the inside or outside boxes. The situation was greatly aided by the fact that Harry would normally do the box draws by drawing pieces of paper with the dogs name and marbles with the box number, out of two canvas bags.

Keith Heggart purchased his first Ford Pilot motorcar from the local Ford dealer for £200 (\$7600), a significant discount on the standard price of £600 (\$22,800), when he arranged a railer as pacemaker and gave the car dealer's dog the blue box (Box 4 next to the pacemaker) thus ensuring the car dealer's dog had first sight of the pacemaker.

Sometimes, if the outcome of a race was uncertain, or a bookie was likely to lose a lot of money on a race, a slow pacemaker would be used. The racing dogs would catch the pacemaker and begin fighting. Under the racing rules, the race would be called a "no race" and the results cancelled and all bets returned. Naturally, the bookmaker would need to pay for the privilege of ensuring a slow pacemaker for the race.

The trials were held on Tuesday nights and tickets cost 3/- (\$10). The trials were a regular bun fight as the owners would wait by the kennels and then would race across

to the starting boxes to get the red box. It was a matter of first in, best dressed. There were 40 trials and each returned approximately £1/4/- per the race. That was a total of £48 (\$3100) for trial night.

It was a rough old life in many ways, Keith remembers that there was a Plumpton course and live pigeon shooting at the back of White City, There was also a man called Brown who used to sell rabbits in the car park which would be given to the dogs in the killing pen after they had finished racing. Ian Heggart remembers getting offside with the family when he objected to this practice.

One night, a woman placed a bet with a bookie called Chocka Place, thinking he was a place bookie. However Chocka only paid on winners. When the dog came third and there was no payout from Chocka the woman began abusing him. When Harry, ever the hands-on manager, intervened, the woman hit him over the head with her umbrella.

Harry Heggart was a creature of habit, with a set routine that he followed every week. This regularity of habit proved to be a disadvantage in some ways. Keith Heggart remembers a night at Napier Park when a local gangster, Jack Twist, who was later shot in the gangland slaying on the wharves, asked Harry for 20 quid (\$4000). Keith was surprised that his grandfather gave Twist the money. "He knows where I am every day of the week and I want to drive home in my car tonight," explained Harry.

Heggart and White City had supported whippet racing. Whippets raced down the straight track in the middle of the circular track. There were no lures required for the whippets, as they just seem to run for the fun of it so the trainers would walk backwards down the track waving tea towels at the dogs. When the trainers got to the end of the track, the whippets would run. The whippet owners had continued to support White City through thick and thin. Heggart steadfastly supported whippet racing, despite the NCC making dropping the whippets from the Speed Coursing programs a condition of re-admission. It became one of many points that hampered negotiations for White City to rejoin the NCC.

Harry was also a generous, if distant, father and grandfather. Ian Heggart was very keen on motorbikes and Harry bought him a brand-new C11 BSA 250cc motorbike and continued to lend him money to upgrade his bikes. One day, when he was racing at Cranbourne, Ian saw Harry was sitting by the side of the track watching. He stayed until after Ian had raced and then left without saying anything.

By late 1940s and early 1950s, White City was getting very drab. The only bright spot was the large coke braziers used to keep patrons warm on the cold winter nights. There were hollows worn in the curve of the track and very little was being spent on maintenance. The government had made it quite clear that the days of propriety racing were numbered and that there would be no compensation for the club owners.

When non-proprietary racing was introduced in Victoria, White City had been operating for 28 years and held out of the 2500 events. The chairman of the GOTBA, Dave Heneberry made an offer to purchase the track on behalf of the newly formed MGRA. The offer of £75,000 (\$2m) was turned down and Fred Watkins who had owned the track for its entire life, later sold it for £113,000 (\$3.1m). When White City was originally purchased in 1927, it had a current day value of \$3.7m.

With non-proprietary racing now introduced in Victoria, Harry Heggart left dog racing. There was a lot of resentment against the Heggarts at the time and Harry was simply not invited to be part of the new era that was to focus on the new men like Harrison Mathews and McKenna.

BALLARAT

In the summer of 1935, the late Messrs Lou McRae and Bill Jackson introduced greyhound racing behind the pacemaker at Broadway Park in Creswick Rd. on the northern outskirts of Ballarat. The land was originally a dairy farm owned by Charlie Lockett who became the caretaker and supplier of the pace makers. His grandson, AFL legend Tony continues the family tradition now owning a string of successful greyhounds.

Racing was held on Thursday nights (a shrewd link to pay day). Many of the dogs were entered by employees of two nearby companies, engineering firm M. B. Johns, and the Railway workshops, both within two blocks of the track. With large numbers of greyhounds kennelled within the near vicinity of the track, it was to prove to be a very popular location.

Many dogs that raced in those early days were bred in South Australia and doubled up in both track races and the Plumptre, held on a Sunday where they would chase a live hare for as long as 15 minutes. In addition, many dogs backed up as hurdlers jumping over hurdles made from fire hose and later from brooms standing up on end. The dogs were nothing if not versatile.

Times were tough in the 1930s, Life member Bill Middlin remembers £10 (\$660) being a big prize at the dogs and as a 14 year old in the late 1930s, he was paid 6/- (\$20) a week for walking dogs at night. This made the price of entry of 1/6 (\$5) a big sum in the Depression. However, if you had a dog, entry was free. Hence punters would stand around the gate waiting to offer handling assistance to owners with more than one dog, to get free entry to the track.

Punters at Ballarat were no different from punters across the State. A big win at the dogs could be the difference between the family eating or going hungry that week. Families, both human and canine needed to stick together. Ed Ure, a President (from 1998 - 2006) when the track had moved to Morshead Park, remembers one particular trainer with a litter of six dogs. Somehow, the fastest dog in the litter won its own maiden, and was then rung in to win five more maidens for its sisters, supposedly undetected.

In 1955, with the advent of mechanical hare racing and the abolition of the proprietary clubs, £3500 (\$96,000) was needed to purchase the title of the land from the proprietary club. Bob Coleman made a major contribution by pouring in £600 (\$16,500) into the debenture issue.

However, conditions at Broadway Park were rustic at best with big braziers burning around the track to keep people warm on cold nights. A set of old platform scales that were used to weigh the dogs before a race perhaps unintentionally provided a little space that enabled trainers to put their foot under the scales and manipulate the “correct” weight for a dog. This serendipitous opportunity was very important if the dog had inadvertently eaten too much just before the race and was in danger of running more slowly than trial times had suggested.

The bookmaker Tommy Murphy remembers that during the 1960s and before TAB betting, greyhound racing was at a very low ebb in Ballarat. Originally, the club had raced on a Thursday night with Sandown meetings being held on a Saturday. A switch in dates occurred to attract crowds and with a promise of TAB meetings, racing at Ballarat was moved to Saturday afternoon. However, once Sandown started, it became difficult to get dogs to race in Ballarat and fields were so small that the bookies also had to bet on the gallops. It became hard for the bookies to make a living with race meetings often only having 25 dogs and five races. In addition, the quality of the dogs declined and with many of the dogs not chasing well there was a decline a decline in interest in the sport. This situation was not helped by the fact that in the days before inoculations for distemper and hepatitis and treatments for parasites such as tapeworm all of which caused very high loss rates, became available, it was a very difficult time to maintain dogs in good racing condition.

In addition, the Broadway Park track was small with very tight corners and falls were frequent. It was not uncommon for dogs that fell at the first turn to jump the rail and try to cut across the middle of the track in an attempt to rejoin the race. This was hindered by the dam in the middle of the track that became partly frozen during the depths of many a Ballarat winter, deterring repeats often of such actions.

The situation reached its lowest ebb when GOTBA President George Schofield received a late night phone call from the Ballarat Club secretary saying that

attendances were down so far that the club was broke and would have to close unless the GOTBA could run a rescue operation. A series of meeting involving George, Jack McKenna, Henry Harrison, Roy Duncan and Les Foran led to the Greyhound Control Board agreeing to have GOTBA take over the club, to be renamed the Ballarat Club. The condition was that the GOTBA would take the over the committee and the week-by-week running of the club until it was back on its feet financially. It was a long process with George and GOTBA members Ray Duncan and Les Foran, driving to Ballarat every Saturday to run the meetings that now included footraces between players from the local football competition. This move brought many football supporters to race meetings. The clubs position improved to the point that GOTBA was able to hand the running of the Club back to the local committee with GOTBA represented by the ongoing participation of George Schofield.

Eventually, the Club Committee welcomed the opportunity to move to a new location at Morshead Park beside the Ballarat Trotting Club complex. Originally the Miners Common, the Miners Race Course had been used by the Ballarat Miners' Turf Club. The park was named after Ballarat born Lieutenant General Leslie James Morshead, KCB, KBE, CMG, DSO who served at Gallipoli, Passchendaele in WW1 and Tobruk, El Alamein and New Guinea in WW2. Forty years after the pacemaker and then tin hare racing took place at Broadway Park, a new track opened for racing on the 23rd December 1978. "Karingal Silver" (trained by Patricia Helps) had the privilege of winning the last race at Broadway Park on Wednesday 8th November 1978. "Tivoli Salute" (trained by Cyril Matthews) had the honour of winning on both the last night at Broadway Park and then on the opening night at Morshead Park. On that opening night, a match race between two metropolitan class greyhounds saw "[Darville's Flyer](#)" beat "[Tangaloa](#)" by 7.5 lengths in 25.69 sec. However later in the program "Tivoli Salute" recorded 25.48 sec. and then proceeded to re-break his record at the following two meetings. [The "official" opening](#) of Morshead Park [was](#) held later [on January 06, 1979](#).

The original race distances at Morshead Park were 450m and 735m. With a drop in the number of greyhounds racing over the 735m distance, 550m boxes were introduced in 1985. While the opening night had been a sell out, the transition to night racing on the now expansive new track was very difficult for many dogs. However as

time went on, the new track gained a reputation as being good, fair and open with only one bend, in contrast to the City tracks which both had four turns, meaning that strong dogs tended to win at Ballarat.

The new track and facilities at Morshead Park were the result of many hours of volunteer work particularly by Committee and Club Members. This culture of volunteerism has been an important corner stone of the Club from its early beginnings until the present. Since the opening of Morshead Park in 1978, the Club has continuously worked towards upgrading facilities. Major changes have seen the introduction of a fully computerised tote and on-course video coverage began in 1982. In 1991, a new timing system complete with split time at the 310m mark went into operation. An upgrade of lighting at all tracks in 1992, by the then Development Board, saw Morshead Park in a much brighter light. In the late 1990s the kennel block underwent a major redevelopment, with further improvements placing all kennels on ground level occurring during 2003. The announcement in July 1994 “that as from August, 1994, Ballarat race meetings would be televised by SKY Channel on Wednesday evening” was met with great delight by all connected with the Club. This reward for already excellent off course figures was seen to be a boon by the Club. With a trend back towards providing more opportunities for greyhounds to race over longer distances, the club introduced 650m handicap boxes in 2002.

Recent years have seen many improvements that ensure maximum comfort for patrons. The glassing in of the grandstand and betting ring in 1996 was followed in 2007 with further improvements including carpeting and a floor to ceiling viewing area. Further, outdoor summer facilities were provided and additional improvements aimed at expanding function facilities in the grandstand are planned for 2009.

The culture of the Ballarat Greyhound Racing Club has always cantered on the excellence of ‘working committees’, which enabled the club to maintain excellent prize money during years when distribution was not always generous. Without the hard work of Committee members, to numerous to mention, the Morshead Park track would not be in the sound financial position that it is in today.

BENDIGO

Greyhound racing commenced in Bendigo in the 1920s when field coursing (Plumpton) was conducted in the centre of the Bendigo racecourse at Epsom. Here two greyhounds, identified by red and white collars were released from collars by a "slipper" to chase a live hare. They gained points for ability to show pace and turn the hare. When the hare reached the "escape" the judge signalled the winner. Coursing was not the only form of dog racing and gambling in the 1920s and 1930s. There was also illegal fox terrier and even goat cart racing on the creek flats around Bendigo.

Early Greyhound Registration Form (Courtesy of Mrs Aileen Kirkwood – granddaughter of the owner) [picture about here](#)

In these early days, Bendigo produced the winners of Australia's most prestigious race the Waterloo Cup with "Brown Hawk" owned by Mr. F. Goyne and "Mindful Elsie" owned by Mr. J. Watts successful in the 1920s and "Robert Macawber" winning for Allan Duffy of Eaglehawk in the 1950s.

Life member Alan Abbot remembers going out as a boy with 20-30 people in the fenced scotch thistle fields around Bendigo to catch hares for Plumpton coursing. Hare drivers would block holes in the fences beforehand to stop the hares escaping. Then nets 60 foot long and three feet high were stretched across the corners of the field. Kids hid behind kerosene boxes placed in front of the nets to scare the hares into the nets. Beaters would move towards the nets driving the hares before them. The captured hares were then put into long boxes with partitions to stop them getting on top of each other and suffocating. A good drive would get 30 - 40 hares as well as a few rabbits. The hares were trained to run down the Plumpton course to find the pipes located at end of the course. The pipes had a flap at the end to let the hares in and to keep the dogs out. These pipes led to the hare enclosure next to the coursing track. The hares were well trained in finding their escape routes, initially chased by local kids on motorbikes and later by sheepdogs before being used for coursing.

The weather had an important bearing on the outcome of a course. The hares were rarely caught on windy days, which appeared to favour the quarry. However wet days favoured the dog when there were more kills. Live hare coursing continued until 1964 when the blue ribbon classic the Victorian Waterloo Cup was run at Bendigo over a

three-day carnival. That winner was the great Byamee who was owned by Ray Herbert from Diamond Creek. Thirty bookmakers fielded at the last Bendigo meeting in 1964. Within a year, however, field coursing was outlawed in Victoria.

While coursing continued until 1964, Alan Taylor remembers accompanying his father to the first track or Speed Course racing meeting held at Canterbury Park in 1936. There the Bendigo-Eaglehawk Speed Coursing Club conducted both flat and hurdle racing behind the mechanical lure on a 300yd circular turf surface. The first meeting was held on October 3rd 1936. People took to this new Saturday racing very keenly with two special trams running nightly packed with at least 100 patrons travelling to the track from the fountain in the centre of the city.

Len Griffin Snr was a bookie at the meeting. Forty years later, he would field at the new Lords Raceway. The economic importance of greyhound racing to many in the 1930s and 1940s is illustrated by Alan Abbot. Alan remembers going to Eaglehawk to work with his dad who was a penciller. For this Alan got £1 (\$47) and dad got £2 (\$94) a time when the average weekly wage was £3/10/- (\$200). Ray Wallace recalls that there was strong opposition to Plumpton Coursing and gambling generally, from the Churches. But when one of the prominent church leaders was offered a job as an Assistant judge for £1 per meeting, good money in the Depression, the group appeared to take a more liberal line.

As Canterbury Park was also the home of the football club, officials and kids had to run wire mesh around the fence line to convert from football to greyhounds. A canvas sheet was run across the track to catch the dogs at the end of the race. During the cricket season, play would stop for the running of a race with players sitting on the ground to watch the race. When the race was over, cricket restarted. Working around the other sporting codes was not the only difficulty. On foggy nights, a torch was attached to the mechanical hare so the lure driver could tell where it was.

Stand at the Eaglehawk Race track picture about here

For many years, the Greyhound industry in Victoria fought to have proprietary clubs, which were privately owned by shareholders with a strong profit motive, replaced by non-proprietary clubs. The non-proprietary clubs would effectively be government owned, controlled by a local board of directors and returning profits to the people who

bred, owned, trained and raced greyhounds. This fight was conducted by GOTBA stalwarts Dave Heneberry, Syl Doyle and Alan Taylor all of whom hailed from Bendigo. After a long GOTBA and NCA campaign, legislation was introduced banning proprietary racing. With the advent of non-proprietary racing, new Clubs were formed as non-proprietary companies operating under Constitutions and Articles of Association. This was a mixed blessing for the Bendigo Coursing Association (BCA) founded in 1956 but with no capital to buy or build a track. At this time Government or Control Board grants for funding were not available.

Pictures of Syl Doyle, Alan Abbott about here?

During this time, no greyhound racing was conducted in Bendigo for 18 months. A public meeting of interested Greyhound people raised debentures worth £7,500 (\$196,000) to commence building a track at Eaglehawk. Early progress was slow but with this small amount of money and hundreds of hours of voluntary labour, the BCA were able to construct the rail, build the light poles from used piping, bring in the sand, build a driving tower and install a second hand Ford V8 lure motor. Unfortunately, the electrical contractor had to be paid £7000 (\$183,000) to fit the electrical equipment.

Because of the long lay off, dogs in the district had fallen away. Not deterred, the Committee decided to promote breeding by leasing a champion greyhound named "Fine Earl" from N.S.W. "Fine Earl" was to stand at stud at a very attractive fee. The idea was a great success and assisted the number of dogs bred in the district. The opening night in March 2nd 1957 had 20 bookmakers in attendance. By the time of the last meeting at Eaglehawk was run on Saturday Dec 2nd 1982, prize money had risen to \$1050 (\$2400). Racing continued at Eaglehawk until the government suggested multiple use of the trotting complex at Lords Raceway to take in Greyhound Racing at Junortoun.

The shift to Lords Raceway took place in 1972. By now, money was available from the TAB Development Fund and the Control Board funded the brand new track, kennels, office, betting ring, grandstand, spray irrigation system and new boxes. By the time the track was ready to be opened, the Greyhound Development Board had invested \$800,000 (\$1.8m) in the complex. However funding from State bodies did

not mean the end of volunteers work. Typical of the legion of volunteers supporting clubs in regional areas, Mr Charlie Summerhayes, who was well into his 70s, came across from his home 3 or 4 times a day to water the grass in front of the new grandstand. Alan Taylor remembers a fierce debate with the Development Board over the shape of the new track. The locals wanted a single turn, horseshoe for the 430m races with double turn for the rare 700m races. The Development Board wanted a four-turn track similar to Sandown. Eventually, the locals prevailed and the single turn 430m track was built.

This was a significant change from the race distances at Eaglehawk where the races had been held over 355m, 528m and 726m. Members of the GOTBA believed that dogs who struggled to finish the 355yds at Eaglehawk would be “out of business” on the new 430m track. One major advantage of the new track configuration was that it eliminated the dash for the first turn on the 528m Eaglehawk track where many fancied dogs were knocked out or interfered with. This had become so common that the turn was known as “bookmakers” corner.

At opening night of the Lords Raceway track, Mr Jim Bourke, a long-serving President of the Club was reported in the Bendigo Advertiser as describing the opening as “a milestone in the history of Bendigo and sport in general”.

The opening featured an innovative lure designed by Noel Bramich. The lure, also used at Sandown, Warrnambool and Warragul at the time, was driven by two electric motors rather than being dragged by the more traditional cable system. The lure also activated a switch that opened the boxes thus eliminating human error. Unfortunately, the new lure system did not operate well in very cold weather. It was eventually replaced by the traditional system.

Picture of Jim Bourke about here?

Over the years, funds from the Development Board and GRV have brought many changes to Bendigo. The electronic trip start replaced hand starts, electrical timing and a new digital semaphore board replaced the old stopwatches and manually operated result boards. New starting boxes covered by roofing and the recent building of the new fully glassed, air-conditioned grandstand with tote facilities, live TV coverage and replays of all races added to the comfort of patrons. In all of this neither

dogs nor children were forgotten. The new kennels holding 100 dogs was fitted with evaporative air-conditioning and Alan designed and constructed a children's playground.

The club has enjoyed long and loyal support from members like Alan Abbot and in date? four special presentations recognized the service of Lex Campbell, Alan Abbot, Allen Taylor and Ian Jansssen who, between them, had a total of 94 years of service on the Bendigo Greyhound Racing Association Committee. Alan, Allen and Lex were deeply involved in the shift to Lords and Lex served as President from 1989 to 1996 while Ian's involvement dated back to the Eaglehawk days where he was lure driver and saw the change from cable lure to the Bramich lure and then to the modern motorised lure.

On the 17th August 1998, Allen Taylor's long service to the Bendigo Club was recognised by the opening of the A J Taylor Stand at Lords Raceway by the Mayor of Greater City of Bendigo

In the next decade, Noel Massina took over as President, and Bendigo, like many Clubs has changed its racing timeslot to fit with SKY Channel broadcasting requirements. The switch to twilight racing has meant that crowds have diminished. However, the revenue from off course turnover has seen weekly prize money increase from approximately \$7,000 per night to \$11,000 per night..

Picture of Alan Taylor 22/4/91 about here? Also Noel Massina?

While Allen Taylor passed away in 2006, he would be proud of the continuing progress at Bendigo. Trialing and conditioning facilities via straight hand slipping tracks have been provided for local use. The Club is also developing its Gold Rush Carnival held during Easter where five days of racing culminates in the Bendigo Cup worth \$25,000. While catering for all classes of greyhounds, the Carnival has been timed for the tourists visiting Bendigo for the Chinese festival. Bendigo was also given the privilege of running the inaugural "Great Chase" with a final worth \$50,000. In 2006, a new single tier kennel block and administration complex was opened and plans are in the wind for a refurbishment of the catering facilities at the complex.

PAST PRESIDENTS

1956 – 1971 J. P. Bourke	1989 – 1993 G.A. Campbell
1971 – 1972 R. Rosers	1996 – 1997 W. Robertson
1972 – 1983 J.P. Bourke	1997 – 1998 W. Thompson
1983 – 1989 B.J. Hiscock	1998 – N. Massina

LIFE MEMBERS

*J.P. Bourke
*E.A. Ogilvie
*A.J. Taylor
*S.A. Doyle (MBE)
A.D. Abbot
G.A. Campbell

CRANBOURNE

When it was announced in 1972 by the Undersecretary John V. Dillon (there was no Minister for Sport at this time) that four more licenses would be issued to Horsham, Shepparton, Traralgon and Cranbourne to conduct Greyhound Racing, the south-eastern sector of the State was mooted as a preferred location. Originally two sites, Cranbourne where thoroughbred and Harness racing already existed, and the speedway site at nearby Baxter became front-runners. A group in favour of a site at Rye dropped out of the contest after a few months.

Much debate over the sites raged and the Greyhound Racing Control Board (GRCB) Chairman Charles Petty and the President of the Greyhound Owners, Trainers and Breeders Association (GOTBA) Les Foran attended an original “meeting of interests”. At a sometimes fiery meeting, Les started in the Chair but because he was not aligned with either of the two factions, one supporting racing at Baxter, the other at Cranbourne. He was promptly voted out.

In Cranbourne’s corner five men, Fred Booth, Rupe Lee, Horrie Tomamichael, Jack Finning and Fred Abel formed a steering committee to apply for a licence to conduct Greyhound racing on the Cranbourne Racecourse Reserve. After meetings with the Cranbourne Turf and Trotting Clubs, an application for a license was lodged. Baxter was the preferred site of the GRCB. However the Trotting Club at Cranbourne had wanted a co-tenant to share overall expenses at the Cranbourne Racecourse Reserve. A number of politicians had already stated that they wanted shared facilities for racing and this was to become a deciding factor. Despite a GRCB resolution for Baxter, Dillon (later to become Sir John), a bureaucrat and effectively the man controlling racing in the state, stepped in and made the decision for Cranbourne.

The original Cranbourne Committee of Fred Booth, Fred Abel and Ross Mitchell lasted for about a year. Both Fred and Ross later became long serving Committee members and Presidents of the Club. This original Committee of three was eventually replaced by a committee of twelve comprising President Mr. Colin McKaskill, Vice Presidents Fred Booth and Jim Boyd and Committee members Fred Abel, Charlie Anderton, Ned Bryant, Geoff Hardy, Ross Mitchell, Laurie O’Hare, Alec Stevens and Horrie Tommamichel.

Ross Mitchell remembers racing a dog called Banks and Braise for Tommy Hunt (an employee at Sandown) that Tommy had covered in black boot polish to avoid detection in a trial. The greyhound trialed very well and the people in the know got 8/1 at the dog's next start at the old North Melbourne track. Ross also recalls that trainer Barry Gaze once put black dye on a dog to avoid detection in a trial, every was going well until they washed the boot polish off with hot water and the dog turned pink and couldn't race for a month. Ross also remembers bad old days when doping was prevalent amongst trainers

Des Carlson is typical of the strong band of Cranbourne loyalists. Des had his first winner in 1949 at Coaleri Park in Wonthaggi when it was run by Jack McKenna. His dog, Alcon, won five races in nine days. Des sold the dog to bookmaker Chummy Parks for £750 at a time when he was earning £5 a week. He used the money to buy a Pontiac and two blocks of land for £25 pounds in Chelsea Heights which he sold a year later for £50. In more recent times Des trained 'Marsha Brady' the winner of the 2000 Cranbourne Cup.

Track shape immediately became an issue for the new Club as it is for most Clubs. A number of people wanted the track designed in the bigger U-shape and others wanted greyhounds to run twice passed the post. However the U-shaped track put the dogs about 250m away from the grandstand and in times of live viewing and no television replays, this made the larger U-shaped track impossible.

The first race meeting of the Club was conducted on August 31st 1974 and was such a success that the gates had to be thrown open to ease the traffic congestion building up 12km back along the South Gippsland Highway to Dandenong.

By 1976, the club began operating its own tote, a move that Secretary Hec Caruana (later to become a GRV assistant CEO and GRV Board member) described as stopping the Club losing money hand over fist. In these early years, Cranbourne was a member of the Gippsland Greyhound Racing Association (GGRA) a group also including the Sale, Traralgon and Warragul Clubs. The GGRA had a Greyhound of the Year where the prize was a Mazda Car and held an annual ball at Moe. The GGRA ran for five to six years in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

During these years, the Cranbourne Club was highly innovative in its approach to promotion and like the major city clubs worked to have celebrities and leading sportsmen promote its feature events. National Channel 7 games show host Tony Barber had a dog called Sale of the Century which, much like today's Fred Bassett, generated multimedia coverage for the club.

In 1976, the track was changed from 510m to 520m allowing for the starting boxes to be correctly aligned with the first turn thus reducing interference. A 420m start first positioned at the first turn was later abandoned in the 1990s after racing resulted in excessive interference.

During the 1980s and early 1990s Cranbourne was a very popular Saturday night meeting place for the greyhound fraternity. With a very strong bookmakers ring, the Club regarded itself as the top provincial Club in the state, leading the way in turnover figures and prize money levels. The Club's feature event, the Cranbourne Cup has long been regarded as one of Victoria's prized trophies. It has been contested over the years by most of the top sprinters in training and has been won by some of the great champions of the sport including National Star (winning twice) Vapour Whirl and the brilliant track record holder Pororoca (29.86 sec). In the main, success at Cranbourne is dependent on greyhounds having "run home" strength. Dogs that won in the city at Olympic Park or Sandown often got beaten at Cranbourne where the wind and "uphill" home straight are significant factors. The track at Sandown is in a hollow whereas the Cranbourne track is on open high ground and nothing shelters it from the wind. Over the years, Cranbourne has developed a reputation for being a tough track favouring strong dogs.

Following the introduction of SKY Channel in 1986 on course attendances plummeted at many tracks and Cranbourne, racing on a Saturday night, endured tough times. In addition, divisions within the Committee caused tremendous friction over a series of relatively minor issues concerning fee structures and trials days. Current committeeman Tony Mills saw the Committee as dominated by 'outsiders and troublemakers' many of whom are no longer involved in the industry or on the committee. To add to these woes, gaming expanded in Victoria from the early 90s, with the Casino opening and Gaming Venues springing up all over the state. The

impact this had to on-course activities was catastrophic and while “SKY” Clubs boomed others including Cranbourne suffered further.

Committee unrest continued and problems over approval of a salary increase for the club secretary, and with Club President Norm Watkins denying involvement, it was alleged that Club Secretary Peter Campion had approved his own salary increase.

As a result of continuing disagreement the committee resigned en masse in February 1995. Ken Carr, then Executive Director of the GRCB gave the Cranbourne Committee the opportunity to reconsider, but to no avail. The GRCB had no option but to place the club under administration for the next three years. By the 1990s, Cranbourne featured in rumours suggesting there were to be club closures.

Ken Carr initially became the GRCB Administrator in February 1995, he later passed on this role to Adam Wallish who was the administrator until November 1997. Tony Wright was appointed as the Club Manager in May 1995, a position he still holds today. In November 1997 the Committee was invited to reform and was reduced from twelve to seven members in an effort to create a better operating unit with fewer factions. John Van Echte became the new President of the Club. John has been instrumental in welding together a stable and consistent committee, which now has female representation and a mix of greyhound and business people. John sees himself as a “grass roots” President and his undoubted success seems due to an uncanny ability to communicate with people from all levels in greyhound racing.

Under John Van Echte there have been many changes around the Club, but none more as dramatic as the move on August 1st 1996, from the regular Saturday night-time slot to Friday afternoons. In 1998, the face of greyhound racing in Australia was about to change forever with SKY Channel requesting racing in the twilight time slot. Victorian greyhound racing was overhauled and four Clubs, including Cranbourne, which took the Friday twilight, time slot, racing between 4pm and 7pm. With full SKY Channel coverage, the exposure of the Club throughout Australia had never been better. On Sunday August 22, 1999 the Club celebrated its 25th anniversary with a family fun day. Several original club members of the Club were acknowledged with appreciation certificates. The Shadow Minister for Gaming, later to become the Minister for Racing the Hon John Pandazopolous was also in attendance.

In April 2000, Trios Tabaret was opened. This development could prove to be the most important single event for the financial future of the Club. The Tabaret was initially financed through a huge debt of \$2.4m. The Greyhound's share in Trios required a \$870,000 loan from GRV. On July 1st 2001, the newly named Greyhound Racing Victoria (formerly GRVB) delivered a crippling blow to the Club by changing the industry distribution system and introducing a stakes equalization scheme for all Clubs. This required the Club to immediately use revenue from Trios for survival. There has been concern on the part of GRV over funding arrangements between the three codes at Cranbourne whereby the Club pays \$50k a year in rent compared to peppercorn rentals at other greyhound Clubs. However, since the creation of Trios, the greyhound Club has enjoyed a very close working relationship with the Turf and Harness Clubs. This has been reflected in the success of the annual Tri-Code race day first held in June 2002 with 27 races conducted over 6 hours.

The Clubs security of tenure was assured in 2004 when a 21-year lease was signed with the Recreation Reserve Committee of Management for the clubs exclusive use of the track and for the shared areas with the Turf & Harness Clubs. In conjunction with the leases, the Club and GRV are committed to a memorandum of understanding with the Turf & Harness clubs for the financial management of the racing centre.

Eventually the Club was to reap real rewards from the Trios project, which has been very important in building the new kennels and producing a better deal for the owner trainer. The new kennel and administration building was finished in 2005 when the Club decided to borrow an extra \$225k from GRV. As a result of a request from the Committee, GRV reduced this loan by \$105k in 2007. When all of the loans are paid off, the club should be in a strong financial position Trios has now been operational for seven years and the Club receives a dividend of about \$200,000 per year. Because of the stakes equalization process, it is not possible to put money into extra prize money for graded races, One solution is for these funds to be distributed by way of top ups to various feature events.

The Committee has a strong view that Cranbourne needs to look after the grass roots level of the industry, the greyhound people who have been loyal to Cranbourne over many years.

The club is now in a strong financial position. There continues to be a constant revenue stream from the equal third share of Trios Tabaret and the loan has been fully repaid. There is a new Kennel Block and Administration Building that will cater for participants for the next few decades. Cranbourne is a rapidly growing community that is expecting the close surrounding suburbs to continue to grow over the next 2 decades.

GEELONG

Greyhound racing in Geelong has been conducted at three separate venues during its long and varied history. In the early part of the last century, it was a centre for coursing, frequently hosting the Waterloo Cup.

Ninety-year-old Steve McKee was six when one of his parents' dogs won a minor prize at the Waterloo Cup. Steve achieved fame for marching down to one of the 15 bookies and demanding the prize money. Betting was strong and in addition to bets on individual courses, there was also a Calcutta.

Later the young Steve McKee trained coursing dogs in the paddocks across from the Mooroolbark Creek where there were plenty of hares. Three or four beaters would move ahead to flush the hares out and then the dogs would be slipped.

Often he would go out with a family in the morning and course the dogs twice over a two-minute run. More frequently than not, the hares would get away by escaping through a fence. Later, when he was training dogs for the track, he would take them over a five-mile walk/jog each morning and then walk them at night. Soon he had a drag lure running up the hill at his Lovely Banks property and would train the dogs there.

Racing was first held in Geelong in 1936 under private or proprietary ownership at Nelson Park, near the Ocean Child Hotel, opposite the Melbourne Road in North Geelong. Nelson Park was run and owned by the two Nelson Brothers and races were held on Saturday afternoon. One of the Nelson brothers was Director, Handicapper, Steward (along with his brother), Betting Supervisor and Starter, which gave the proprietary interests a significant influence over events at the Park. In fact the Nelsons did everything as the other brother graded, handicapped and judged. Steve McKee still believes that the only money the Nelsons got was the entry fee from the gates.

The dogs would run between two poles for a finish line where the placings would be called. There were no photo finishes in those days, just judging by the Nelson brothers. The prize money in those days was £4 for a win, £1 for second and 15 shillings for third.

Of the opening night, the Geelong Advertiser reported; “A grand opening of the Nelson Park Olympia, the ‘Sportsman Paradise’ on the Melbourne Road in North Geelong took place on the 9th of November 1937.”

A bus ran from the city to the ground on the opening night, which was to feature mass bands and a grand parade, greyhound racing, an exhibition of night trotting, professional running and other novelty events. The night marked the culmination of a 15-month effort to provide a sporting venue capable of accommodating 15,000 people, with the grandstand, ten entrance gates, six change windows and a safety fence to prevent the public being endangered from the traffic on Melbourne Road. There was parking for 800 cars and the staff wore a snappy uniform of scarlet jackets and khaki pants. The greyhound track was said to be the only one in the Commonwealth where the public had two views of the dogs during a race.

The Geelong Advertiser reported that “the amazing swiftness of the greyhounds and thrills associated with the midget car and motorcycle dirt track racing were presented to a huge crowd under ideal weather conditions, when the grand carnival opening of the Nelson Park Olympia at North Geelong was held last night.” The meeting was successful beyond wildest expectations and it was announced that the official attendance figures were 21,000. The response of the public to this new form of outdoor lighting was most gratifying for the promoters of Nelson Park Pty Ltd., who had spent a large sum of money and a great deal of time on the venture, designed to provide citizens with an entirely new type of recreation.

Greyhound racing was the principal attraction on the program; the speed of the animals drew audible exclamations of astonishment from the onlookers as they streaked around the course. Nelson Park also doubled as a motorbike racing track on cinders so loam would be spread across the track for the Greyhound races. Motorcycle races followed and although the riders acknowledged they would be more confident when the track was known to them and several minor improvements effected, they gave a splendid demonstration of speed and agility. In the midget car races, the drivers showed skill at manoeuvring the vehicles around the track. It was estimated that they reached speeds of 35 mph. (56 kpm). Unfortunately, owing to the legal difficulties associated with trotting in the State, it was not possible to stage the exhibitions as planned. Further, owing to the breakdown of a motor vehicle to convey

greyhounds from Melbourne to Geelong, there were a number of scratchings. The shortage of greyhounds was made up by fox terrier racing.

Another Club identity was Fred Gillett who was a kid in the days of the hand starts from the boxes at Nelson Park. The starting boxes were a couple of poles with hessian sacking tied around them; Fred would bring a box with 9 or 10 rabbits (one per race and a couple of spares) in it. Before each race, he would run along in front of the boxes bashing a squealing rabbit against the posts of the starting boxes to excite the dogs. When the dogs were suitably excited, Fred would run down the track and hide in a hessian cubby at the side of the track. Once he was hidden, the starter would release the dogs. The job was BYO rabbit and he got paid 2/6 for his work.

It was also the days before photo finishes and the race finish would be called as the dogs ran between two poles. Often the punters were unhappy with the call, particularly if it was being done by the same person who had graded the races and arranged the box draw. It was not uncommon for an angry crowd to gather around the judging box endeavouring to shake the judge off his perch. Mary Payne, who was the grader at Napier Park, later took over that role at Nelson Park. Steve McKee regarded her as a perfect lady and doubts that, as grader, she had any part in the race rigging that bedevilled the club. As the Club was often short of dogs, Steve would often help Mary out and keep them going with dogs from his kennels. This meant he often race had to race dogs that were not quite ready for racing at that time and probably had little chance of winning.

One of the legends of the Geelong Club was Hugh Emmerson, who was a Life Member, Committee Member and Director of the Greyhound Racing Club and who is still honoured with an annual memorial race, the ??? Emmerson supplied the pace makers for the Nelson Park track in the 1940s providing 10 pacemakers for the eight-race programs until drag lure racing was introduced in 1955.

Emmerson reared dogs for the big names of the sport including Harold Matthews, Buck Buchanan, Chummy Parks and George Schofield. His daughter, Ada Spitty remembers much of the detail of life in the industry in the 1940s and 1950s. She grew up on a farm before and during the war where they grew chaff for the horse teams especially the Light Horse, which was stationed in Melbourne. Her father's farm

equipment was used for the heavy work at the many working bees on the track. Hugh had around 30 dogs in work but this would go to 150 at Christmas when he looked after dogs for people on holiday. Ada remembers the work needed to feed so many mouths and that it often fell to the kids if Hugh was away racing the dogs.

The dogs were fed horsemeat from “downers”, sick or injured horses, and it needed an animal (usually a horse) every 10 days to feed the dogs. The pups were fed crushed grain and wheat meal which was boiled up in a copper. The pups were also left a carcass (skinned horse) hanging on a tripod and they would jump up and tear bits off as it was lowered so they could reach it. The racing dogs were fed more carefully and would have their food weighed and they were also served vegetables. There was also fresh milk from their farm and ute loads of old bread from the bakery.

During the war years, she was walking four dogs behind her bike each morning when she was 8. She was also hand slipping the dogs in a paddock with her father at the other end with a live animal, which he would release for the dogs to chase. During the war, petrol rationing meant travel for races was limited so much of the racing was done locally. But she remembers the single lane road to Melbourne and leaving in the early afternoon to get to the city for night racing in the family’s Chevrolet 4 truck with the dogs and kids in the back. At Nelson Park, her job was to hold the dogs between races and even at this tender age she suspected that dogs were being doped in the kennels. She remembers the early days at Corio where a number of the kennels that backed on to parklands had loose boards making it possible to tamper with the dogs before a race.

There was no electricity for lights at Nelson Park in the 1950s so racing was held on Saturday afternoon. Nor was there electricity at Lovely Banks where she lived until 1957 and she recalls her father leaving money with the bookies rather than walk home in the dark to Lovely Banks for fear of being robbed by one of the gangs who went to the races to see who was winning. Her dad died just before the last meeting at Corio Oval held in September 1979?.

In 1956, the Geelong Greyhound Racing Club and the Geelong Trotting Club moved to Corio Oval in East Geelong and greyhound races were held inside the trotting circuit. The popularity of greyhound racing flourished at Corio Oval with about 25

bookmakers at each meeting servicing the needs of punters as Geelong grew in the post-war industrial boom.

It was a pretty rough old world in greyhound racing in those days. John Howard remembers cats being thrown on the track as an added incentive for the dogs to chase and live rabbits being attached to the lure arm during trials.

Owning a greyhound was not easy either in those days as the Geelong Council actively discouraged the dogs. The council would issue permits for people to own dogs but permits for properties to train dogs were very hard to come by. Sometimes permits actually went with a block of land. Bernie Watts, The dogcatcher was responsible for coming round and count the number of dogs on a property to make sure the council fees had been paid. but as John worked on the council and was a friend of Bernie's he never had his dogs counted. To lighten the load on owners, the Greyhound Board picked up the payment of fees to councils in the 1970s.

W.A. "Horrie" Capron was a long-serving President of the Club during these flourishing years, which ran to the mid-1970s. Also a bookmaker Horrie is not remembered fondly by many who knew him during this time. Capron would also quiz the kids about their fathers' dogs' form however the kids very quickly learned to play dumb.

Legendary trainer Graeme Bate, was involved in racing during Horrie Capron's rule at Corio Oval. where he exercised very tight control over the operations of the Club. If you wanted to race at Geelong, you had to let Capron trial your dog. He was the only person who knew the trial times and armed with this information he did the grading for the races. Not only did he grade the races but he did the box draws with Jack Luke, who also did the handicapping. As well as being a bookmaker, Capron was also a punter. When he decided to bet, he would have a number of people placing bets for him so all his money would go out once and secure the odds. But then the odds would drop immediately leaving many punters, including the owners, with the less good odds.

Capron kept control of the Club by limiting Club membership to thirty despite the club's constitution requiring the club to have 100 members. The Board was elected by this very small club membership, which Capron controlled. It was widely believed that the membership contained a number of dead directors whose devotion to the club was such that they returned from the grave to ensure Capron's regular re-election.

All 30 were mates of Horrie's who voted him in year after year. Matters came to a head in 1965 while the Club was still at Corio Oval. Local GOTBA President Steve McKee began a campaign to meet with the Club to discuss a series of issues including stake money and kennelling. The Capron refused to talk to them and finally the Victorian GOTBA called a boycott of the races at the club. This resulted in only three to four dogs competing in the races. Finally the Club agreed to meet with the GOTBA but nothing was changed as result of a series of demands. McKee realized that Capron's control of the membership would thwart any efforts for change and began a long campaign to get the membership opened up.

This local campaign needs to be seen in the wider context of the ongoing campaign of the GOTBA against proprietary greyhound clubs and the allocation of the profits within the industry. With Horrie Capron as the President and with the Club's 30 members supporting him, there seemed to be little the GOTBA could do. The limit on the number of Club members had been a source of discontent for the GOTBA for a number of years after a long battle the GRCB eventually directed the Club to have open membership.

Capron still refused to accept new members and all the Greyhound Board of Control was prepared to do was to advise an increase of ten members. However, this did not change the voting patterns for the Club Directorate who was naturally in the same ilk as the current membership. Eventually the GRCB intervened and went to the extraordinary lengths of hiring the State Electoral Office to conduct a board election arising from a vote of no-confidence at an extra-ordinary meeting of club members where the OTBA now had considerable influence. The vote swept away the old committee and replaced it with a new one. With Capron voted out Steve McKee became President in time for the shift to Beckley Park, followed some years later by Ted Turner. The only survivor from the old regime was club secretary Kerry Askew.

Horrie Capron had trouble on another front. A great argument arose one night at the trials when Capron's mates were jumping the queue for the trials leaving other dog owners waiting. One of the owners objected and got very little sympathy from Capron. By coincidence, the aggrieved owner's son was the race starter pulling the handle that opened the starting boxes. In an angry confrontation with Capron, he said "I'll fix you. I know what you've been doing". He maintained he had seen the marked race books that his son had brought home with each race marked E and L (for early and late) by one of Capron's associates. It was alleged that the boy, David Geal, was paid \$20 a week to pull the boxes early or late according to the instructions he'd been given. Pulling the boxes early meant the outside dog had an advantage, pulling them late meant the inside dog had the advantage. A late pull of the boxes was disadvantageous to good starters.

Good starters know exactly when the box will open judged by noise, so are disadvantaged when there was a late pull and would bang their head on the front of the box. Given that a greyhound covers 20m per second at full stretch, even a half second delay at the start could be decisive.

Many believed that the early and late starts could be critical at Corio because there was a short sprint to the first turn and the with the first dog around the turn having a greater chance of winning

Geall later pleaded guilty to receiving the money. Club Director Wayne Freedman, Horrie Capron's son-in-law was later warned off greyhound tracks for five years when found guilty of having counselled Geall to engage in corrupt practice by the GRCB. Freedman appealed to the Supreme Court and had the suspension over-turned on a technicality. Capron was subsequently charged with improper conduct over the matter. In 1956, the State Government set up the Greyhound Racing Control Board (GRCB) and permitted only non-proprietary tin-hare racing.

That year Emmerson was on a Sub-Committee which established a new track at Corio Oval, the former home of the Geelong Football Club in the city's Eastern Park. The first club President was Fulton Knowles and Ted Turner, who trained Australian Cup winner Swanston Lass, became Club Chairman and guided the Club through a period of change in the late 1970s. Plans were drawn up for a new Australian National

Animal Health Laboratory to be built opposite Eastern Park. As the Laboratory was to deal with infectious diseases, it was decided that large congregations of animals would not be permitted near the laboratory and the greyhound and trotting Clubs were told they would have to vacate Corio Oval. It was decided both clubs would move to a site by the Princes Highway in Corio.

John Howard had been involved in the Committee at Nelson Park and was approached by Capron appointee Kerry Askew to go on the Committee. One of the tasks for this committee was signed off on the lease for the market, which was held in the car park next to the track. Askew, an entrepreneurial wheeler-dealer negotiated the lease. There followed a concerted whispering campaign and rumours about the financial arrangements for the market all of which proved to be unfounded by repeated audits.

The issue of the lease for the market has continued to be a vexatious one for the club and Marg Long remembers a series of acrimonious lawsuits over it.

In 1964, the trotting club, under the guidance of President Ray Beckley had bought 23 hectares of land at what is now known as Beckley Park. The Racing Development Board bought a further 13 hectares adjoining the site a few years later. The trotting Club moved to Beckley Park in September 1978. The greyhound Club, which had hesitated on the move, had its opening night at Beckley Park on Friday, March 7, 1980, enjoying state of the art facilities at a cost of \$650,000. The greyhound circuit backed onto the trotting track and this allowed for some independence.

Many outstanding greyhounds competed on opening night, but none greater than the top liner of the time Tempix, who had proven to be almost unbeatable on U-shaped circuits. Greyhound racing thrived at the new track under Secretary Kerry Askew with his emphasis on marketing and promotions. High profile entertainers often performed to attract bigger crowds. Greyhound racing stalwarts who served considerable periods as Club Chairman at Beckley Park were Steve McKee, Jack Howard, Mark Pearson, Wendy Pearl, Max Scott and Barry Cole. Maurie Blair is the present Chairman.

The 1990's saw the demise of a once great club. As with many other clubs with the advent of SKY Channel on course revenue streams dried up and by about 1990 things fell apart. The club was in continual dispute with the GRV Board and various 'stop

gap' management schemes were tried. Following a 'show cause' request from GRV, in October 2003 the club was put into Administration with GRV Club's and Services manager Colin Baird (a former Secretary of the club) taking the role of Administrator. Dennis Lockwood as Chairman (also an MGRA Director) was instrumental in reorganising the club's management and financial status under Baird's guidance. Following the election of a completely new Directorate under Chairman Maurie Blair the club was released from Administration on December 31, 2007.

Despite all this there were many innovations at Beckley Park in 1990, one of which was the use of movable starting boxes to allow racing over a 600m distance. The hydraulically operated boxes were designed by GRCB electrical contractor Ron Izon. A \$250,000 upgrade of grandstand facilities was opened in 1997, providing fully sheltered and carpeted viewing of races at the track. Construction of a new kennel complex began in September 2007 and a refurbishment of the grandstand, lure driving mechanism and administration offices are planned for 2010. Geelong has been home track for many of Victoria's leading trainers, who have won some Australia's biggest races. These include Graeme Bate, Alan, Robert and Jeff Britton, Tom, Andrea and George Dailly, Paul Bartolo and Dennis Trewin and his partner Tina Womann.

HEALESVILLE

The Healesville Greyhound Association was established in 1979 after a public meeting organised by the Shire of Healesville and some local greyhound enthusiasts. With the support of the Shire, the Association was granted permission to set up at a new sporting complex being built in Don Road, Healesville. With the Shire was trying to develop a sports complex and while the club had originally thought to put a grass track inside the Yarra Race Course when the Yarra Glen Shire gave the club the land at and the opportunity to build the straight track they had always wanted was too good to turn down.

With the assistance of Des Lindsay, Harold Brown, Tony Marraffa, Rod Parnell, Peter Wishart and members of the Patterson, Thorneycroft, Duddy and Cowman families' funds were raised through street stalls and bingo to enable work to start on the track. The Sandown Greyhound Racing Club donated assorted pieces of plant and equipment including their old broadcasters' box and timing device, which assisted the fledgling Club immensely.

A grass track with an uphill climb was constructed with the help of the Shire of Healesville and C.S.I.R.O. and for viewing purposes an electric "Bramich" lure was installed on the right hand side of the track. This was source of constant irritation to local identity Des Lindsay who was frequently in conflict with club especially over the Bramich lure and which side of the track the lure should be. Current Chairman Gary Thorneycroft believes that this set-up is a good one as it makes the dogs fan across the track now (as distinct from) going to the left as with all other tracks.

The Thorneycroft family has a long history with the Club. Gary has been on the committee since 1982 and President for the last 4 years. Both his father, Ron, and brother, Rod, have been involved since 1982 when his mother ran the canteen from a caravan.

After conducting a number of picnic meetings the Club was granted permission to hold official coursing meetings during 1988. In 1989 the Greyhound Racing Control Board issued a licence for the Healesville Greyhound Association to conduct eight non-TAB meetings per year. This figure has now grown to 25 meetings per annum. The club is in good shape able to field 10 – 12 races each week often with more dogs nominating than can be raced.

The late Ken Carr and the Mayor of Healesville officially opened the track in November 1989 and “Eureka Man” won the first Cup, which was held in 1990. With financial support from Greyhound Racing Victoria the “Bramich” Lure was updated and a new rail was located on the left hand side of the track in 2000. During 2002 some major drainage works were undertaken which will hopefully enable Healesville to offer great racing all year round.

The Healesville Greyhound Association had developed following the failure of the Yarra Valley and Districts Association to gain a licence to race at the established racing and harness venue at Yarra Glen and Healesville itself, like Mildura, had been unsuccessful in gaining one of the four available licences following the Board’s study in the late 1960s. The failure of Healesville was put down to a lack of facilities to complement the 70 acre site purchased on Don Road through the agency of a most supportive Shire President in Gary Cooper.

The decision to deny Healesville the opportunity to provide a greyhound racing facility in what is known as “the North East Quadrant” did not faze the Healesville administration. With the assistance of fund raising organised by Pauline Patterson the Club was able to prove its viability without Development Board or Control Board contributions and was granted a restricted licence of fifteen meetings, which like Robinvale was later increased to 26.

Healesville was unique in the Victorian track racing scene in that it is the only “track Club” racing on grass and for a while the only one at which the greyhounds pursue a Bramich lure which started from the front of the boxes. By perfecting the “in front” start Healesville returned the animal to his natural law of chasing by vision, which had been the greyhound’s predilection for many thousands of years.

It is also the only straight racing track in Victoria. Straight racing on grass not only produces clean injury free competition but also provides a facility for betting confidence.

The track has always aimed at the small owner but the bigger trainers will sometimes use the track to trial a dog. Many owners will race at Healesville on Saturday and then at Warragul mid-week and owners will travel from Bendigo, Geelong and even Sydney for the Cup. Coursing dogs come before the season.

The picnic format has proved popular with meetings now on 38 Saturdays in the afternoon with 10 – 12 races with 6 - 8 dogs attracting crowds of around 200. The club is entirely run on volunteer labour, except on race days when they are paid.

Before the emphasis was on picnic races, the track had operated as a trial track on Friday nights often running as many as 80 – 90 trials each week. To begin with, it was bingo nights and the trial fees that built the toilet block, the kennels and the canteen. After that the Board began putting money in for track upgrades and lures.

There is a great need for a new judging box and lure driver as the old box was a present from Sandown when the club first started. Gary recognizes the great support that Smokey Dawson, the Sandown President and John Stephens, the CEO, provided to Healesville in those early days.

The facilities have improved over time and for the latter part of 2007 there was an on course TAB facility for 6 – 8 meetings a year. Bookie numbers have dropped from the original four but Gary Thomas has fielded at Healesville for the last 15 years.

Gary Thorneycroft believes that the next step is to get SKY to cover straight track racing and to take out the dip in the track. This will represent a dilemma for the club. SKY will bring strong cash flows but the club is at risk of losing its Saturday afternoon timeslot in the shift to SKY. This may mean the end of the Saturday picnic race atmosphere and much of the ethos that the club has been so successful in building over the years.

The club has an interesting demographic with many of the staff being very young, some of whom own dogs or have parents who do. Many of the staff started out catching dogs after the races. Most trainers will only bring one dog and the big trainers will not be there adding to the hobby owner family atmosphere of the club.

Like Marg Long at The Meadows, Gary Thorneycroft and his committee have a strong sense of the need to establish the club within the local community and to build links to other sporting clubs. They have held a rodeo in conjunction with the pony club, the local football club has used the ground to train juniors and there is an annual cricket match between the Greyhound Club and the cricket club. Being located in a multi-purpose complex has advantages for the club. Spectators and players alike often come over at half time or after a match for a bet when the races are on.

The club also holds social events like bucks and hens parties and has begun approaching local retirement villages and giving them free passes for the seniors and carers. Family members of the senior citizens tend to come along as well, as a day at the dogs adds interest to a visit to an aging relative. The club has also held 4 Great Chase events, the state-wide competition for dogs lent to charities.

The strong community focus is also combined with a strong tourism focus with combined event with wineries, the Healesville Sanctuary and the horse races and the development of weekend packages supported by strong word of mouth. One interesting development is the growing popularity of the club with tourists from Ireland where coursing has a huge following.

Gary remarks that recently 5000 people turned up to the Yarra Valley racing club for a recruiting drive for Richmond footy club and sees this as a potential activity for the greyhounds. He sees potential future if the club can be on the TAB on Saturday or Sunday mornings to get the early bird punters at the TAB. The growing strength of the club is reflected in the fact that the club has had a full-time manager for the last 5 years. Reflecting a growing trend in the younger modern greyhound club managers, the new manager has a strong background in marketing, sponsorship and promotion.

HORSHAM

Live coursing began in Horsham in the early 1900s in times when there was less concern about animal cruelty than later in the century. Racing was held on flat country off Plumpton Rd on the site of the future abattoir. The club had strong religious connections with Father Jon Manning as vice president and Father Tony Waldron as treasurer. ("A Story of Horsham" Brian Brooke and Alan Finch)

Although live hare coursing had been conducted in Horsham since the early 1900s it was not until 1971 that the Horsham Greyhound Racing Club was formed to take up an offer to conduct licensed greyhound racing in the Wimmera area. The first public meeting in Horsham's Town Hall attracted a large crowd of vocal greyhound supporters.

Further meetings followed and Mr Jim McCabe, Member for Lowan, was elected as the Club's first President. Jim played a large part in obtaining Horsham's racing licence and paid tribute to the Greyhound Racing Control Board, Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, the Greyhound Development Board and the Horsham Agricultural and Pastoral Society for allowing the greyhound Club to share its grounds.

When work began on the track construction, the Trotting Club were still racing at the Showgrounds and had requested that sufficient room be allowed between the two tracks for the ambulance. Track design is a critical issue for new clubs and protecting the design was very important. Reducing the greyhound track to accommodate the ambulance would have resulted in much tighter corners on the greyhound track. Tight turns increase the chance of interference and injury to dogs. Finally, an agreement was finally reached which allowed the ambulance to use the greyhound track during Trotting Meetings. Thanks to the foresight of the Committee of the day, many trainers (and locals) now regard the Horsham greyhound track as the best in Australia. Club President and life member Bill Powell believes that this is because of the configuration of a long run to the first turn and a long race home over the 480 m track.

Legend has it that there was also an unacknowledged contribution to the track shape. Bluey Kemp related the story at Reg Forbes' funeral. Construction of the track was underway and the surveyor's pegs set in place. Bluey and Reg were having a few

beers one night when they decided to enlarge the track to take advantage of the fact that the trots had moved out and left extra space that the greyhounds could use. Later that night, they went out and shifted the surveyor's pegs set in preparation for laying the track the next day. When dogs were returning slower times than expected the track sprint distance was re-measured. Originally designed to be 320m, the actual distance was found to be 336m presumably as a result of the intervention of Messrs Forbes and Kemp.

Early racing had its ups and downs. In the first trial at the new track, a greyhound caught the lure and bit its tail off. It became common for the dogs to catch the lure before steps had to be taken to speed up the mock hare.

The opening meeting at the showgrounds was held on 17 December 1973 with a large crowd in attendance. The first race on the program, a Juvenile Stakes, was won by the Alan Britton owned and trained The Vixen who took home \$50 plus a trophy. Other winners on the night received \$50, \$60 or \$170 plus a bag of Noskes racing bits and a magnum of Champagne compliments of Noskes and (bookmaker) Mr. C. Parkes.

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The Monday meetings continued until 1982 when the Club experimented with Saturday racing in an attempt to seek wider public interest. Finally with the introduction of SKY Channel coverage, racing settled into the Tuesday twilight timeslot. The change to twilight racing and off course betting has meant that \$40,000 originally bet on-course on a Horsham meeting has now become \$300,000, which is bet off -course, making a significant contribution to the financial well-being of the Club.

The Club has been privileged to see some of the best greyhounds in the country race at Horsham including former track record holder “Tempix” and superstar “Brett Lee” and current 480m track record holder “Crash” now at stud in Ireland.

The Horsham Greyhound Racing Club owes much to the hard work and dedication of the people who contributed to volunteer Committees over the years and in particular past Presidents Jim McCabe, Doug Hughes, Brian Murray and foundation Member and current Club President Bill Powell. The Club is also fortunate to have the work of two dedicated and long serving women in Sylvia Penny and Jenni Coustley.

Jenni joined the committee in 1984 and Sylvia has been on for nearly 30 years. Sylvia was the first woman on the Committee, joining in the mid-70s. When she was first appointed Sylvia remembers one male member of the Committee resigning in disgust. However, he later returned and apologized saying she was doing a good job. Sylvia’s dedication is shown by the fact that she worked as the unpaid cleaner during a long period of her association with the Club. In addition, she has been running trials, cooking for the raffles and running the bingo.

When a local dog, Eight West, which raced for a child who was in the Eight West at Royal Children's bolted and disappeared for three days, it was eventually spotted by an ex-lure driver for the club. He notified Sylvia found the dog still with its blanket and muzzle on, coaxed it into her car and nursed back to health. The dog went on to win more races for the Royal Children's. In 2002, Sylvia Penny was awarded Horsham Volunteer of the Year Award.

Jenni has been Vice-President of the Club for between 15 to 20 years and been both President and Secretary of the ladies committee. Jenni is the only local owner to win the Horsham Cup, which she did with Propellant in 1984. Her long association with the Club led to her being awarded the Horsham Volunteer of the Year Award in 2002.

Local owners Ted and Barb Lovett owned Rooftop Romeo, who had 11 wins in the city mainly at Sandown with \$42,000 in winnings. The dog achieved local fame, and his name, for his habit of standing on the roof of his kennel. As the photos show, one day he was not so successful getting up there.

HORSHAM

Live coursing began in Horsham in the early 1900s in times when there was less concern about animal cruelty than later in the century. Racing was held on flat country off Plumpton Rd on the site of the future abattoir. The club had strong religious connections with Father Jon Manning as vice president and Father Tony Waldron as treasurer. ("A Story of Horsham" Brian Brooke and Alan Finch)

Although live hare coursing had been conducted in Horsham since the early 1900s it was not until 1971 that the Horsham Greyhound Racing Club was formed to take up an offer to conduct licensed greyhound racing in the Wimmera area. The first public meeting in Horsham's Town Hall attracted a large crowd of vocal greyhound supporters.

Further meetings followed and Mr Jim McCabe, Member for Lowan, was elected as the Club's first President. Jim played a large part in obtaining Horsham's racing licence and paid tribute to the Greyhound Racing Control Board, Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, the Greyhound Development Board and the Horsham Agricultural and Pastoral Society for allowing the greyhound Club to share its grounds.

When work began on the track construction, the Trotting Club were still racing at the Showgrounds and had requested that sufficient room be allowed between the two tracks for the ambulance. Track design is a critical issue for new clubs and protecting the design was very important. Reducing the greyhound track to accommodate the ambulance would have resulted in much tighter corners on the greyhound track. Tight turns increase the chance of interference and injury to dogs. Finally, an agreement was finally reached which allowed the ambulance to use the greyhound track during Trotting Meetings. Thanks to the foresight of the Committee of the day, many trainers (and locals) now regard the Horsham greyhound track as the best in Australia. Club President and life member Bill Powell believes that this is because of the configuration of a long run to the first turn and a long race home over the 480 m track.

Legend has it that there was also an unacknowledged contribution to the track shape. Bluey Kemp related the story at Reg Forbes' funeral. Construction of the track was underway and the surveyor's pegs set in place. Bluey and Reg were having a few beers one night when they decided to enlarge the track to take advantage of the fact

that the trots had moved out and left extra space that the greyhounds could use. Later that night, they went out and shifted the surveyor's pegs set in preparation for laying the track the next day. When dogs were returning slower times than expected the track sprint distance was re-measured. Originally designed to be 320m, the actual distance was found to be 336m presumably as a result of the intervention of Messrs Forbes and Kemp.

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MGRA

When the legislation for non-proprietary racing provided for two metropolitan greyhound track licenses, one was issued to the National Coursing Association of Victoria and the other to the Owners Trainers and Breeders Association, which would add “Greyhound” to its name and become the Greyhound Owners Trainers Breeders Association (GOTBA). In 1955, the Melbourne Greyhound Racing Association (MGRA) was formed separating out from GOTBA and registering as a company to hold the license to race greyhounds. However, membership at Board level of the two bodies continued to have a high degree of overlap. This initial structure was similar to that of the NCA and the NCA of Victoria.

With a new license, but unable to afford the £35,000 (\$960,000) for the purchase of the White City track, the MGRA needed a home. To avoid a recess in racing, the MGRA began racing at Maribyrnong paying a lease of £100 (\$2700) a week while working on plans to establish a track at the football ground in Arden Street, North Melbourne. The then ‘Dog Racing Control Board’ also approved the MGRA to race at Sandown Park until it moved to Arden Street.

At the General Meeting of August 1956, the members of the MGRA were advised that negotiations for the move to North Melbourne were completed. Racing was to be conducted behind a tin hare lent by the GTOBA of New South Wales, to be paid for when possible. Approval was given to raise £25,000 (\$686,000) for the promotion of tin hare racing. Committee minutes for this period set this amount in context: the Secretary was paid £25 (\$686) per week with a car allowance of 9d (\$1) per mile, the mechanic and the assistant driver were to be paid £5 (\$140) per meeting, £10 (\$280) a week was approved for publicity, and Maurie Kirby’s amplifying system was hired for £3 (\$82) a week. The Club was also making payments equal to the gate takings from one meeting a year into the Compensation Fund, which compensated the previous proprietary Clubs for the loss of their licences. In 1957, this amounted to £571 (\$14,400). Annual rent, payable to the Melbourne City Council was set at £7000 (\$176,00) per annum. The MGRA Committee also approved payment of £1,500 a year to building contractor and former prominent St Kilda football captain Harold Matthews to be managing Director. He and fellow builder Stan Cleverly were to start

the preliminary works at Arden Street. The work, valued at £35,000 (\$880,000), was financed by a debenture issue.

Times were tight to begin with and the Directors agreed to take turns to serve drinks at the bar to save on wages. But with Chairman Harold Matthews at the helm, there was no shortage of optimism with the decision to issue debentures to raise the £35,000 for the work at North Melbourne. In addition, an order was placed for 80 bookies' boards. A night's racing at Arden Street would soon be attracting 50-60 bookies per night. On the 11th September 1957, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne opened the new North Melbourne ground with stake money for the opening night at £750 (\$19,000). For the next few years greyhound racing boomed and things looked rosy for the MGRA.

Then on 14th June 1961 the Melbourne City Council lobbed a grenade into the MGRA in the form of a rent increase from £7,000 (\$163,000) a year to £9,500 (\$220,000) a year. The MGRA believed a rise of £2500 (\$60,000) pounds was extortionate, especially as they had removed a £1,700 (\$40,000) liability at North Melbourne and spent in excess of £30,000 (\$700,000) on improvements within a space of four years. Having paid £23,000 (\$536,000) pounds in rent over three years, the golden goose finally choked. Within a week, negotiations had begun with the Olympic Park Trust (OPT) to move greyhound racing out of the North Melbourne ground. The speed and effectiveness of these negotiations was due in part to the very good political and sporting connections of President Matthews.

The decision of the MGRA not to pay the rent increase received support in the Sporting Globe newspaper where it was argued that their revenue flow which appeared to have prompted the council's rent increases, was being used to redeem the £35,000 (\$880,000), worth of debentures which were used to finance the building of the track. It was argued that as the MGRA had no right to the assets they had created, the owners and trainers were entitled to get the money back. This was not to be and eventually the MGRA had to walk away from the £30,000 (\$700,000), capital investment that they had made in Arden St. However, on balance it was clear that the decision of the Council had indeed strangled the golden goose.

In August of 1961, the MGRA reported a loss of £694 (\$16,000), for the first six months of the year and this was in contrast to the surplus of £11,300 (\$263,000), for the previous year. The MGRA had received £50,000 (\$1.16m), in revenue during the six months in question and had expenditure of £51,000 (\$1.19m). Its main revenue streams were £17,000 (\$396,000) in admissions, £12,000 (\$280,000) in bookies fees, £8,444 (\$197,000) from bookmakers' turnover, £4,350 (\$102,000) from race book sales and £2,300 (\$54,000) fees from trials and nominations. Main expenditures were £23,230 (\$542,000) in stake money and trophies and £8,000 (\$186,000) in wages and salaries.

The decline was attributed to increased stakes in a period highlighted by extremely bad weather and the provision for depreciation of leasehold improvements. However overall, the MGRA was in a good financial position. It had £1,000 (\$23,000) in the bank, £3,000 (\$700,000) of accounts payable and had £6,000 (\$140,000) in goods and furniture.

The members of the MGRA endorsed the move to Olympic Park after the Directors had put in a counter offer to Melbourne City Council to pay rent at the present rate of £7,000 (\$163,000) or 12.5% of the gate takings which was not such a great offer given that takings for the previous year were approximately £35,000 (\$816,000) which equated to £4374 (\$102,000). Clearly, the MGRA was prepared to stand strong on the issue.

Things were not improved by the fact that the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee was not prepared to see the MGRA delegation until after the council elections and the appointment of a new Committee. All did not go smoothly for the MGRA on another front. Despite Cabinet approval of the MGRA move to Olympic Park, the Metropolitan Board of Works rejected an application for the reconstruction of the oval and the grandstand on the basis that the running track at Olympic Park was for human beings and not for dogs. In addition, the amateur sporting bodies that tenanted the No. 2 oval strongly opposed the move of the greyhounds to Olympic Park.

The MGRA was not deterred and at a subsequent General meeting of the Club, the recommendation to shift was endorsed by the members and preparations at Olympic

Park began in earnest. In 1960, £7450 (\$174,000) was paid to renovate the bar and the kitchen. This was to be repaid at £1000 (\$23,000) per week.

Early in September 1961, State Cabinet approved the MGRA plan to spend £50,000 converting the No. 2 oval at Olympic Park in Swan Street for greyhound racing. The MGRA would pay annual rent of £5000 (\$116,000) per year or 12.5% of gate takings whichever was the bigger, to the Olympic Park Trust. To do this, the club took on a £30,000 (\$700,000) overdraft. The last meeting at North Melbourne was held on April 16, 1962.

In July of 1962, trials began at Olympic Park with races to be conducted over 560 and 800 yards. The MGRA announced that 68 bookmakers would field at meetings and that 30 selling windows would service totalizator punters for win, place and quinella betting. Parking would cater for 1000 cars. On Monday 20th August 1962, a crowd of over 6,000 braved cold weather for the opening and witnessed Chief Secretary Arthur Rylah cutting a white ribbon after the third race. Admission was Gents 8/- (\$9) and Ladies 5/- (\$6). Every effort would now be made to regain patronage and before too long Olympic Park began to get better attendances than those at North Melbourne.

Aerial shots of the North Melbourne Ground and Olympic Park Precinct about here

By the next year, the MGRA was running the Australian Greyhound Cup worth £4600 (\$100,000). However, the Club's financial success did not go unnoticed in the country. In 1962, the MGRA received a request of financial support from Wangaratta and in 1964 the Sale Club asked MGRA to take over its financial commitments.

While not able to meet these requests, MGRA was later able to give Ballarat £5,000 (\$110,000) in stake money and also guarantee a £2500 (\$55,000) loan at the bank. Later that year, it guaranteed a £4000 (\$87,000) overdraft for Warrnambool and a further £10,000 (\$220,000) for the Ballarat Club. However, this generosity was short-lived and by 1968 the MGRA decided to stop subsidizing country Clubs.

In these early days as was to be expected, the MGRA Directorate continued to be made up of GOTBA members but as time went on that membership changed and the two groups became more distant. Again this situation mirrors that at Sandown with the NCA and the NCAV. Fred Abel who served for 17 years with the GOTBA, including six as President, remembers times when the GOTBA had to go cap in hand

to the MGRA to get anything done. Abel later joined the MGRA Committee in 1982 becoming the Chairman of Directors in 1990 a position he would hold until 2001.

The Olympic Park era is strongly associated with a youngster who started at the MGRA as an effervescent young gate attendant. Kenneth Russell Carr eventually rose to the position of Secretary/Manager for the period 1971-1989, which many would say were the halcyon days of greyhound racing. Going on to lead the industry for next seven years as CEO of Greyhound Racing Victoria, Ken continues to be held in great esteem and is remembered annually when the Victorian Greyhound Racing Industry's highest award the K.R.Carr medal is declared. As well as bringing strong management and administrative skills to the Club, Ken Carr also introduced celebrity glamour to greyhound racing at Olympic Park. Promotions included a tie-in with the Moomba festival and the frequent use of glamorous models, one of whom was later found to be a lady of the night.

The club has been well served over the years by its Presidents. Harold Matthews was President from 1956 to 1979. During Matthews time the club established itself at North Melbourne and successfully shifted to Olympic Park where it enjoyed its halcyon years. Bill Conroy took over from Harold Matthews and was chairman from 1979 to 1996 and Les Foran served from 1996 to 1999 with Fred Abel in the chair since 1999 during which time the club shifted again to the Meadows.

Australian Cup Promotions pictures about here

Racing at Olympic Park in the 1980s pictures about here

However ongoing issues beset the MGRA as working with other sport codes always led to friction over the right to decide when to race, when to have trials and control of the catering services. There had been a problem with parking at the North Melbourne ground and this continued at Olympic Park as did the stealing and stripping of cars during race meetings. The time (1984-90??) of Les Foran as Chairman.

Dogs closing on the twin lures at Olympic Park pictures about here

In the mid-eighties the GOTBA suggested that dogs could not see the lure so a longer arm with two bunnies was introduced. Fred Abel remembers that the two lures were not very effective and the experiment was abandoned. A twin lure continues to be used in parts of NSW today. Fred Abel becomes Chairman (1990 - 2000). Put in photo of twin bunnies

The early 1990s saw declining attendance numbers and finances mainly as a result of the opening of Crown Casino but fortunately there were a number of important milestones for the MGRA. First was the joint venture with Sandown, which established the Tabaret gaming facility at Sandown, which soon created strong cash flows for both clubs. The second was that better tenancy terms were negotiated for Olympic Park with a new 15-year lease and the third that Marg Long became the Manager of MGRA in 1993 with Chairmen Hec Caruana ('89 - '91 and Peter Craig '91 – '93.

All the clubs had been offered the opportunity to take up Tabaret licences, but only MGRA, Sandown and Sale took up the offer. It was to prove to be a licence to print money and to this day Marg Long regrets not having separate licence for MGRA. The Sandown/MGRA revenue flow is currently around \$500,000 annually for each club.

Although nearly \$200,000 (\$335,000) was coming annually from the Tabaret, competition from gaming venues, the newly opened Casino and television driving an off course market put added pressure on the Club. But by late 1994 the Domain Tunnel, proposed to run along the back straight of the track had become an issue of monumental importance that was to shape the future of the club.

The initial plan was for MGRA to move out during the construction of the tunnel. But after further discussions, the Club was told by the Olympic Park Trust (OPT) that it would not be able to return despite holding a further 13 years of lease of the site. Both the OPT and the Transurban/Citilink tunnel consortium believed that no compensation was payable for the lease. Eventually after some negotiation, \$1m (\$1.7m) was offered as compensation on the condition it relocated. Fred Abel visited close friend and Racing Minister Tom Reynolds, who also happened to be on the Olympic Park Trust. After more negotiation, Citilink agreed to contribute \$5.5m (\$9.2m), GRV \$2.5m (\$4.1m) and the Olympic Park Trust \$3m (\$5m). With funds

available, the Club began giving serious consideration to relocation options with Broadmeadows becoming an early front-runner location. So for the second time in 30 years, MGRA was on the move again.

With racing transferred to Sandown, Fred Abel, Marg Long and the Committee began to look for a new site for the MGRA. In a wide-ranging search across Melbourne they looked at 85 different possibilities before finally settling on a site in Camp Road, Broadmeadows.

The period leading up to the shift to the Meadows was difficult one. There was a continued downward trend in takings. Monday night at Sandown, which was the only option to continue racing, had not proven to be particularly profitable. But the new site at Broadmeadows provided for significant optimism. First, it provided for greyhound racing on the northern side of the Melbourne or "North of the Yarra" as Marg Long put it. Second, the Hume Council was keen to engage the MGRA as a business partner in community development and third, the demographics of the area presented the MGRA with a great opportunity to attract a younger audience to greyhound racing. During planning and construction, the club enjoyed good relationships with their builder, the MAB Corporation (MABCorp) and the new track took about 18 months to complete. Construction was however not without stresses and strains.

The track is located on a high point of Melbourne and is subject to particularly strong winds. In the normal course of events, this presented problems for a highly unionised workforce. Marg had to exercise all her persuasive powers to keep the subbies and labourers working round the clock to finish for opening night. Later, the club put on a special race night to recognize the work of the sub-contractors and labourers who had worked on the site. Opening night was a stunning success with the Racing Minister Tom Reynolds, senior members of GRV and a crowd of 8000 people cramming into the new Meadows racetrack.

Since the shift to the Meadows there have been a number of significant events. In 1997, the first Annual General Meeting held at The Meadows showed that, despite the Club still being in financial difficulty, prize money increased. There has been a constant desire to broaden the funding base for the Club and hence in 1999, the

corporate dining room opened. The importance of the Tabaret at Sandown as a source of cash flow was re-emphasised with a plan to establish another Tabaret at The Meadows. Hence in late 1998, after discussions with GRV, a site on the corner of Northcorp Boulevard was purchased with this objective in mind. Unfortunately a change in Government policy with respect to poker machine caps in the City of Hume caused the demise of this plan.

Significantly, a chance opportunity through SKY Channel in 2001, allowed for a move to Saturday night racing. First shared with Sandown, but then confirmed as the new solo MGRA timeslot, the move to Saturday night racing has proven to be very successful and it is now the cornerstone of racing at the Meadows. This year also marked the farewell of longstanding MGRA Chairman Fred Abel, the departure, due to work commitments of Chairman Terry Davis after a two-year term and the appointment of new Chairman Eddie Caruana.

Some coverage of The Meadows start about here

With a broadening sense of improving financial performance and social responsibility within the emergent local community, the Meadows became involved in Charity fund raising with the Dean Jones Walk for Leukemia and the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal raising \$7,600 and \$42,000 respectively. With Caruana's blend of attention to feature events, the needs of 'grass roots' owners and trainers, and the development of the Meadows as a family friendly community environment, the Meadows has prospered to become the shining light of greyhound racing in Victoria.

The Australian Cup of 2001 entered the record books when Graeme Bate's tearaway leader "Blackjack Tom" was joined on the line by Max Burdiken's "Most Awesome" to create the first dead heat in such a major race. In April 2003, a hand-slipping track was established for local owners and trainers. On a racing front, the Directorate revamped the format of the Australian Cup Carnival in 2003 to include a first night that is highlighted by the "Temlee", the "Rookie Rebel" and the 'Zoom Top" as invitational feature events. The MGRA has also promoted now well proven group events such as the Silver Chief, the Maturity, the Hume Cup and the Silver Bullet now traditionally conducted on (horse) Melbourne Cup eve.

Having a large modern dining room enabled the Meadows to promote the clubs facilities to businesses and families in the local area. The strategy has proved successful as the dining room is booked out for most meetings and in 2007 the Club was looking to expand its dining facilities.

SALE

In 1876, only three years after the holding of the coursing meeting at Sunbury, a coursing club was formed at a meeting in the Club Hotel in Sale with authorization to purchase 50 hares at 10/- a head. In 1880, the North Gippsland Coursing Club (NGCC) was formed at a public meeting and in held the Australia Cup meetings on local estates in 1895, 1896, 1899 and 1902. The Gippsland Times reported a large attendance at the 1896 meeting with hares being plentiful but difficult to draw into the open despite the efforts of the beaters.

Greyhound racing had its beginnings in 1920 when a meeting between the Sale Turf Club and representative of the Sale Coursing Club to discuss the possibility of a Plumpton course on the Sale Reserve. The course was to be 800yds by 350yds and be fenced on one side and have wire netting on the other. A hundred hares were to be grazed on the enclosure.

The entrance charge was 2/9 for gentlemen and 1/- for ladies. Hares were supplied by holding hare drives, which had a social as well as practical aspect. Nine gallons of beer was supplied by the local brewery with corned beef (cooked by the ladies) butter bread and cordial for the kids all being supplied by local merchants. Coursing continued until 1952 when the fencing was taken down and the 67 acres ploughed and planted with crops.

In 1921, the Lands Department approved the project and the course was built at a cost of £1000. That year, the NGCC changed its name to the Sale Enclosure Coursing Club (SECC) and held its first meeting. Gippsland Times reported that the Mayor of Sale, Tom Cullinan and the MA for North Gippsland Jim McLachlan both spoke of the importance of Sale coursing in the Australian context. It also reported that a high percentage of the hares were killed.

By 1922 charges of cruelty to hare were appearing in the local papers and in 1924 the championship meeting had to be abandoned because the hare had been “deliberately liberated”.

The Sale and District Greyhound Racing Club was formed in 1935 to conduct speed coursing with the first meeting conducted on Saturday the 6th February 1936 at the

Sale Showgrounds. The speed coursing track was built by proprietary interests spending £700 on the track equipment and the lighting. President of the proprietary Club, owned by the shareholders, was Jack Ponchi. Jack Scott was Club Secretary, Grader and Track manager. Prize money averaged £10 a race. The track was a straight track commencing at a point where McGhee St is today, running along the Dawson Street boundary. It also had a 340yd circle track and races were conducted over the 250yd straight and 340yd circle. Hurdles were conducted on the straight track. Twelve hundred patrons paid a total of £85 on opening night to see the first race won by “Nulla Nulla” trained by Mr. Frank Gooding.

The first meeting was enlivened by the additional attraction of camel races. Old timers of this era still reminisce about champion hurdler “Calaby”, trained by Buck Davidson. “Calaby” kept winning to the extent that he was handicapped so far behind that part of the fence behind the boxes was removed to accommodate his starting box. The Club progressed and soon moved to a new site with a grass track opposite the Showgrounds on the Princess Highway. In the early days, the Club had a number of names. Originally it was the North Gippsland Coursing Club, then the Sale Enclosure Coursing Club then Sale Speed Coursing (since its first meeting on 8th January 1936) and each reflecting the change in nature of the sport.

As with most Clubs, times were tough during the depression and the Club survived with only one meeting a month. Prominent owners were Jim Jennings who won the 1938 Waterloo Cup and Victorian Derby and Tom Lannigan Snr. who won the St Leger and the Victorian Oaks with “Shyanza”. Today’s Sale Club has conducted the Tom Lanigan Memorial for a number of years. The race is for dogs that have not won more than three races because Tom always saw himself as the battling trainer. Tom was also a Life Member of the Sale Club.

Artie Davidson remembers how he and his brothers raced greyhounds with live hares in the middle of Sale’s racehorse track on a Plumpton Course similar to that at Maribyrnong’s Napier Park. During WWII, Artie who was Club Secretary, Charlie Hyatt who was President, Gordon Ogilvie and Arthur Hay ran four races for £3 on a Saturday afternoon to keep the Club going. While pleased to see the growth of the present day industry, Artie derived his greatest satisfaction from keeping the sport

going during the war years. Arthur Hay was also hare driver for the Club since the inception of the mechanical hare. His name is commemorated today in a special race.

Racing veteran, Perc Martin was at the opening of the original track when he was 20 years old. He worked milking cows and his employer had good Plumpton dogs, which were raced at the Sale racecourse through until the 1950s. He remembers seeing as many as eight Plumpton dogs being trained behind a baker's cart drawn by a horse. He took part in hare drives for the Plumpton mounted on a pony, driving the hares into a net. While there were rabbits by the thousands, they were normally too slow for greyhound coursing. The six hares he would catch were a good result for a day's work would go to the Traralgon Plumpton as well as the local Club. These hares were trained to find a safe exit from the Plumpton course being chased by fox terriers before being used for greyhound coursing. The slower foxie had no chance of catching or injuring the valuable hare.

In 1967, Perc nominated Dave Gault, an engineer and successful local businessman as President, at a time when it looked as if the Club would not survive. Perc, who was also on the Agricultural Society Committee with Gault, hoped Gault's business acumen on issues such as banking and bookkeeping would bring success and stability to the club. In recognition of his work, the Agricultural Society named the pony show jumping area the Perc Martin Arena.

Greyhound Racing left the precincts of the Showgrounds for the only time in its 70 year history when, in the late 1940s, the Gippsland Speed Coursing Club sought greener pastures and moved across the Princes Highway to a site on Dawson Street. Racing was over both a straight 300yd and 427yd circle and this form of racing continued until 1955 when mechanical lure racing was finally legalized. Racing was conducted behind a pacemaker and a drag lure, rather than today's continuous cable system. This old system had to be carried back and placed at the start after each race.

Some of the enthusiasts who acted as officials and volunteers during this time were Don Clavarino, Arthur Hay, Alistair Kennedy (President), Jack Mitchell (Secretary), Ang. Patterson (Secretary/Manager), Bert Pooley (Secretary), Jack Lambourn (Groundsman), and Lure Drivers Knox French and Clem Adamson. Don Hayes was a Committee member for 20 years (1959 – 79) and also Vice President for 2 years.

Freddie Booth and Len Colliver gave him good dogs to train and this made him as a trainer.

He went out of dogs with the shift to the current track. He remembers the hurdles being particularly spectacular and popular. Don also remembers his dad entered a hurdle dog in a flat race and the dog kept jumping in the air every 20m, despite this, the dog finished 2nd beaten by a head.

Don's experience is typical of the sport at the time. Results were always uncertain: A member of the Traralgon Club in the mid 1950s, he had a dog finish 7th but its number went up as first because the Judge had money on it. Greyhounds were still regarded as natural coursing dogs so his early training method was to course his dogs and to give them a kill before a race. Such practices were common as was that of giving the dogs a rabbit after a race. Don remembers that the catching pen had a glass cage full of rabbits and the trainers would show the dogs the rabbits before the race. At the end of the race, the rabbits were released to the dogs. This had the effect of training the dogs to run hard knowing there was the prospect of a kill at the end of the race.

Distance and travel time was not an obstacle. When he worked at the RAAF base, he was typical of the dedicated owner trainer. He would travel to Sandown, race, and drive home and be up at 5am to walk the dogs. He would also fly to Bairnsdale to race. His friend Les Wallace was grader at Wangaratta. While Don was training, he and Les would ring in Don's good dogs in races at Wangaratta. Don would race his dog under another trainer's name, an arrangement that only Les and Don knew about. The deal was that when Don's dog was graded for a race; it was for a race it could win. The arrangement was that Les would refuse to accept that Don was the trainer, suggesting Don nominate another trainer. Naturally, the bookies never learnt of this arrangement, but it would have cost them a lot of money over the years.

Like many kids who grew up in Sale, Don remembers Musical Jack who lived at the track and had a fabulous LP collection. The kids would hang around his hut listening to the music. Parents warned children not to go into Jack's hut on pain of death which really only made it more attractive. Don also recalls how Arthur Hay, a local trainer got drunk one afternoon and had an argument with his wife before taking his gun dog, Bluey, to the track. He and his mates put all their money on the Bluey. His angry wife

went to the cross roads where the gate to the track was open and as the dogs went past. When the dogs came past with “Bluey” in the lead, she called “Hey Bluey, here Bluey”. The obedient dog stopped chasing and ran over to her. Moral “Don’t mess with the hand that feeds the dog”.

On the 17th August 1963, the Greyhounds returned to the Showgrounds racing on a track constructed around the main Showgrounds arena. Compared to the modern facilities enjoyed by patrons at Sale Greyhounds in the 21st century, the conditions in the 1960s could best be described as spartan. Racing changed from Saturday afternoons to Saturday nights with an uncovered betting ring, no form guides but a great atmosphere. The old paling fence was the only weather protection and on the really wet nights the Bookmakers would field in the Grandstand.

The Track was constructed using only volunteer labour - including all the postholes that were dug by hand. Much of the equipment to build this new venue was second hand with the lights, judges’ tower (still standing) and the wooden starting boxes being relocated from the old North Melbourne track at Arden Street. Robert and Wayne Wynd were involved when the old track grandstand was transported over. Getting the Showgrounds up and running over the weekends while racing at the old track required a huge effort on the part of the volunteers. The wives would bring BBQ lunch and the kids would play around the track.

The new track’s circumference was 470 yards with race distances being initially 400yds and 545yds with a 622yds start being added later. The track was officially opened by Sir Herbert Hyland MLA with Councillor Ossie Ruff representing the City of Sale. The first race at the track was won by “Dans Dian” trained by Arch Rowley. It is interesting to note that “Dans Dian” came out of Box 1 but wore the yellow rug. In those days, the rug colours were allocated based on the original grading selection order but the box draw was not conducted until just prior to the first race which meant that rug colours and numbers did not necessarily correspond to Box numbers.

On June 30th 1970, a charity meeting was held at Sale to raise funds for Miss Maree O’Sullivan an entrant in the Miss Australia Charity Queen contest. The feature event

was the NCA Free to All which featured the States best stayers – “Luxury’s Son”, “Traffic Talk”, “Suzy Capri”, “Sprite of Egypt”, and making her farewell appearance the champion “Miram Miss” - all competing for a cassette player, toaster and a transistor clock.

Kerrie Ferguson, daughter of the legendary Arthur Ferguson, came to racing early (she was dragged along to the old straight track when she was three) and with an impeccable pedigree. Her father, Arty was the Club Grader for many years after Kerrie’s mum died. As was often the case in country Clubs, the jobs were shared out in the family. Arty’s brother and his son ran the ticket box and had a great involvement in sport. She and her sister were unpaid Secretaries for the Club, typing up the letters to the Control Board for her dad. She remembers her father was a very fair and systematic Grader who remained involved for many years and also spent time on the Committee

On Saturday night after the dogs, many trainers came to their house to nominate for the next week. While fair and systematic, Arty would give a man who was down on his luck a break according to Des Dooley. He looked after locals and you knew that if you had had a run of no places, Arty would give you your turn. Against this, there was always pressure to make sure the fields were evenly matched to ensure the winner was not a stand out. This would ensure that there would be even betting and the bookies would give odds to encourage the punters would bet. Artie Davidson owned “Winter Haven” who ran 116 races for 23wins, 15 seconds and 25 thirds between 1975 and 1978.

Yvonne Claverino, who married into a family with a long history in greyhound racing in Sale, is the wife of former Club Chairman Don. Her mother-in-law, Emily, was also President of the Ladies Committee, which has been running since the early 1950s. However, once the pokies arrived there was no need for these fund raising activities and the long tradition of the Ladies Auxiliary faded. Her dad was in the RAAF and she met Don at the Church Social and he invited her to the track to watch his father’s dogs. Her mum would have been horrified had she known of her daughter’s introduction to greyhounds but it was an introduction to a long involvement Club.

Her future mother-in-law, Emily helped with the kiosk and her sister Valda was also involved in the fund raising. Their contribution was significant. In the early 1960s, the Ladies Committee raised money with money from the kiosk under the stand, which served soup and rolls at the meetings to move the grandstand from the old track. They bought the lure with lucky number envelopes, and chook and beer raffles. The kiosk also supported the volunteer effort when the ladies cooked for the volunteers working on the track while the kids played there.

In 1971, the plans for the new Sale complex went on the drawing board for the first time, some 11 years prior to the tracks opening. It was obviously a time of frustration that saw the end of Dave Gault's 13 year reign as President. Gault wanted a circular track like the Gabba in Brisbane and also like the one at Sandown. His domination of the Club meant that this was the proposal that went to the Board where it was rejected. At the instigation of the Board, Don, Noel Banks and Ned Wallish modified the plan while Dave was away. Yvonne remembers standing out on the track while they took measurements for the new proposal of a U-shaped track. The plan they drew up was accepted.

This meant there were considerable delays in the building of the new track. The "Gippsland Times" reported in 1975 that the track would cost \$90,000 with racing to commence in early 1976 whilst a lift out supplement in the Greyhound Weekly dated 14th June 1979 forecast the opening meeting to be in December 1979. The new track did eventually open on 19th June 1982. Yvonne remembers the current track opening on 19th June 1982 when a record crowd of 2000 was there to see Club President Peter Papworth hand scissors to Sports Minister Nipper Trezise to cut the ribbon opening the new track. Originally budgeted to cost \$116,000, the new track was completed at a cost of \$500,000. Control Board Chairman, Bill Crowley rated the facilities as the best outside the metropolitan area.

Local Member Tom Wallace MLA, Sports Minister Trezise and President Peter Papworth at the opening of the new complex in 1972 picture about here

Yvonne's husband Don was Vice-President in 1984 when negotiations began with Control Board the continuing viability of the club. Around this time, Control Board Chairman, Brian Halpin gave the Club two, three-month reviews with a view to

closing it or amalgamating it with Traralgon because they could not get a bookie on track. The club enlisted the services of a 90 year-old retired bookie, Joe Price, and somehow the Club survived. Don was very proud of his life membership, his Trainer of the Year Award in 1976, opening the new track and his record 33 winners in one year on the Sale track in a year when he had 64 winners all up.

The popularity of greyhound racing continued to decline in the eighties and despite great enthusiasm and hard work by the Committees of the time, crowds reduced significantly. On course revenue was crucial to the Club's finances and to the Committees credit they were not frightened to try different avenues increase crowds and to raise money. Bingo commenced at Sale greyhounds and continues today with the Club having the best bingo following in the area. There was experimentation with afternoon racing and eventually the Sale Club became the first to race in the Saturday twilight timeslot, a radical move in an endeavour to gain TAB coverage. Sale was also the first Club to conduct Sunday twilights. A complete rebuild of the track and facilities was conducted in 1979 at the cost of \$250,000 and the club raced successfully on that complex until moving to the current site also located on the showgrounds in 1982.

Racing commenced at the present complex on the 19th June 1982. Local greyhound, "Southern Hunter" trained at Sale by Dennis Sweeney fittingly won the first race conducted at the new track. Development of the complex has been ongoing since this time and the current venue stands as a monument to the efforts and initiatives of past and present Committee and Management. The club has continued to be innovative and progressive in its approach. Free admission to the track for all meetings was introduced in the mid-eighties, the first time a Club from any code had offered permanent free admission.

In the early 1990s, the single most important decision for the Sale Club was made. With all Victorian Clubs being asked to consider installing poker machines, only Sale and Sandown took up the challenge. In early 2000, the Club took over the running of the Dog and Lure Restaurant, and the 50 full time and part time staff employed there. The opening of the gaming room in July 1993 with 30 machines (now 70) has provided the funding and impetus for the Club to be able to provide patrons with a facility described in the Metropolitan press as "The Moonee Valley of Greyhound

Racing". With the racing and gaming areas complimented by a modern on-site restaurant and extensive asphalted and landscaped areas, tangible proof of the benefits of diversifying from the core racing product are seen. From a racing viewpoint, the change to 630m for the 2001 Sale Cup and a first prize of \$20,000 was a significant milestone.

The constant battle to survive was now turned around, as the Pokies were a great help with the finances. Now a total of 60 full time, part time and casual employees are employed each week at Sale Greyhounds with Trainers embracing the change to the present racetrack. A glance through the honour roll of the Sale Cup shows names like "Chariot Supreme", "Malawi's Prince", "Wylie Boy", "Awesome Assassin" and "Brookside Bear". The seemingly bold move in 2001 to run the Sale Cup over the 630m journey, with a first prize of \$20,000, produced an outstanding result with brilliant front running stayer "Bentley Babe", etching her name on the Cup Honour role. In a lead up event to the Cup, top class Sydney Stayer "Restless Stan" deposed "Awesome Assassin" as the 630m record holder lowering the time standard from 36.27 to a staggering 35.96 seconds.

A major upgrade of the venue took place in 1998 and then the racetrack itself was completely rebuilt in 2004. Following a fire in the grandstand in 2004 extensive renovations took place and in 2006 another major refurbishment of the Tabaret was completed. The works further enhanced the Sale Greyhound Clubs reputation as one of the most progressive racing facilities in Australia.

MANAGEMENT:

PRESIDENT

John Waugh

GENERAL MANAGER

Robert Cherry

VICE PRESIDENTS

Les Hughes

Gary Roberts

COMMITTEE

RACING MANAGER

Moyle Shimmin
Graeme Gieschen
Heather Harper
Ron Healey
Gary Love
John Elston
John Musselwhite
Leigh Jennings

Des Dooley

BROADCASTER
Mr. P. Eustace
(30 years of service)

Sandown

In 1934 a number of local greyhound owners formed the Springvale and District Coursing Club. The first meeting of this Club was held in September on Show Day on James Young's land in Springvale Road. Despite somebody stealing the hares two days before, it was a decided success with 250 spectators watching 68 dogs running nine races over a straight track of 250 yards.

The Club folded when Roy Maidment organized the Sandown Greyhound Racing and Coursing Club with a Committee connected with the Victorian National Coursing Association. The Secretary was Jack McKenna, who had successfully organized (Plumpton/live hare/open field) coursing at Tatura. McKenna recalled that he and Roy Maidment decided to establish the Sandown Company in 1933 to promote both Plumpton Coursing and Speed Coursing (Track) behind the pacemaker.

National Coursing Association of Victoria stalwarts, C. J. Stewart (Chairman), Bob Cooper, Chris Flint, Fred Callil, Archie Pyke, Eric Herbert, John Bennett and Pat Killeen, with McKenna as Secretary set up a proprietary partnership named Sandown Park Coursing Club. While the original intention appears to have been to establish National Coursing Association of Victoria influence in the rising sport of tin hare racing, the founders established a separate legal entity thinking that governance by true coursing men would be sufficient to maintain NCAV influence. Ironically, this mistake was to dog NCAV efforts to play a role in tin hare racing until the mid-1950s. They leased the old Sandown racecourse, where metropolitan horse racing is now conducted by the Melbourne Racing Club, for £150 (\$11,000) a year. A Speed Coursing racetrack and a Plumpton coursing field were constructed in 1935 with Speed Coursing commencing in September 1935 and Plumpton coursing starting in 1936. However, an uncontrollable germ in the ground killed so many of the hares that it became very difficult for open field coursing to continue.

Insert a picture of Maidment and McKenna here?

The early history of track racing at Sandown was dogged by a long dispute with the NCAV involving times for scheduling meetings. The NCA had given Napier Park and Maribyrnong permission to race on.... and steadfastly refused permission for

Sandown, White City or Gracedale to race at night. In theory, this would have effectively given immunity from competition to the Essendon (Napier Park) and Maribyrnong Clubs in terms of night racing, except that White City and Gracedale ignored the NCA ruling. Sandown however, abided by the NCA ruling, racing during the day on Tuesdays. Secretary Jack McKenna argued over many years that Sandown Park should be permitted to operate under lights on any night it chose. He objected strongly to Sandown Park being excluded from the weekly night racing recommendation suggesting that Sandown and Gracedale Park (where City Hall is now located on Springvale Road) alternate on a weekly basis. Sandown continued to race during the daytime until the 1950s when non-proprietary racing came in.

Two views of the original "Sandown" tracks about here.

On the left is a close up of the original horseshoe Speed Coursing track on the now Sandown racecourse. On the right a high elevation shot showing the site across Dandenong Road, which would become the home of the NCA, then later the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club.

Daylight Speed Coursing continued at the Sandown track until April 1942 when the ground was taken over by the US army. Racing resumed in 1944. In 1947, the Club rejected an offer to purchase the 169-acre property for £40,000. By 1948, the racecourse property had been purchased by the Victorian Amateur Turf Club (Caulfield) now known as the Melbourne Racing Club. The Sandown Park Coursing Club then purchased the current 19-acre site on the other side of the railway line in Lightwood Road for £9,100. Permission to race was only granted on the condition that a straight track be installed to placate Coursing interests. The straight track cost £\$6,000 to put in and was only used once.

Early shot of the new track showing the straight track used only once about here. Lightwood Rd is in the top left of the picture

Speed Coursing began at a new track in September 1952, with the old Sandown Club continuing with open field coursing across the road until December 1955, when it went into compulsory recess following the Government Legislation abolishing proprietary clubs.

When the legislation for non-proprietary provided for two metropolitan greyhound track licences, the retiring Sandown Park Coursing Club partnership agreed to dispose of the freehold property in Lightwood Road to the newly formed non-proprietary body, the NCA of Victoria, for a bargain basement price of £75,000. This was designed to strengthen their bid for one of the two licences to be granted in January 1956.

The new club was financed by more than one hundred subscribers contributing £55,000 to the Debenture Issue. One licence was issued to the National Coursing Association of Victoria and the other to the “Greyhound” Owners Trainers and Breeders Association (GOTBA). With conversion complete both City licences were able to commence the long awaited mechanical (Tin Hare) racing at Sandown in September 1956. The Melbourne Greyhound Racing Association (GOTBA licence) continued to race at Sandown until its own ground, at the site of the North Melbourne Football Ground, was completed in October 1957.

Early Shot of the new track showing the straight track used only once. Lightwood Rd is in the top left of the picture

Track developments at Sandown: Lightwood Rd is running across the right hand corner of the picture.

On legal advice, The NCA of Victoria was now divided into two separate companies. A new company, named simply, The National Coursing Association (NCA) was formed to control track racing at Sandown while the Executive the National Coursing Association of Victoria (NCA of Victoria) would conduct and control open field coursing. Under Chairman Jack Kelly, a new Directorate of true “Plumpton” men was set about the task of sending greyhound racing into a new era at Sandown.

But over time, the President of the NCA of Victoria, Sylvester Doyle who had moved from the original Sandown Directorate (1956) to its administration (1956-59) became concerned that the changing structure of the Directorship was weakening the influence of the NCA of Victoria at Sandown. Matters came to a head when Jack

McKenna (Sandown Secretary from 1956-1970), apparently at the instruction of Government Undersecretary John V. Dillon (there was no Minister for Sport at this time) and Committee newcomer Henry Harrison (from 1959-1987), submitted the annual renewal of the Sandown racing license in the name of National Coursing Association omitting the crucial "of Victoria". This effectively transferred the racing license to Sandown and freed the Sandown Club from the influence of the National Coursing Association of Victoria. This led to an acrimonious split and so much bitterness between the two bodies and the divide between supporters of the new "tin hare" and the traditional and time honored "Plumpton" deepened. It certainly didn't improve relations between Doyle and Harrison as Doyle would have to watch the increasing power of Harrison and Sandown and the slow but inevitable decline of his beloved NCA. Eventually, it was agreed that 5% of the Sandown gate takings would go to the NCA of Victoria as a form of compensation.

Insert a picture of Doyle, Dillon and Harrison about here?

McKenna, Harrison and (later Sir John) Dillon were instrumental in the early development of the club. Heavy usage of the original grass surface contributed to maintenance difficulties and resulted in the decision to change over to a sand track in 1964. Here, it was a fairly common, but well protected, practice in the industry for trainers to break into tracks and have a kill on the track. Although clearly outlawed, this practice was designed to tease the dogs and make them run faster on race night. Here scratch marks were often visible on tracks and sometimes the body of the dead rabbit was also thrown over fences. Folklore says that one trainer was caught in the act before the rabbit was killed. He quickly threw the rabbit and then the dog over the fence and escaped. However, the dog had a good memory. Leading its race later in the week, it reached the point where the rabbit had gone over the fence. It swerved off course, jumped the fence and shot off down the road looking for another rabbit.

In such days it was also common to put an animal, often a possum in a sack for some time prior to a trial. The sometimes-empty sack was then attached to the arm for the time trials. After the time, trial the dog would chew on the sack and associate the smell of the sack with the lure, making it more willing to chase. Trainers were often very inventive in using teasers. One trainer used his wife's wig, allowing the dogs to chew on the wig at the end of a trial. A short time later, he and his wife were dressed,

she in her wig, to go to a party. Intentionally or otherwise, he asked her to feed the greyhound before they left. The greyhound barrelled the poor woman and began re-acquainting itself with the wig. History records no more. In latter years, the Rules of Greyhound Racing were clearly changed to prohibit these practices and severely deal with any offenders.

Commented [1]:
Ha, great stories – really add colour to a historical account!

In 1964 Henry Harrison, who made a fortune manufacturing Tool Boxes in his Richmond factory, became the Chairman of Directors, a position he would relish and safeguard for the next 23 years. Henry was a very determined man and held in great esteem by the club, his portrait holding pride of place in the Sandown Board room and also in the living room of current chairman and son-in-law Geoff Dawson. After intense lobbying from Harrison and with Dillon's help, the Bolte Government finally passed a Bill permitting the newly formed Totalizator Agency Board (TAB or off course tote) to operate on greyhound racing and TAB betting began at the Sandown meeting on 3rd March 1966. If Harrison were remembered for nothing else, this was a major achievement. The advent of TAB privileges allowed for real growth in the Club's finances and would become one of the most significant milestones in the history of all clubs who were able to operate an off-course tote.

Before that, it was tough going. In the early days, money was often so short that McKenna would often throw bills in the air and say, "Catch three" and those would be the ones that were paid. Stake money which in the 1940s was \$400 (\$22,800) a meeting, had become \$4,000 (\$96,000) by the late 1960s. By 1967, attendances were up 29 percent on the previous twelve months, on course tote turnover had increased by 35 percent and bookmakers turnover had grown by 20 percent. TAB turnover at Sandown alone had increased by \$1.8 million in a comparable period of only ten months, stakes increased by 46 percent and many thousands of dollars were being spent on improvements and amenities.

The twenty years between mid 1960s and the mid 1980s have been described as the halcyon days of Sandown when Harrison's autocratic but entrepreneurial Chairmanship (from 1964 to 1987) drove the club forward. For Thursday night was 'pay night' and with the extension of drinking hours from 6 to 10 o'clock in February 1966, Sandown was one of few places in Melbourne where workers could get a drink

and also bet late at night. With up to 80 bookmakers operating, these were days when weekly crowds of 5000 would pay a \$5 (\$33) entrance fee and more than 10,000 would witness the running of the Melbourne Cup. In those days, there were three betting rings, one in the bar, the main ring and one under the stand behind the very old on-course totalisator building. The rings were often so crowded that the bookies had runners who were ready to lay off bets when the bookies gave the sign. The crowding was such that there were often fights over someone taking a good price on a dog before the owner could get to the bookie to place a bet.

These were the days of private trials when a dog would be trailed without anyone other than the owner, the lure driver and the starter being present. This was designed to keep the dog's form a secret. However, the professional gamblers were often able to work out the times. Often the trials would be watched from the houses across the road. The gamblers would arrange for the owners of the houses to let them into the roof and then lift the roof tiles and use their binoculars and time the dogs, or perhaps Joe Perkins would go in and talk to Jack Malone, the ground foreman, about the weather and accidentally watch the trials through the window. There was big money involved with some bookmakers holding up to \$100,000 (\$675,000) per night, weekly bookmaker holdings of \$2.5m (\$16m) were closer to the true amount held as the "officially" returned figures which were traditionally "trimmed" by the bookies to avoid paying turnover tax.

Harrison ruled with an iron fist and only daughter Loretta often took an active interest in running the club. It was 'H's' way or no way and you were in or you were out with Henry. His Directorate and staff rigidly toed the line and his by-line of "ya back em or ya sack em" prevailed without question. This did not endear him to many of the rank and file owners and trainers and there was seemingly incessant whingeing about his style and vision for greyhound racing. Sandown became known as Henry's Club rather than an asset of a wider greyhound industry. Harrison was elected democratically by the members, and membership of the Club was always open but many remember membership application forms being notoriously difficult to obtain, meaning membership was controlled much as Capron was doing at Geelong.

Harrison Photo here

Through the '70s and '80s Ron Snell was the Club accountant (1970-1988) and Marg Scarlett was the public face of Sandown (1975-1988). Henry strongly backed both of his senior managers using immaculately presented Marg Scarlett to promote the club. Scarlett came to personify the glitz and glamour and the strong celebrity status associated with major Sandown events. Most famously, Hollywood stars Elke Sommer, Linda Day George and Robert Stack were "imported" to promote the Club's feature event the Melbourne Cup. A promising young golfer named Greg Norman was present at the Cup. While very successful from an image perspective, these promotions were not universally well received and in particular the rank and file began to circulate scurrilous rumours about the cost of such promotions. Harrison was regularly at odds with participants who wanted Club funds to be put into prize money. In 1981, to celebrate their twenty-fifth anniversary, Sandown purchased a silver Mercedes-Benz as a lucky patron prize. After racing ace Peter Brock pulled out the winning ticket, the "Sandown way" again came under fire as being aloof and removed from the true greyhound world. Harrison would retort that he had Sandown on the front page of the Sun and his strategy provided greyhounds with unprecedented publicity.

With exponential growth of patron numbers and with the Sandown car park always full, the City of Springvale was forced to begin policing parking restrictions in streets surrounding the course. In addition to race nights, the trials occurred on Tuesday nights between the hours of 6pm and midnight but many sessions extended into the early hours of the next day. Trial fees, attendance money, bookmaker fees, catering and beverage turnovers all provided Sandown with a substantial cash flow that boosted the substantial on-course turnovers and profits.

However viewing comforts for patrons were poor. Sections of the "grandstand" which had been rolled across from the Sandown racecourse on the other side of the railway line in the late 1950s were primitive and the betting ring was no more than a covered shed, open to the north to give punters direct access to the track. The Club bar (now the Tabaret) was the second largest "night bar" in Melbourne often requiring over 20 "eighteens" (gallon drums) each Thursday night to quench the thirst of beer drinkers. At the other end of the track, McKenna Hall was constructed in 1970 to provide (non-drinking) patrons with a reasonable food and beverage environment. A western

section of McKenna Hall was set aside for the Sandown Committee and special guests. Ann McKenna, Jack's widow was the nightly hostess of the room and Bill Dempsey the ever-busy barman. Long standing club employee Lorraine Dagg remembers poker games at \$1000 (\$5500) a card being played in the Boardroom. In 1992 and in tighter times, McKenna Hall was converted into a track maintenance and veterinary clinic facility run by Dr Jim Gannon.

A badly needed grandstand was delayed primarily because the Government's Development Board rules only allowed for the funding of building on Crown, land. For most clubs, this was not an issue but Sandown was a freehold property purchased by the club in 1957. However, in what later proved to be a masterpiece of financial and political manoeuvring, Henry Harrison repeatedly refused to cede the Sandown freehold back to the Government. Development Board funds from TAB turnovers and a general agreement saw the bulk of these allocated equally between the Sandown and the MGRA but while MGRA, located on Crown land at Olympic Park, was able to spend the money on capital works, Sandown was not. Harrison however did a deal with Bill Conroy, the Chairman of the MGRA to first allow for all of the metropolitan Development funds to go to the MGRA to build their grandstand in 1979. The stand would also encircle a warm up track to impress International Olympic Committee delegates as part of Sports Minister Brian Dixon's (unsuccessful) 1988 Olympic Games bid for Melbourne. The Harrison/Conroy deal effectively used funds from the racing industry to support the Olympic bid. Once the deal was signed, Harrison called in some political favours. With some re-arrangement of the Sandown constitution Harrison was able to side step the Crown land restrictions and by early 1980, the Harrison/Conroy arrangement allowed for all of the metropolitan Development Board funds to be used to build Sandown's new grandstand. The structure was originally designed to hold 15,000 patrons—a figure based on the heady days of the 1970s with significant bookmaker, catering and attendance income. But with TAB and off course betting growing due to SKY coverage there was a marked reduction in attendance figures and the size of the stand had to be reduced to hold 5000. The new grandstand opened in lavish style on July 6th 1986. Sunday markets were held in the car park under the new grandstand and four sessions of bingo were successfully held in McKenna Hall until the arrival of the Tabaret and the non-smoking bans.

Insert a grandstand picture about here?

The Harrison's desire for Sandown to be promoted as the "best of the best" continued but by 1988, the Club had overspent their grandstand budget by about \$1m, arguably as a result of delays caused by the Builders Labours Federation (BLF). Ultimately, this led to a number of serious factors conspiring against the Club's future. TAB off-course betting fuelled by direct SKY Channel television broadcasts into pubs and clubs continued to cut on-course attendance figures. Drink driving laws and the vigilance of the local police had deterred the drinking punter. Furthermore, the huge growth in the off-course TAB had eroded the number of larger bettors transacting with bookmakers. This build up of factors immediately before the 1988 stock market crash, plunged Sandown into deep financial trouble. With bridging finance attracting 22% in interest rates, the Club fell into financial freefall with debts passing \$2m (\$3.7m). To this day Board member Ray Byron maintains the club was not in trouble and that to suggest so is a slight to the financial management skills of the Board.

By 1987 Harrison, only the third Chairman of Directors in the Club's history, was 72, and under Corporations Law required to attain 75% of the membership vote to be re-elected as a Board member. This gave those with long memories the chance to cut down a tall poppy and cut him down they did. In a strange irony, Harrison's son-in-law Geoff Dawson, a Club Director since 1979, became the Club's fourth Chairman in 1987. Geoff originally worked as an apprentice butcher after he left school. But he also worked part-time for a bookmaker behind a funeral parlour opposite the town hall in Bridge Rd. On Harrison's advice he chose to with his apprenticeship rather than the bookie until he married Lexie Harrison.

Initially regarded by many as simply a proxy for Henry, Dawson did not find things easy in his new role. In a torrid initiation, he found the Club's financial crisis made daily newspaper headlines amid allegations of corruption and financial mismanagement. Ron Snell and Margaret Scarlett both left Sandown, long serving Directors were ousted and a new broom swept into Sandown. When "rookie" CEO John Stephens arrived in November 1988, the Club was in chaos and the Greyhound Racing Control Board (GRCB) had appointed an administrator to take control of the Club. In a conciliation process facilitated by local MP, and later GRV President, Jan Wilson, Dawson's "new broom" Directorate argued for time. It was agreed that

GRCB Assistant Secretary Hec Caruana would join Stephens in the early reconstruction of the Club's management structures. Within a year, a Development Board loan was converted to a grant and a further \$700,000 in previously unclaimed grandstand expenses allowed the Club to return a profit. From then on the Dawson/Stephens partnership proved fruitful and Dawson's contribution to Sandown may be judged by his continuous Chairmanship since 1987.

In 1990, Sandown moved to GRCB central grading and in 1992 a Tabaret gaming facility was established at Sandown in partnership with the MGRA. The original budget of \$460,000 to refurbish the Club bar ballooned out to \$1.2 million and the relationship between Sandown and the MGRA deteriorated when Sandown required lease payments and compensation for setting up the facility. But these feelings quickly dissipated when the Tabaret began creating strong cash flows for both Clubs. A total refurbishment of Sandown boasting a new kennel complex (1995), new track (1996), Tabaret (1992), Grandstand (1986) and Veterinary facility (1994) was opened by the Hon Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing, Mr. Tom Reynolds on the 29th of February 1996. The construction of a new track, with a XXXm to run to the first turn eliminated the infamous 'demolition derby' of first turn interference at the old track and Sandown gained a reputation as a world class greyhound racing facility. By introducing new concepts to racing such as a prelude system for the Melbourne Cup, the Damsel's Dash and match racing, Sandown aligned with the needs of industry participants. On GRCB Chairman Bill Collins' suggestion that the industry needed a signature race, Sandown ran with the idea formulating the TOPGUN as the "Cox Plate" of greyhound racing. In 1997 Dawson, Stephens and NCA CEO Gavin Fitzpatrick travelled to the UK and USA to organise the internationalisation of the TOPGUN. This led to representation from England, Ireland and the USA in the race and up to 150 international guests attending to witness the race. By the end of 2000, Sandown was financially strong and Stephens departed taking up the position of CEO at Greyhound Racing Victoria.

Stephens replacement was Jeff Davies a former 1980s greyhound bookmaker and since a Sports Management Consultant. Davies worked hard to progress the racing program at Sandown and events such as the Lizrene Classic and Sapphire Crown developed in his time. Current CEO Matt Corby (since 2004) has overseen the latest

refurbishment of the Tabaret and plans are in place for a grandstand update in the coming years.

The current CEO, Matt Corby, was appointed in 2004 having held a marketing role with the Club for the two years previous. It had been the shared view of Davies and Corby that, despite the difficulties that racing Clubs were experiencing in the modern era in relation to attracting on-course patronage, there was still a viable opportunity for promoting the race night offer to social and dining patrons. Corby continued to develop a more aggressive marketing philosophy for the Club in addition to streamlining many of the processes within the business.

In 2006, long serving Director Geoff Dawson was awarded the Ken Carr medal for his services to the industry.

Melbourne Cup winners?

Sandown Cup winners

1957 Orialta, 1959 Woodford Chief, 1961 Plunkett's Present, 1963 Briar View, 1964 Haleka Jewel, 1965 Venetian Court 1966 Fawn Scout 1967 Charlie Lee 1968 Sprite of Egypt 1969 Local Blend, 1970 Paul's Thunder, 1971 Paul's Thunder, 1972 Lizrene, 1973 Lizrene, 1974 Corcoran 1975 Tammy Shanta, 1976 Brindle Norma, 1977 Rani's Copy, 1978 Kawati Boy, 1979 Miss Tema, 1980 Wynlee Wonder, 1981 Bianca Lee, 1982 Status Supreme, 1983 Lead Role, 1984 Raurimu, 1985 Tashla, 1986 Bold Trease, 1987 Bold Trease, 1988 Bold Trease, 1989 Bold Trease, 1990 Western Creole, 1991 Pixie Eyes, 1992 Village Stomper, 1993 Eliza Dylan, 1994 Top Sovereign, 1995 Keon Star, 1996 Boronia Blossom, 1997 Tonight's Wish, 1998 Red Mystique, 1999 Smart Attitude, 2000 Osti's Joker, 2001 Bentley Babe, 2002 Jennev, 2003 Arvo's Junior, 2004 Proven Lethal, 2005 Best Quoted.

Chairman	Administrators
1956-1959 J.F. Kelly 1959-1964 E.C. Herbert 1964-1987 H. Harrison 1987- G.T. Dawson	1956-1970 J. McKenna 1956-1959 S.A. Doyle 1969-1972 G. Jones 1970-1988 R.J. Snell 1972-1975 T.J. Hunt 1975-1988 M.J. Scarlet 1988-2000 J.R. Stephens 2001-2004 J.L. Davies 2005- M.P. Corby

Committee	Committee
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1956-1959	J.F. Kelly	1965-1975	G.A. Brickell
1956-1960	C.H. Buchanan	1969-2000	P.M. Hogan
1956-1959	J.H. Baines	1970-1988	R. Jennings
1956-1969	E.C. Herbert	1975-1978	D.E. Dalton
1956-1956	S.A. Doyle	1978-1988	A.W. Austen
1956-1957	W.G. McKenzie	1979-	G.T. Dawson
1956-1961	P.J. Regan	1980-1998	R.E. Byron
1956-1960	R. Maidment	1981-1989	E.J. Logan
1957-1980	A.C. Ralston	1987-1988	L.J. Dickson
1957-1963	B. Smith	1988-	M. Gibilisco
1959-1970	A.J. Glanfield	1988-	D. Gleeson
1959-1987	H. Harrison	1988-2001	R.S. Smith
1960-1964	G.H. Leverett	1989-1992	D.L. Holmes
1960-1963	K.J. McClounan	1989-	R.J. McCurdy
1962-1979	J.W. Biddington	1992-2003	C.J. Diamond
1963-1981	L.J. Dickson	1999-2000	R.M. Nestor
1964-1966	G.V. Norman	2001-	N.J. Brown
1964-1988	K. Bravo	2003	P.E. Rowell

SHEPPARTON

Records indicate that Plumpton coursing was conducted in the Shepparton area as far back as 1916. In 1939, leading local trainer, the late Roy Pyke who trained four winners and his brother Leckie trained two on the eight-event card and then four winners from the five-event final coursing meeting at Tatura. Pike also trained the mighty “Kreuger” who won the 1934 Derby at Tatura, the 1934 Waterloo Cup at Geelong and the 1935 Waterloo Cup at Benalla.

The first Speed Coursing meeting conducted in Shepparton was at Deakin Reserve, now the showpiece of Goulburn Valley football. Two races were conducted on a carnival night with the first race taken out by the Roy Pike trained “Some Gag”. Speed Coursing behind a pacemaker commenced at the Shepparton Showgrounds in 1937. Kelvin Tremellen remembers the track at the showgrounds. It was a pear-shaped circular track with a 275 yard straight that finished by a long-gone Pepper tree. When Shepparton became a city in 1948, greyhound racing was transferred to Tatura as betting in cities on anything other than horses was illegal under legislation. Tremellen also remembers time spent at Tatura during the late 1940s and early 1950s when the greyhound track was on the inside of the Plumpton enclosure. The Club ran a bus from Shepparton over to Tatura for patrons but it was still too far for many punters. Enthusiasts from that era remember the efforts of local stars such as “Don’t Enquire”, owned and trained by Bob Crawford who was undefeated on the showgrounds track; “Saddleback” and “Cupford” who won numerous races and “Bungana” a champion hurdler for local mentor the late Mick Moylan.

Local owners and trainers made their mark on the Plumpton events. The Young brothers from Tatura won the Derby in 1935 with Asaland. Ted Ansell also won the Derby at Tatura in 1953 with Count Cashiel, trained by Les Mc Kellar. Shepparton owners and trainers were fortunate to have the Plumpton at both Tatura and Benalla where the Waterloo Cups, Derby and Oaks events were regularly held.

Over the years, greyhound racing in the Shepparton district has produced some great administrators with the late Jack McKenna, Secretary of the Tatura Plumpton Club and later at Sandown Park possibly the best known. In late 1972, the Greyhound Racing Club moved to the Shepparton Showgrounds with a high-speed 440m

horseshoe track featuring wide turns and a 720m circumference. In those days, there was no off course TAB betting so 12 bookies accommodating the punters. With the Showgrounds already the home for the Shepparton Trotting Club, the cost of establishing the venue for greyhound racing was minimal and a kennel block was the only major construction work that was required. With huge input from working bees organised by the Committee, it cost a mere \$40,000 to re-establish greyhound racing in the Goulburn Valley.

On the 11th January 1973, Mr Peter Ross-Edwards, Victorian leader of the National Party, officially opened the new track. Mr Ross-Edwards remained as Club Patron for many years. A huge crowd attended the opening night with the Olympic Park Grade 2 being the feature event on the card. City superstar “Half Your Luck” was the main attraction on the program but for once he had his colours lowered by the Buck Buchanan trained “Mighty Thunder” who established a track record of 25.50 secs. By the time racing had moved from the showgrounds to Kialla in 2005, the track record had been lowered by some twenty lengths with the mighty “Brett Lee” holding the track record of 24.16 secs. The opening event of opening night “The Wangaratta Juvenile Stakes” over 440m was taken out by the by the W. Davey’s trained “True Blue” who picked up the \$65 winner’s cheque and a trophy. In the first year of racing, nineteen bookmakers operated on local and interstate meetings, a real indication of the halcyon days of greyhound racing in the early seventies.

The track re-opening program in 1973 listed the President as Ken Pewtress, Vice Presidents as Reg Roscoe and Vic Brett and the Secretary as Terry Tremellen. Vic Brett later became a long serving Secretary of the Club until 1997 whilst Terry Tremellen is still a Committee member of the Club today. The Shepparton Veterinary Clinic was in charge on the opening night and that group still provides the race night veterinary service to the Club today. In those early days, several well-known families were active in local greyhound racing, most noticeably the Tremellen family who are still active today.

Insert the Tremellen family photo about here

The Pyke family, still represented by Leckie Pyke was another major player and in more recent years Tony McGrath led the Club with great support from his wife,

Sandra. Tony was on the Committee for 30 years from 1975, 13 of them as President. He remembers the times at the show grounds when the Board did not allow money to be provided for clubs that were not on Crown land. As a result, the Club had to borrow money and get big numbers at working bees to complete such tasks as building the cafeteria that Tony remembers as a major step forward for the Club.

Pride of place amongst Shepparton greyhounds goes to Doug and Lorraine Ferremi's Hall of Fame Inductee "Highly Blessed". During the 1990's, "Highly Blessed" won virtually every major Group race in Australia and earned career prize money of \$294,565. The World Greyhound Federation has voted "Highly Blessed" as one of the world's best eight greyhounds and she is one of only two Australian greyhounds to be selected in the All World Greyhound Field.

Insert Lorraine Ferremi with Champion Highly Blessed about here

Another local star was Roz Gilmore's "Thorgil Magic". Quick out of the boxes, "Thorgil Magic" won the Geelong Winter Cup of 1986 and the Shepparton Cup in 1985 and 1986, breaking the track record in 1986.

*Insert Picture of **Thorgil** Magic about here*

Over the past decade, the Shepparton Cup has normally been conducted during November and has provided a springboard for dogs going on to race in Group 1 races in the city. It has been an important prelude to Sandown's premier event the rich, Group One Melbourne Cup series. Melbourne Cup winners "Fair Sentence", "Hua", "Highly Blessed", "Major Giant", "Fair Sentence" and "City Blitz" were some of the more notable greyhounds to race well in the Shepparton Cup before their giant killing performances in the city. The 1996 Shepparton Cup winner "Bahama Image" went on to win the Group One Golden Easter Egg at Wentworth Park, Sydney the next year.

With GRV not prepared to improve the aging infrastructure at the Agricultural Society's showgrounds, another shift in venue came about with the Greyhounds moving to new premises on Crown land at Kialla in 2005. GRV had joined with the City of Greater Shepparton and the State Government to finance a new track and facilities at Kialla, the home of Shepparton Harness racing. The Council were keen for the greyhounds to move to Kialla to establish a multipurpose precinct for both

harness and greyhound racing, while allowing for development of the old showgrounds site for inner city recreational purposes.

During this time the Club experimented with the new synthetic track surface ProRide, which had been successfully used for gallops and was now installed at Kialla.

Shepparton was the first greyhound track in the world to use the surface. The initial response to the new track was extremely favourable with local trainers Doug Feremi and Jim Auld having early winners. "It was bloody perfect the first few races on Saturday before the heat got to it," Feremi was quoted in the Shepparton News.

Insert ProRide pictures about here

But by April 2006, it became clear that the new surface was extremely temperature sensitive, melting in the heat and freezing in the cold. It cost some \$0.25m to dig up the synthetic surface and install a conventional sand and clay track. The Club went into recess during this process. However, these conventional surfaces require large amounts of water and with increasing water restrictions becoming a fact of life, it may be that the ProRide experiment at Shepparton will be the way of the future.

PAST PRESIDENTS

Ken Pewtress	Tony McGrath
Kelvin Trickey	Vicki Hope
Ross Tremellen	
Gerry Moylon	

TRARALGON

Greyhound racing was originally conducted at the old track known as the Park Lane track by the Traralgon South Racing Club. It was a proprietary track that used a pacemaker and legend has it that it was known for having a one eyed judge. There was a straight 100 yard track and a U-shaped 400 yard track and dogs wore leather muzzles. Helen Pattle remembers first watching the dogs race at Park Lane through a hole in the fence after the Second World War. There wasn't much to do in been in those days in Traralgon and she so she decided to pay to get a closer look. This began a fifty years in the greyhound business as a successful owner and trainer.

Helen and her husband Alan regularly went to Parklane in 1946 and 1947. Allen worked at APM and they were living in a condemned house in Traralgon. Housing was short and you had to have two children before you could get a commission house. Later when they had more children they were able to move into a commission house, which she has lived for the last 50 years.

Helen specialized in training “giveaways”, dogs no one wanted anymore and which were often mistreated. This may have been one of the reasons for her success as a trainer. One of the dogs that she was given, Dark Guinness, had just lost a race and the owner was belting it after the race. He offered the dog to Helen. At first, the dog would not come out of the kennel so she sat in the kennel with the dog and talked to it until it came out and she could begin training it. The dog proved to be a winner.

Her dogs were often a cut above the competition. One night, Helen left a dog in her car after the race. In those days, the cars were all parked along the edge of track and naturally Helen had left the windows down. When the next race went past, the dog jumped out the window, ran onto the track, and despite having already run once, was able to overtake all the other dogs and win the race. The stewards were not impressed but Helen escaped with a caution.

Club stalwart and font of greyhound wisdom, Jack Callaghan believes that women are more patient with the dogs and this means that they are more successful. He also

believes that a nervous owner transmits nervousness down the lead to a dog making the dog nervous and not able to run at its best. Jack had a good way of judging which dog would win the race, "the one leading the trainer out". This seemed to imply that the dog had been given something to make it rather more active. Both Helen and Jack remember owners setting dogs up to win or lose races.

In 1936, Jack's dad had a dog, called Rory's Boy, which had been specially prepared for a race at Traralgon. Often this would involve having a dog lose a series of races and then entering it when it was a very good chance of winning. Such a dog would often get good odds with the bookies and the owner, presumably the only one knowing the dog had been specially prepared, would back the dog at good odds. Unfortunately, someone had beaten Jack's dad for the odds with a big punt and the odds had suddenly come down. Jack remembers his father tightening the strap on the dog's muzzle so tightly that the dog choked and fell over after the first 100 yards. His dad got a six month suspension and Jack, who was only a boy at the time was very dark on him for he did. Undeterred by the suspension, Jack's dad continued to race at Sale.

The old track was at Parklane, and either did not have a licence or lost it, had become stagnant and it was felt there was a need for another track in Traralgon. There had always been good relations with Sale and Warragul so the idea of a new track in Traralgon was agreed to be a good idea for greyhound racing in the Valley. In addition, there was only horse racing at Glenview Park. However, the Shire was keen to have all three codes sharing the same ground. When the track was first built it was out in the sticks but today it has been caught up in the urban expansion of Traralgon and like a number of other clubs now occupies expensive urban land.

Barry Longmore's dad, Leo dad had raced greyhounds all his life. Leo's boss Brian Barry who owned an engineering company and very influential in the town was convinced to support the establishment of the new club. Brian was also friends with Don Cooper the Shire engineer who became a great supporter coming to the early committee meetings that were often held in people's homes. Brian Barry became the

first President of the new club and was instrumental in organizing Shire support. Interestingly, neither Brian nor Don ever owned dogs.

Barry recalls there was a lot of hard work and many trips to the city being involved in getting the licence. Brian Barry provided the workshop where all the railings were made and when there was no work to be done, greyhound work took precedence. Helen Pattle worked long and hard in those early days and her husband, Alan supplied timber that went into the grandstand. It is now part of history that when the old town hall was knocked down, the bricks were cleaned by the greyhound people and used to build the kennels.

The new greyhound racing circuit was designed to provide two circular ends with initial racing distances being over 513 metres and 730 metres. A mechanical lure is driven by an electric motor remotely controlled from the top floor of the judge's tower. The Kennel House at the northern end of the Complex is ventilated and kennel operations can be viewed by the public externally from the southern end of the building.

The inaugural Club President Brian Barry supported by a committee consisting of Leo, Barry and Peter Longmore, C.Ayres, R.Dore, W.Harrison, B.Hayes and Tony Tabone.

Relationships between the Committee and the Ladies Committee were not always harmonious. Helen Pattle was Secretary of the ladies committee that ran the canteen and sold party pies, sandwiches and soft drinks. The subcommittee was less than impressed to find that the money generated from the sales had been spent to buy a fridge to store the sandwiches. Helen attended the next committee meeting and suggested, as the committee wasn't happy with the way the decisions were being made by the ladies committee, they could make sandwiches themselves. Her point was taken. The ladies committee also used to work behind the bar but when the decision was made to pay someone to do it, the ladies committee finally disbanded.

At the start the Club conducted its race meeting on a Thursday night where a 10 race program was conducted. Initial stake money was \$150 for a graded race and \$250 for

a Special Event. The Club was serviced by 14 registered bookmakers, 11 betting on local races and 3 on Sandown.

The inaugural greyhound race meeting at the Glenview Park Racing Complex was conducted on 28th June 1973 by the Latrobe Valley Greyhound Racing Club. The Glenview Park Complex is owned by the Latrobe City and was designed and developed by the City as a centre for the racing of greyhounds, gallopers and trotters. The Mayor, Cr Cec Beaton JP opened the complex acknowledging the work of many dedicated voluntary workers. The opening event was sponsored by the Shire and was a grand occasion.

Barry Longmore estimates the first night attendance at 4000 with a great atmosphere and for some time racing on Thursday night was able to attract 4 bookies, in the betting ring was under the stand would also bet off course. Attendances were such that the club ran two bars. Then like all clubs, the numbers started to fall away until there were only 4 bookies.

Original committee member Tony Tabone remembers it as big function and that his wife, Carole, got a special hair do. Tony thinks there were 10,000 people there and that you couldn't move for bookmakers who were about 10 feet apart and "Suddenly the locals were watching the dogs at Sandown not simply listening to it on the radio". It was also the first time there were bookies betting off-course at Traralgon.

In many ways, Tony typifies the country folk who are the backbone of local racing. He only ever raced once at OP. At the time of his first and only race, Tony believed in the folk myth that dogs should not be given water on the day before they raced. He took the dog to Olympic Park in a trailer on a very hot day. The dog, the favourite, hit the wall and collapsed 10yds from the finish while 6 lengths in front. Tony was invited for a "cup of tea with the stewards" and when asked why the dog did not chase, that is failed to run a full speed for all of the race, he suggested that it might have been thirsty. History does not record the steward's reaction. He was fined \$20, which was half a weeks pay for an ETU member working at Hazelwood and never raced at Olympic Park again. It was just too expensive for the struggling country

owner with the cost of travel and the entry fees. In the days before the freeway travel was a difficult 3-4hr drive. Tony remembers getting lost at St Kilda Junction and having to ask directions to get to the Park.

He had no money on the thirsty dog believing that this “put the mozz on’ the dog. Years later, when he had a Box 1 draw in the Temlee at Broadmeadows, a race worth \$25,000 and which his dog subsequently won, he was still not going to bet.

During the drought in 2000, he had two dogs, Smurf’s Candidate and Smurf’s Explorer that won him \$75k that was then used to buy feed for the cows. In 2007, he had 41 winners with a strike rate of 18%.

In addition to the dedicated owners, trainers committee members and volunteers. The club also had its share of so-called “colourful characters” who have always represented another side of the industry. XXXX Helvey was the club steward at both Traralgon and Warragul. Later sacked from both positions, Helvey worked for the PMG’s department. In those days, the PMG was responsible for telephone services. Jack Callaghan remembers when he was on duty at the track and responsible for phoning in the betting fluctuations to the bookies at Olympic Park. At the first call of the card, the odds at country clubs would be phoned through to the city clubs where bookies would take off-course bets on country clubs. By the second call, the odds may have fallen, often in the natural course of events.

Jack remembers when he was on duty at the track and responsible for phoning in the betting fluctuations between the first and second call, to the bookies at Olympic Park. Jack was unable to make the call and because a PMG workman was at the club busy connecting a line ostensibly to phone in the results through to Adelaide. Jack checked with Club Secretary, Marg Long who said there was no meeting in Adelaide that day. The PMG workman was actually making sure that the fluctuations would not get through to Olympic Park where he had associates who were betting on the earlier and better odds. Many years later, Jack recalls with satisfaction that he was able to find another phone and make the call.

Brian Longmore remembers a small scandal when the winner of the car competition for picking 8 winners turned out to be the steward's brother in law and the steward (an ex-policeman) had doctored the results.

One of Des Carlson's early experiences was being invited to the racing at Traralgon by a friend with a friend who had six of the eight dogs in a race. And the other two dogs came second and third, leaving his friend the lucky winner.

Des had his first winner in 1949 at Kalerie Park in Wonthaggi, which was run by McKenna with his dog Alcon, which won five races in nine days. He sold this dog to Chummy Parks for £750 pounds, at a time when he was earning £5 pounds a week. He used the money to buy Pontiac and two blocks of land at Chelsea Heights for £25 that he sold a year later for £50.

Marg Thomas has been a club member for many years, on the committee for 9 1/2 years from 91 with six of those as president. The club is in financial trouble when she became president and she describes it as "dormant". She started her raffle to generate more revenue and because numbers were down was forced to cull staff. In addition the committee had to volunteer to do much of the work around the club. They bought a stud dog, which gave free services possibly from the raffle.

When trying to lift the club finances, Sam Bye introduced an auction way he auctioned anything that had been donated, stud services, break-ins, umbrellas or these were conducted after happy hour. The best effort for one of these was \$9,000 in one night. When the Traralgon hospital wanted help for the new Cancer Wing, the club put on a picnic day with a GOTBA raising \$3500 for research.

Like many clubs it has had many changes of race day and night moving from Thursday to Monday to Tuesday and then finally to Friday. This is to accommodate the complicated coordination of the club meetings across the state. The club often gets a better percentage from the off-course TAB than from the on-course betting sometimes as much \$400,000.

Marg has noticed that over the years Traralgon has been attracting bigger and better dogs. She felt it is necessary to try to attract the bigger trainers to Traralgon and sometimes trainers such as Peter Giles would race his dogs there. With many of the bigger trainers using the midweek country meetings as trial races for their dogs, it is becoming difficult for the smaller trainer. The dilemma is that the big trainers help lift the standard of racing but this makes it very difficult for the small "hobby" trainer who cannot go to midweek meetings in the city but now may run up against the bigger trainers at local venues.

In addition to putting the club on a better financial footing, Marg introduced the concept of Memorial races for life members and people who had made major contributions to the club. This ran for about four years but to Marg's disappointment now has been dropped.

Ever the innovator, Marg raised dog named Dalkeith and then donated it to the old folks hostel in Traralgon. Throughout its racing life, Dalkeith was trained by Ray and Rita Cuneen. The dog raced at Traralgon and was filmed by *A Current Affair*. From this the idea of the film was born and GRV put money into the production. After the production Dalkeith went to the old folks hostel as a pet but the GAP training scheme was in its early stages and Dalkeith killed the hostel cat and had to be moved on. The premier of the film was at a Top Gun night. The local club was disappointed that the filming had to be done in Ballarat but many of the folk from the Dalkeith time were used as extras. The film has now been shown in 29 countries and has developed a cult following in Melbourne.

Later Marg suggested that one of her dreams was that people with disabilities and the underprivileged should be able to own a dog and from this the idea of the "Great Chase" was born. Brochures were sent out to local organizations involved in the area asking if they like to run a dog. The plan was for the organization to own the dog for 12 months and get half the winnings. The famous dog Slater won \$136,000 for its owners. The scheme now involves more than a hundred organizations.

One of the big disappointments for the club as that, when Bill Collins was at GRV, the club was promised \$1.4 million to build a Tabaret but the money did not change hands because the gallops were not able to get their share. This was a disappointment has made a significant difference to the finances of the club.

In 1982 the committee resolved to change the name of the Club to the Traralgon Greyhound Racing Club and was given the opportunity to change its race night from Thursday to Friday. Additional boxes were placed at this time allowing the Club to race over 298 metres and 658 metres in addition to the 513 and 730 metres. The Friday timeslot remained until mid 1998 when 5 of Victorian provincial clubs were allocated twilight timeslots with full Sky Channel coverage.

Initially the Club conducted its race meeting in the Tuesday twilight timeslot but after 6-months changed to a Monday, as problems were apparent with both the Traralgon and Warragul Clubs, geographically closely located, racing on the same day.

The move to twilight racing with Sky Channel coverage has been significant in the progress and viability of the Club with turnover increasing by over 100%.

The Club in the past, and presently, has always been well served by voluntary workers who conduct raffles and organise social functions in order to assist the Club's financial viability.

Whilst it is not possible to list all voluntary workers who have been involved in fund raising activities special acknowledgement is made to Lorna Richards and Graham Thomas.

WANGARATTA

North East Victoria has long been steeped in greyhound racing tradition with all forms of the sport active during parts of the last century. In the period to World War II, there was racing at Wangaratta Corowa, Benalla, Wodonga, Shepparton and North Wangaratta. Owners and trainers had no trouble getting a run in those days. Coursing was also well catered for with Plumpton conducted at Albury, Mulwala, and Benalla. Open coursing was also conducted at St. James and the Cockspur Club at Wangaratta. However, after the war, only the Benalla club had been able to pay its fees and keep its licence.

A meeting of interested people was convened in 1957 and it was the Benalla license, which allowed the Wangaratta club to form as the North Eastern Coursing Club. A lease was obtained over the football ground at North Wangaratta and after three years of voluntary work, the track was ready for pacemaker racing. The North Eastern Coursing Club held the opening night at Centennial Park, where Mrs Bernice Walsh held a 99-year lease. It was attended by an estimated crowd of 3000. The 10-event program was reported to have raced in ideal conditions. The local MHR, Mac Holten, commented that leading greyhound racing officials had said the track was the best outside Melbourne. He also praised the Committee and in particular Secretary Mr. J. Odgers.

During the 1950s, local owners would course their dogs on the Common, an area of land close to the current Avian Park track. Families would bring dogs to the common to course hares and take those caught home for dinner. Any dog showing promise by jumping fences on the common was promptly entered in the hurdles, and was often the case in country clubs, was not uncommon for dogs to race on the flat and over the hurdles on the same night in these early days. There were disadvantages attached to this. With most dogs coursing as well as racing as flat racers and hurdlers, it was difficult to get really great track dogs. Uncontrolled local breeding also made it difficult for local owners to breed dogs good enough to get nominations for the big city race. John Carr remembers a local owner going to Sydney to buy a well-bred dog. He invested £250, against the £5 price of a locally bred dog. He was assured of the quality of the blood lines of the new dog but informed local opinion was that the

purchase was half Labrador, a fact confirmed by the dog's habit of stopping half way through a race and looking round for its next meal.

"Country form" was regarded as second rate in the city and added to the problems of isolation, which included a lack of good vets and the expense of travelling to meetings. With small prize money and tight bookies, city dogs rarely came to race at Wangaratta.

There were exceptions. The Centinel Park track was cooch-grass track. Some dogs would pass through on their way to race on Sydney's cooch-grass tracks. A run at Wangaratta would give the dogs experience on the cooch-grass track. However, if the unwary owner did not understand racing on cooch grass tracks and did not trim the dogs nails before the race, the longer nails were likely to get torn and put the dog out for a fortnight.

The Club raced at North Wangaratta for thirteen years before transferring to Avian Park after negotiations to purchase Centennial Park failed. During this period Club stalwart Les Wallace was Honorary Secretary and Grader for 20 years. His term of office covered the move to Avian Park where he also graded dogs.

The highlight of the Centennial Park era was undoubtedly the appearance of the all mighty "Zoom Top" which beat a graded field over the 575 yards after being well back at the halfway mark. The appropriately named "Barefoot Days" was successful in the last event held at Centennial Park in 1973 and racing was ushered in the following week at the new Avian Park venue where the harness and greyhound codes continue to co-exist amicably.

The time that the Club raced has proved to be problematic. The Club changed from their traditional Saturday nights to Monday nights in the 1970s, which resulted in better racing and increased turnover. Total turnover was \$800,000 in 1976 before the shift and jumped to \$1.5m immediately after. By 1978, average turnover per meeting had risen to \$40,000 per meeting. However, bookmakers betting off course at Olympic Park would often hold up to \$60,000, severely reducing the commission paid by on course bookmakers.

But, the Club eventually found it increasingly difficult to fill fields on Mondays and racing was transferred to Saturday nights and then to Saturday twilight. The Club currently races on Friday morning to fit in with the SKY timetable. While SKY brings Wangaratta greyhounds to a wider television audience, there are no spectators at the Friday morning meetings, even the owners and trainers race their dogs and then leave the deserted track.

Mighty dogs such as “Tempix” and the great “Lizrene” have performed at Wangaratta over the years. Locally bred “Lizrene” was trained by Peter McGuinness, and is one of the great stayers of Australian Greyhound history and was inaugural 1973 Victorian Greyhound of the Year. “Lizrene” had 97 Starts - 56 Wins including the 1972 & 1973 Sandown Cup, the 1972 & 1973 NCA Cup (Olympic Park), the 1973 National Distance Championship and the 1973 Olympic Park Distance Championship.

Local Champ: Lizrene picture about here

In 2000, plans were set in place to extend both the Greyhound and harness tracks. On 28th April 2000, the last meeting was conducted on the old circuit. Track record holders at the close of racing were “Dutchy’s Angel” (22.45) and “Wylie Boy” (22.45) for the 400 metres and “Lucky Spark” (37.17) for the 640 metres.

Renovations were completed and racing recommenced on Saturday 17th November 2001 on the new track, which increased from 500m to 650m in circumference. New distances are 403m, 474m and 650m with the home straight of 160m being possibly the longest in Australia at present.

The official opening of the track by Greyhound Racing Victoria Chairman Mrs. Jan Wilson took place on 17th January 2002.

Recent milestones for the Club have been the arrival of SKY Channel in July 2006. This ensured TAB betting on meetings and now 5% of oncourse tote goes to club. Before equalization, the country Clubs got a % of on-course turnover but not the much larger off-course pool. Long-term club member, John Carr remembers the importance of this for the Country Clubs. In the days when Board allocated TAB funds, it seemed to the members at Wangaratta that distance from the city was inversely proportional to prize money.

WARNAMBOOL

In the early days of racing, there were several small tracks around the outskirts of Warnambool. One was a 300-yard grass straight track at Bushfield, approximately 4 miles (8kms) out of Warnambool racing on a Saturday afternoon before good crowds, a bus ran out to the meeting, and the local pub was close by.

Around 1931, another track sprung up at the rear of the Christian Brothers College, on the outskirts of Warnambool. The popularity of greyhound racing during this period saw a Plumpton club opened at Wangoom, a small town just out of Warnambool.

In 1933, Bill Gleeson, who owned the hotel, offered £50 to establish the Warnambool Greyhound Racing Club. A public meeting raised £300 and a further £800 was raised after public canvassing. Debentures were offered at £5 and, by reports, they "went off quick".

In 1936, a new track was opened on some very low ground on the corner of Botanic and Queens Roads, just below the Botanic Gardens. The initial course was a single grass track of some 300 yards. In 1937, the club created a circular type track of 388 yards. The new circuit was shaped as a horseshoe, with a good run home to the finish from where it linked up with a straight track.

Alan Stoneman's early sketch of the Botanic park track about here

Opening night saw a crowd of 1200 people and dignitaries who included National Coursing Club Secretary Roy Maidment and White City and Gracedale Park owner Harry Heggart. Both made glowing speeches, the local brass band entertained and the 10 race program, including two hurdle races was keenly supported. The first race was won by Hopeful Andrew owned by club president P O'Keefe who collected £17 prize money. All this could have been obtained in those days for the admission fee of two shillings (20 cents) for gentlemen and one shilling for ladies.

The standout dog of this period was Warnambool Hall of Fame member Adoree, owned by Percy Levy and Stan McNamara. Levy trained their dogs and had a saddler's shop in Warnambool. The success of the dogs he sold nationally and internationally established the area's reputation for breeding and raising good dogs.

During the next 5 - 10 years, there were two Clubs racing at Warrnambool Whiteway, as the track at Botanic Park was known. The Speed Coursing Club and the Plumpton Racing Club, one raced on Friday nights and the other during Saturday afternoons. As was the case with all clubs, the enforced security restrictions during the 1939-45 war years, meant all night racing was banned and Saturday afternoons became the norm.

Life was always exciting at Botanic Park. The Whiteway track was situated in a natural hollow with local creek running right through its grounds and flooding was a fact of life at Botanic Park. In 1946, the district experienced one of the worst wet weather periods ever recorded and the huge floods that followed the 1946 deluge turned the track area into a lake. The tendency for the track to become completely fog bound proved to be an additional hazard. There were sheep grazing in the middle of the Park and if the handlers were not fast enough catching the dogs at the end of the race, the dogs would leap the barriers and start chasing the sheep, adding to the handlers' woes.

The Steward was local schoolteacher Bob Allen. One night, Alan, a strong enforcer of the rules, refused a major "identity" entry to a race because he arrived five minutes late. The identity took his dog home and returned determined to deck Alan. Alan beat him to the punch and to add insult to injury, the stewards handed out a five-year suspension on the spot. The next day, this was commuted to five days.

When the Club purchased Botanic Park from the Raynor family in 1968, the horseshoe track had decaying equipment, the rail was made of water pipes supplied by Nestles and the driving mechanism for the lure was an old car. The cables that dragged the lure were handed down from Sandown. These often broke leading to the cancellation of the race.

By 1976, the Club was faced with vast expenditure to upgrade facilities that were desperately in need of repair. The move to the Warrnambool Showgrounds, which was located on Crown land, meant that the State Government would provide funding for the development of the Wannon Park track. The final meeting at the Botanic Road site was held in 1978 before a very large crowd, which saw the Norm McCullagh trained Luskadena, win the last race.

Long Shot Luskadena owned and raced by Norm McCullagh wins the last race at Botanic Park at 12- 1 photo about here.

If bookies' turnover was any indication, the move to bigger and better facilities was warranted.

Graph about here

Jack Daffy, Club President from 1971-1982 remembers changes to the way the sport was run. He is proud of the fact that Warrnambool was the first Club in Victoria to operate with Electric lights, to use electric timing, to employ a fulltime secretary and to Use telex to distribute information. A veterinarian was appointed to the Club to examine dogs before they raced. Any dog that was put out of a race was suspended for 28 days. This encouraged owners not to enter dogs that were not well prepared.

Jack Daffy saw July 27th 1978 as the dawning of a new era of greyhound racing in Warrnambool when the lights of the new \$290,000 (\$970,000) track were turned on for the first time at the Showgrounds site. Racing commenced in late August with a huge crowd in attendance. The new track was opened by Greyhound Racing Control Board Chairman, Charles Petty. The first race was won by Skyline Blue, sired by the mighty Temlee, trained by committee-man Bill Kermode and bred by Club chairman Jack Daffy.

Photo of dogs coming out of boxes about here

While the shift was initially a great success, it produced some unexpected changes. Norm McCullagh remembers that the new two-turn track and the shift from grass to sand favoured stronger, fitter dogs. With favourites winning more often, the bookies found the going tough and their numbers dwindled. The declining odds on offer led to declining attendances and forced the Club to cut prize money by 25%.

In 1986, Stan Lake was elected President and took on the task of revitalising the Club. The old Botanic Park track was sold to the Parish priest for a school. Paid staff were replaced with volunteers from the local branch of the GOTBA and the Ladies' Committee. Hurdle racing was introduced, proved successful, and saw the crowds return to the Park.

Stan Lake was on the Club Committee from 1952 and was president from 1986 to 1997, in all 46 years with the Club. His achievements and dedication were recognized in the naming of the Stan lake Pavilion at Wannon Park and the Stan Lake Invitation Special, a race of the 450 m held annually. Stan's best dog was Indian Fighter, which won two Warrnambool Caps and two ANZGRA cups.

Lake photo about here

The hard work took the Club from one of the lowest to the highest stake paying non-TAB club in country Victoria. After many deputations to the Greyhound Racing Control Board and the Racing Minister, the club was granted its first TAB meetings, which were staged on April 25th and 30th 1985.

The 1980s belonged to the legendary "Bold Trease", owned by Norm and Alan McCullagh and trained by Norm. "Bold Trease" won four successive Sandown Cups, a record unlikely to be surpassed.

A Bold Trease picture about here

In 1991, after three years of planning, the first Warrnambool Classic was run. It had \$100,000 (\$160,000) in stakes with \$350 (\$560) coming from each of the 700 dogs entered. It is the only race of this type and it continues to draw entries from all over Australia. Maureen Drennan, daughter of Stan Lake and Club Secretary at the time, remembers that a huge effort was required to keep the Club on a secure financial footing. Picnic meetings, "guess the legs" competitions, dress up competitions and bingo, were all designed to maintain interest in the club.

Picture of Maureen and Stan about here

Maureen believes running the Cup and the Classic on the same night in 2000, while a controversial move at the time, proved to be very successful element of the Clubs strategy.

The Club has continued to thrive. In 2001, the club paid out \$775,000 (\$960,000) in prize money including \$50,000 (\$61,000) to the winner of the Macey's Bistro Classic. This is the richest provincial meeting in Australia and is now supported by a strong

base of breeders and trainers. In Jan 2007, the club celebrated it 80th^b Anniversary by inducting eight dogs into its Hall of Fame:

Dog	Owners
Princess Kerry	C Skipworth
Adoree	Percy Levy and Stan McNamara
Sydney Dingaan	Brian Lenehan
Modern Assassin	Mary Mugavin-Brown
Golden Currency	Kevin Mugavin Jrn
Lady Lilly	Colin Kelly
Bold Trease	Norm McCullagh
Master Giant	Angus McDonald

Warrnambool Club Presidents

1936 – 1938	P. O’Keefe
1938 – 1942	D. Melican
1942 – 1947	D. McCarthy
1947 – 1951	P. Sheppard
1951 – 1956	L. Irvine
1956 – 1958	L. Jenkins
1958 – 1961	E. Cain
1961 – 1962	S.Lake
1962 – 1971	J. Maloney
1971 – 1982	J. Daffy

1982 – 1886	G. Parsons
1986 – 1997	S. Lake
1997 – 1998	J. Fisher
1998 – 2003	P. Keane
2003 – 2004	L. Brookes
2004 -	P. Mitchem

WARRAGUL

The first meetings to establish the Warragul Greyhound Racing Club took place in 1949. However, it took quite a few years and some dedication on the part of several committed enthusiasts before the Club was up and running. Firstly a venue had to be found. With Council permission it was decided that a track could be laid on the inside of the harness track at the Showgrounds (Central Park) that had commenced racing in 1947.

Despite a number of attempts to obtain a racing licence from the State Government, it was not until the late Jack Cooper, who owned the racing licence of the defunct Wonthaggi Greyhound Club came to the rescue. He sold the Wonthaggi Licence to Warragul for the princely sum of £1. The transfer, which was helped by the support of Jack McKenna from Sandown, allowed the Club to race officially. Jack Cooper who ran "Auto Ray Photo Finish" installed the photo finish equipment at Warragul free of charge. In the 1970s, his equipment was also installed on many greyhound tracks around Australia.

Jack Cooper owner of Auto Ray Photo Finish about here

The track was built on an old tip mainly with voluntary labour. The late Noel Banks played a large part in the construction by obtaining many of the materials needed to build a track and carting them to the site.

Club Stalwart Noel Banks – the picture you have is not Noel Banks it is Noel Murphy former Chief Steward – Picture about here

When the Club was first formed, it had £20 in the bank so a debenture scheme was used to get building underway. As was the case with all country Clubs, all work was voluntary and the early supporters of the club were Jack Baines, the Cunninghams, the Colliver family, Noel Banks, Buck Buchanan, and Jim Kendal who was engineer and lure driver for 16 years following Gordon Penny. Two other notable supporters were Joe Price, the oldest bookmaker in Australia at the time and Frank Morley of the Melbourne Sporting Globe who gave the Club early publicity and who had a race named after him. The Club also boasted the only woman timekeeper, Mrs. K Lineham, who spent over twelve years in the job. The first Club president was Bob

Kellam and the first Secretary was Ern Martin who later became a Life Member. Other office holders during this period included Vice Presidents Peter Giles and Frank Bellamy both prominent trainers. Peter Giles trained “Odearo” one of Australia’s great hurdlers who held the hurdle track record for 430 yards at Warragul.

By today’s standards, the facilities were quite primitive (the dining room floor was concrete), however, they did the job. A circle track with distances of 430 yards 540 yards and 730 yards was constructed with a set of movable starting boxes used for the 540yd and 730yd distances. A straight track of 320 yards was also constructed in front of the grandstand.

The first meeting was conducted on Friday night 14th September 1956 with 20 bookmakers operating and prize money of £6, £2 and £1 and for the first few years, racing on mainly Saturday afternoons, the Club did well. Some night meetings were conducted on the circle track, as the straight track did not having a lighting system. Alf Baker remembers when he went to the first trials at Olympic Park being struck by the brightness of the lighting. This was in marked contrast to Warragul where the lights were weak and the lure rail would sway in the wind. Alf was one of the luckier local punters. He had a dog sent over from NZ which really wasn’t much good. In its only race, the first two dogs started fighting and the next five joined in. Alf’s dog, then 10 lengths behind, kept running and won at 7-1.

In the mid 1960s, night racing started to become more popular and the straight track became redundant. The Government legalised betting on horse races at greyhound meetings but this advantage was wiped out by the increasing difficulty of getting enough nominations. Soon the program was reduced to five races and the bookies started drifting away. Soon only two were fielding at Warragul. When the Club changed to racing on a Saturday afternoon, finances became stretched and raffles were conducted to ease the strain on the Club. Money was so short that when the lights failed, the Club had to run twilight meetings during daylight saving until some temporary lights were put in. The raffles were conducted by the Ron Bennett and Jack Baines and on one occasion following a police raid, the two were promptly charged with conducting an illegal raffle. Later they were later handed a small fine of £1 for running an illegal raffle. Justice having been seen to be done, the raffles continued the following meeting.

Ron Bennet picture about here

The raffles were important to the Club as most of revenue came from entry fees, bookies fees, the on course tote and 2/- to race a dog. The club was so poor that often there would be a whip around the committee to pay the prize money of £1 and 10/-.

In the pre-TAB meetings, the tote in those days was called a Control System. The punter got a ticket, which was punched win, place or quinella. The odds were set on a board controlled by a series of pulleys. There were a series of boxes with tickets in them and running calculations were made on the dividend. The bets had to be finalised one and a half minutes before the start of the race and phoned in to Melbourne. The tickets were then sent in to Melbourne after the meeting. Winners would get paid an hour after the last race which meant they could not re-invest their winnings on the next race. Once payouts could be made after each race there a huge difference in revenue.

Then came the TAB, which proved to be a huge shot in the arm for country Clubs who were now given a share of the TAB pool on city meetings. The first TAB meeting at Warragul held \$148,000 and by the sixth meeting this had risen to \$780,000 Warragul's first dividend from the TAB was \$10,000 and this had risen to \$50,000 by early 70s. This money helped pay out all the debentures and to use some paid staff rather than volunteers to work on the ground. However, even with the injection of funds from the TAB, the Club was still reliant on the work of long serving and hard-working members such as Joe McMinn who was not only Club Secretary but also Secretary of the Country Association of Greyhound Racing Clubs in Victoria and a member of the Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Board.

Joe McMinn picture about here

The track remained much the same throughout the 1960s until around 1972 when a new tower lighting system was installed to service both greyhound and harness racing. The system did not meet expectations and for two years the Clubs were engaged in legal argument with the supplier. Both Clubs suffered financially during this time and finally it was resolved that the Greyhound Club would put in a lighting system of the type that is now used and hand the old system over to the Harness Club.

By 1973, racing was being held on a Friday night with 14 bookies and 500 people in attendance. However, when the TAB insisted on a shift from Friday night to Tuesdays there was a predictable drop in the crowds. As a consolation, the Club got 13, then 26, race times on the TAB in the late 1970s. The Club still had to cut back on prize money and run lots of raffles, as it was a fight to survive right through the 1980s. The \$50-60k income was not enough to run the Club even working in conjunction with the trots. However, the legal dispute over the lighting meant that it was not until the 1980s that good relations developed.

During this period, the Greyhound Board decided to reconstruct the racing track including spending \$94,000 to install a new lighting system which at the time was considered one of the best in Australia. A new photo finish tower was also installed and a cantilever veranda to provide seating for 2000 was added to the grandstand. The kennels were rebuilt and a new driving tower was built with dual mechanical equipment. The total cost of these renovations was over \$150,000.

The new track meant significant changes to race distances. The main sprint distance was lengthened to 407m then to 411m and finally, with reconstruction of the new Judging Tower, finally lengthened to 424m. It was decided to do away with the 494m, which started on a corner. Finally, the 648m start was moved to the present 699 metres on the 589 metres circumference track. The only thing still in its original place was the front straight. This is now the only part that remains from the original construction in 1950s.

The social side of the Club was not neglected. A Christmas party is held on a race night for all the children of owners and trainers. The Club also sponsored an entry to the Miss Greyhound section of the Miss Australia Quest. The winner, Miss Corrine Collins, went on to win the Miss Victoria and Miss Australia Charity Queen title raising \$31,000 for the Spastic Children's Society.

Since altering of the sprint distance to 424 metres there have been some outstanding performers with the most notable being the great "Sylvan Prince" trained by Ron Izon. "Sylvan Prince" raced at Warragul at the time the track was being altered and eventually was giving eight metre starts to fields, which was an amazing performance over such a short distance. He had 12 starts for 10 wins 1 second and 1 fourth. In the

early 1980s, the mighty “Tempix” had 10 wins from as many starts including the Warragul Cup and was an early track record holder.

In the early 1980s, the Greyhound Racing Control Board moved Geelong to Friday nights and Warragul to Tuesday nights. This proved to be a major problem for Warragul as the Harness Club also raced on Tuesday nights about 13 times a year. This created great difficulty for the Greyhound Club until some years later when the Harness Club decided to conduct only day meetings.

Up until 1982, the public facilities for bar and catering were extremely poor but again both Clubs united and submitted proposals to their respective Development Boards to enclose the dining area. Proposals were approved and the new dining room was finished in 1983. The dining room was further enlarged in 1999 to its present size. The change had been a long time coming and saw the replacement of the original concrete floor and the provision of proper chairs. The kennel block was another building that has progressed over the years. It was placed in its present position in the mid 1980s and was upgraded to include single tier kennels in 2000.

The track surface has continually improved over the years with the 424m track record reducing from “Golden Spur’s” 24.41 in the 1970’s, “Tempix” 24.30 in the early 1980s and “Picture This” 24.25 later that decade. This record stood for quite a number of years until the mid 1990s when “Awesome Assassin” was the first to go under 24 sec, with a run 23.86 sec. “Knockabout Wok” is the current record holder with a blistering run of 23.59 sec. Similarly the 699m record was held in the 1970s by “Welcome Girl” at 41.56 sec in the 1980s by “Rods Advice” at 41.20 sec and “Fire Teka’s” run of 40.70 sec in the 1990s. “Boomeroo” currently holds the 699m record at 40.20 sec.

Aerial view of the Warragul Club about here

A number of dedicated volunteers have committed themselves to their Club over the years including the Lineham family most of whom served as Committee people over 35 years. The late Ron Bennett, one of the original members to start the Club, deserves special mention. He served on the Committee for 50 years, including many as President, before ill health forced him to resign.

Father Brosnan, Trezize and Ron Bennet picture about here

John Wilkins, the current Warragul Manager, started in a dual role at Traralgon and Warragul in the early 1990s. Over the years the club has become far more professional and financially secure, taking \$13-15k on course with around 300 people coming to the twilight meetings. The Club is also supported by a strong youth contingent, which shows all the signs of being involved in long term support of the Club. Racing is strong as well, on a good night, there will be 200 nominations for 96 places to start at Warragul and it often takes 3-4 nominations to get into a race. The Club also runs debutante races to get the right mix and provide an opportunity for untried dogs.

Roy Duncan picture about here

Flooded picture somewhere

Section 3: The Great Dogs

Bold Trease – by Neil Brown

Few greyhounds in the history of the sport have captured not only the imagination of the people within the game, but also the recognition of the general public at large. Such was the case of one of the sport's great champions, the Warrnambool "warrior", Bold Trease. He was loved Australian wide for his ability to drop out in his races, tail the field, then with less than a lap to go, then storm home to pick off all his opponents one by one. Among his many career highlights his four Sandown Cups stand a record that most people doubt will ever be broken.

Bold Trease's litter by Roy Trease from Irish Temptress was whelped March 1984. It was Irish Temptress' fourth successful litter. A chaser, she was trained throughout her career by legendary mentor, Ned Bryant. Bold Trease's trainer, Norm McCullagh, explained how he picked out the champ as a pup, "I was up at Ned Bryant's getting my dogs checked when Bryant suggested I have a look at a couple of litters he had on the ground. One was by Roy Trease. I liked Roy Trease as a sire, so I naturally went for them. I had first pick and for no apparent reason I picked Bold Trease. Lucky, I guess, but they all looked the same: fawn dogs and bitches, it was no more than just pure luck." Norm went on to race Bold Trease in partnership with Jim Rule, Ron Hay and son Alan McCullagh.

Bold Trease was reared at the Warrnambool property of Norm McCullagh. He describes his rearing set up as "Nothing special, we rear about six pups at a time in two, one hundred metre runs. We only have a few pups so they get plenty of attention and heaps of good tucker. We also let them out twice a day into a five-acre galloping paddock. You've never seen a dog work harder than Bold Trease. He would just run all day, never blow a candle out. I knew very early on he would make a stayer. He would just run and run and run."

Norm explains how well the champ took to racing. "He broke in a treat, an absolute natural. Only had a couple of hand slips. Two attempts in the boxes and it took only about two-week before he was trailing like a veteran. He only had a handful of runs before he raced at seventeen months. He trialed 26 dead over 450 at Warrnambool, so we put him straight in and he won his maiden in 26.10. People probably didn't realize

he could always sprint. He would break 26 easy at Warrnambool anytime. I would trial him there in lead up runs after a spell. One morning he ran 25.40. My mate that worked the clock that morning couldn't believe it. He had outstanding speed!"

There were quite a number of offers for Bold Trease. "After his first five starts we had a genuine offer of \$80,000 from a prominent Victorian owner/trainer of that time. We also had several offers from Sydney in the early part of his career. I don't think we ever considered the offers, I don't think we would have sold him at any price."

The champ made some amazing comebacks from serious injuries. Not one but two broken hocks, which on both occasions kept him out for four to five months. He also suffered a broken stopper bone and he tore off a toe, but he came back to race successfully each time

For Norm McCullagh his biggest thrills were also Bold Trease's best performances. "His second Sandown Cup was a thrill. He was just so far back, I didn't think he could win, and to run down a dog as good as High Intensity in 43.59 was a great performance. Also to win The West End All Stars Classic at Angle Park was a top performance. But probably, the biggest thrill was that fourth Sandown Cup. I will never forget the crowd that night, it was fantastic. To think he could win it a fourth time was something else. It was a thrill to race a dog like Bold Trease. The public loved him; I remember I was at Sandown after one of his wins. I met a couple who had only come to see him race. They would come out only when he was in and leave straight after he raced."

Bold Trease raced 104 times for 51 wins, 22 seconds, 12 thirds and prize money totaling \$127,600. He was judged the 1987 Victorian Greyhound of the Year, and was a finalist in 1986 and 1988. He won the Sandown Cup four times, 1986 (43.84), 1987 (43.59), 1988 (44.05), and 1989 (43.85) and held track records at Sandown (43.32) and Launceston 722 (43.67). It was the biggest crowd ever to attend a greyhound meeting, the night he broke the Launceston record. He also held the Ballarat 735 record twice (43.82 and 42.90). His other feature wins included Association Cup 87, Navy Day Trophy and the Coca-Cola Distance Final. He was also won the Victorian

National Distance Championship, representing his state at the Gabba in 1986. In a special honour, the champ was judged Greyhound of the Decade 1980-1990. The Sandown Club also nominated him for American Greyhound Hall of Fame at the conclusion of his career.

The 'Warnambool Warrior' lost his fight with bone cancer when on Tuesday the 23rd of July 1991 he was humanely put down

Fawn Dog

(Roy Trease x Irish Temptress)

- Whelped March 1984
- Trainer: N.McCullagh
- Owners: J.Rule, R.Hay, A.McCullagh & N.McCullagh
- Year of Induction 2002
- Career Prizemoney: \$127,600
- 104 Starts: 51 Wins, 22 Seconds and 12 Thirds
- Feature Career Wins Included:
- Sandown Cup, Sandown 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989

He was voted Victorian Greyhound of the Year in 1987 after winning his second Sandown Cup.

Bold Trease's victories live on in the memories of racing fans. At the 70th Anniversary celebrations of the Warnambool Greyhound Racing Club, videos of his great Sandown Cup victories were shown. By the fourth race, the entire room was on its feet urging him on as if they were at the race in 1989.

Brett Lee

Brett Lee was a little black dog named after the great Aussie fast bowler. A speed machine that was to re-write the record books, and provide excitement wherever he went

The Brett Lee story begun with his dam Sobbing Sal, raced by Stan and Rachel Bonsar, the brilliant black bitch competed at the highest level, and was a multi feature winner, Greyhound Of The Year nominee and Top Gun rep. Bonsar chose the very quick New South Wales sprinter Gun Law Osti for her second litter. Bonsar sold five of the six pups for \$6000 each, but one little black dog because he had no testicles was left behind. Richard Kurkowski finally got the pup for \$3000 after being assured by connections that the condition was not a problem. "So I bought the pup, and it turned out to be the best decision of my life" Kurkowski said.

The dog was named after the famous fast bowler when NCA employee decided that Lee, who had taken five wickets on debut in the Boxing Day test against India in December 1999, did not yet qualify as a famous person under the NCA rule that dogs cannot be named after famous people. Kurkowski, a fast bowler for many years with Victorian sub-district club Williamstown, was delighted. So too was Brett Lee. During the Australian Cup Series, he flew to Melbourne to appear in a range of photos that were shown around the country. He proudly posed with his canine namesake, the dog that could ran as fast as he could bowl.

When Brett Lee raced for the first time in a maiden qualifying trial at Ballarat, he won by six and three quarters lengths in 25.76 from box six. At his next start, he won the maiden final in 25.66 by 10 and half-lengths. He then went to Horsham to run 26.94, a new track record for the 480 metres. Then to Shepparton where he won the final of the Geelong Guineas.

Then the offers started. " (South Australian owner-trainer) Darrell Johnstone first offered me \$50,000," says Kurkowski, "then came back with \$70,000. It was tempting but I knocked it back. Low and behold he then offered me \$100,000. I had two young daughters under five and that sort of money can set you up, I had no

choice in the end. I had to consider my family first. It was tough to part with him. I followed the rest of his career with great passion and was absolutely wrapped with where he got too.”

To offset his original outlay Johnstone sold a share in Brett Lee to Darren McDonald who passed on a share to former AFL superstar and close friend Tony Lockett.

After an injury set back suffered at the Meadows and a shock defeat in the Hobart 1000 final, the champion put together a stunning sequence of 12 wins, including five Group 1 victories in early 2001. He won the Interstate Challenge, Adelaide Cup, Australian Cup, Maturity Classic, Golden Easter Egg and the Warrnambool Classic.

During his brilliant career Brett Lee established seven track records: The Meadows (518m) - 29.43, Angle Park (515m) - 28.88, Horsham (480m) - 26.94, Shepparton (440m) - 24.22, Geelong (457m) - 25.19, Ballarat (450m) 24.95, and Warragul (424m) - 23.68. During his career, he had 31 wins and five seconds from 39 starts, and a massive \$405,106 in stakes. He was crowned the 2001 Victorian Greyhound of the Year at a gala luncheon held at Parliament House in 2002.

Suffering a career ending injury he was retired to stud, and commanded a record introductory service fee of \$2750. Not bad for a dog born without testicles!!

Jason Thompson, who trained Brett Lee in the latter days of his racing career said, “His five Group 1 wins were a phenomenal feat. He was only defeated once during those five series when second in a heat of the Warrnambool Classic. I rated Highly Blessed the best greyhound I'd seen, until this bloke emerged. It's hard to separate them, and I don't particularly like comparing different eras, but he's the fastest dog I've ever laid eyes upon; the sectionals he could reel off were unbelievable. There was an aura about him; he captured the imagination of people outside the greyhound racing industry.”

After standing for Thompson at Meadow Vale stud for about six months, the champ was sold to prominent New South Wales owner-trainer-breeder Harry Sarkis who was reported to have purchased Brett Lee for a record sum of \$800,000. The transportation

of frozen semen has made it possible for international breeders to have access to sires such as Brett Lee. However in 2006, it was reported that WA racing stewards were investigating the delivery to a Perth veterinary clinic last March of a \$110,000 tank of frozen semen that was supposed to be from Brett Lee, but turned out to be a mixed batch.

After a period of time, his stud career really got underway and he is firmly established as an outstanding producer of very fast dogs. He is still the most sought after sire in the country regardless of the fact his stud fee has escalated to \$4400.

A story surfaced in October 2004 of the impending sale of Brett Lee to the United Kingdom for the astronomical sum of \$A3.7 million and it looked highly likely Brett Lee would change hands again.

Black Dog

(Gun Law Osti x Sobbing Sal)

- Whelped January 1999
- Trainer: D.McDonald
- Owners: K.Johnstone & D.McDonald
- Year of Induction 2002
- 39 Starts: 31 Wins 8 Placings
- Career Prizemoney: \$405,106
- Feature Career Wins Included:
- 2001 Golden Easter Egg, 520m Wentworth Park
- 2001 Adelaide Cup, 515m Angle Park
- 2001 Australian Cup, 525m The Meadows
- 2001 The Maturity, 525m The Meadows
- 2001 Warrnambool Classic
- 2001 SA Interstate Challenge
- 2001 Geelong Guineas
- Career Track Records:
- Horsham 480m (26.94)
- Warragul 424m (23.68)
- Angle Park 515m (28.88)
- Shepparton 440m (24.22)
- Geelong 457m (25.19)
- Ballarat 450m (24.95)

Highly Blessed

Highly Blessed was a Black Bitch (Chariot Supreme x I'm Blessed) owned and raced by Lorraine Ferremi. Husband Doug remembers the dog was the only bitch in the litter and they didn't want to sell but then no one wanted to buy her. The local Priest blessed the dog and gave rise to its name. Highly Blessed was broken in early and began running great times over 300m. She ran close to the record in first trial at Bendigo and won the WIN TV Maiden Classic worth \$3000 in Oct 1989.

Writer Neil Brown remembers this race. It was the first time he saw Highly Blessed race. The memory is particularly vivid as Highly Blessed ran Neil's dog down in the finals. Highly Blessed went on to win eight races from 55 starts before retiring in 1992 as Australia's highest stake earner with \$294,565. A bookie once remarked to Doug that if he had owned Highly Blessed, she would have won more races. Doug replied, "But not more money". Highly Blessed was carefully prepared for big races where her abilities as a lead dog and sprinter would have greatest effect.

At her peak between November 1990 and May 1991, she won six major finals including winning the Melbourne Cup by seven lengths from box five. From Sandown, she went to the Gabba winning the XXXX Trophy over 558m on grass by 10 lengths, again from box five. At Angle Park, she won the Adelaide Cup by seven and half-lengths from box one. At Wentworth Park in Sydney, she won the Golden Easter Egg. Starting from box four on the 520 metre grass, Highly Blessed won by five lengths.

The champ returned to Melbourne to win both the Honda Trophy and Schweppes Cup. She astounded a large crowd at Sandown two weeks in a row recording seemingly impossible times. She ran 29.89 solo between races the first time and a week later 29.93 in the heat of the Honda.

Among the many accolades was the World Greyhound Federation top eight ranking in 1990. Highly Blessed was a great promotional tool for greyhound racing. She was featured on "A Current Affair", in the Women's Weekly and most daily papers around Australia.

Highly Blessed died on February 10th 1999, when Doug and Lorraine Ferremi decided to end her suffering form deteriorating health and cancer.

Highly Blessed was inducted into the AGRA Hall Of Fame at the Meadows in Melbourne in September 2000.

Black Bitch

(Chariot Supreme x I'm Blessed)

- Whelped February 1998
- Owner-Trainer: L. Ferrami
- Year of Induction 2000
- 55 starts: 38 wins, 2 seconds, 3 thirds
- Career Prizemoney \$294,565
- Track record-holder Sandown 511m
- Major Career Wins Included:
- 1990 Gold Collar 511m Olympic Park
- 1990 Shepparton Cup 440m Shepparton
- 1990 Melbourne Cup 511m Sandown
- 1990 XXXX Trophy Cup 558m Gabba
- 1991 Adelaide Cup 512m Angle Park
- 1991 Golden Easter Egg 520m Wentworth Park
- 1991 McRae Honda Trophy 511m Sandown
- 1991 Schweppes Cup 511m Sandown
- In 1991, Highly Blessed was awarded All World Greyhound Field selection by the World Greyhound Racing Federation.
-
- Highly Blessed had been voted by the WGF as one of the world's best eight greyhounds, and has been one of only two Australian greyhounds to be selected in the All World Greyhound Field.

Lizrene - Peter Quilty

When the topic of conversation between greyhound connoisseurs turns to distance racing, one of the first names mentioned is inaugural 1973 Victorian Greyhound of the Year, Lizrene. A 25kg brindle bitch, Lizrene (Prince Kua-Joanne Lu) was whelped in April 1970. The litter, comprising five dogs and four bitches, was bred by S. Brooker and Prince Kua's owner, Peter McGuinness.

Her sire, Prince Kua, had a brief but brilliant race career. He won six races from seven starts, and, although recognized as a sprinter, he equaled Sandown Park 's 718-metre track record (43 7/16ths) in a private trial at his first distance attempt.

Retaining three brindle pups (2 dogs, 1 bitch), McGuinness christened Lizrene as “Cindy”.

Reared by Roma McGuinness, Lizrene was quick to reveal her potential with 30.25 over 511 metres at Olympic Park. Lizrene raced on 97 occasions for 56 wins, 19 seconds and 12 thirds, being only unplaced 10 times.

She won 23 races at Olympic Park and 22 events at Sandown Park

Her career highlights read:

Winner: Sandown Cup (1972 & 1973); NCA Cup – Olympic Park (1972 & 1973); Sandown Park Distance Championship (1973); Olympic Park Distance Championship (1973); Anniversary Trophy – Newcastle (1973).

Contesting 23 trophy races, Lizrene won 14, with four seconds and three thirds.

Lizrene's finest hour arrived when she was awarded 1973 Victorian Greyhound of the Year honours. On her retirement, Lizrene had amassed \$61,208 in stakemoney – an Australian record at the time.

Brindle Bitch

(Princess Kua x Joanne Lu)

- Whelped April 1970

- Owner Trainer Peter McGuinness
- Victorian Greyhound of the Year 1973
- 97 Starts - 56 Wins
- 1972 & 1973 Sandown Cup
- 1972 & 1973 NCA Cup (Olympic Park)
- 1973 National Distance Championship
 - 1973 Olympic Park Distance Championship

Rookie Rebel

One of the great champions of the late 50's was the mighty Rookie Rebel bred by legendary New South Wales's owner-trainer-breeder the late Les Brett, at his Roccabright Kennels in Kellyville.

Rookie Rebel's dam was a superbly bred brindle bitch named Lady Janellen by Chief Havoc from Clever Vixen, she was owned by Sonny Gram and was on loan to Brett. He chose to her put her to the leading sire of the time, the legendary Dream's Image.

The litter was whelped in December 1954 and consisted of three dogs and three bitches. The litter included the 1956 Harold Park Classic winner Smooth Event and the outstanding race dog and leading sire Sunview. Sunview later sired the 1962 and 63 Melbourne Cup winners, litter brothers Saskagay and Saskaview.

Brett sold Rookie Rebel to the astute Stan Cleverley for a reported £500 in the days when a brand new family car was £1000 pound. Cleverley then transferred him on a short-term lease to Eddie Roberts who produced him for his first start

Racing veteran Les Merry tells the story: "Eddie and I went up for the two day Wagga Cup Carnival with Rookie Rebel and a bitch named Jet Amber. You could get on for anything at those meetings, there were a heap of big bookies fielding up there.

Stan was short of funds which wasn't uncommon in those days and he asked me to catch the train down to Cheltenham Park and drive his brand new Pontiac to Reg Hunt's in Point Nepean Road. He sold it for £200 more than it was worth because you just couldn't get new cars in those days. Stan hired a light aircraft and backed both dogs off the map. Rookie Rebel won his maiden over the 503 yards and Jet Amber was very smart and bolted in. I'll tell you how much money he won, but on the following Monday he paid £5000 for a new deluxe Packard, it was a beautiful American car, absolute top of the range."

Later Stan offered Rookie Rebel to Peter Herman for £1500 which he couldn't afford but Cleverley did a deal with him and sold him for 750 pound and got Herman to sign

an agreement to pay Stan 250 pound from each of his first three wins. Herman asked Cleverley to recommend a trainer and Rookie Rebel came to me at Abbotsford.

I got him going pretty good and entered him and Montana Jet for Hobart on a Saturday near the end of '56. Only trouble was when I fronted Herman to let him know what was happening on the Thursday night at Sandown, he had no money. So Stan gave him Herman the £40 plane fare and £200 pound to put on Rookie then all up on the other dog. Stan and I get to Hobart and Herman doesn't front, but both dogs won comfortably and we come home with plenty.

Now I've always trained on half the prize money and I took Herman's half to North Melbourne to give to him, but again no sign of him. At 2 am the next morning I was a woken by a knock at the door and there's a Senior Police Officer with a young lady, who turns out to be Herman's wife and they want to take Rookie Rebel. Herman's out the front, not game to come in. I explain the situation to the copper and bring him inside, we call Cleverley and Herman has to hand over the balance of the £250 before he can repossess the dog. He put "Rookie" in the back of his tiny little car and next thing Herman drives into the Five Way Garage in Carlton, which at the time was run by dog and horse bookies Wally and Joe Scomazzon. He asks them if they know a trainer he can give the dog to that he's got in the car. At that very moment the late Wally Hooper drives in to get petrol and ends up with the dog. Not only did he get the dog, but a 10-year lease receiving 100% of the prize money so Herman never got another cracker out of him. Stan later sued Herman for the £500 and won but he never saw the £200 he gave him to go to Hobart with."

After racing well throughout 1957 and winning 16 races, Rookie won a heat of the Melbourne Gold Cup over the 565 yards at Sandown, recording the fastest time of the heats winning in 30 11/16ths. After being backed from 3/1 to 5/4, he came from behind, racing away to win by four lengths. In those days, the race was a handicap and this year there were 14 heats. Rookie started from 17 yards was backed from 4/1 into 9/4 favourite, he did everything right, and won brilliantly by six lengths in 30 14/16ths from Montana Jet owned by Stan Cleverley and trained by Les Merry.

In February 1958, Rookie was back in Hobart for another tilt at the 1000. Despite

jumping from the extreme outside in box 10, he survived a buffeting in the early stages, then got to the rail and raced away to win brilliantly by eight lengths, setting the race record time of 29 8/10ths for the 540 yards.

He was back in Melbourne for the Australian Cup in March to create history by winning the treble. With a handicap of eight yards, Rookie Rebel, started 10/9 on favorite to win the £2700 Australian Cup at North Melbourne. Moomba Queen, Miss Norma Jones, added a nice touch of glamour when after decorating Rookie Rebel with a sash, paraded with him and Wally around the perimeter of the track.

Rookie, now having won the Melbourne Cup, the Hobart Thousand and the Australian Cup, had become the highest stake-winning greyhound ever to race in Australia.

Rookie Rebel only had another 20 or so starts before being retired to stud in September of 1958. He equaled Farrago's 1951, 580 yard track record at Wentworth Park recording a win in 31.5/10ths. He also set a new record at Sandown over the 555 yards in running 30 and 14/16ths when he defeated Lucky Bingo raced by Stan Cleverley in an Invitation.

The late Jack Woodward, who reported on greyhound racing for almost 40 years, wrote in 1958. "I doubt whether we have seen one better, if he is not the best he is certainly equal to any I have ever seen race."

George Schofield, a legendary muscleman (who checked the champ), former bookmaker, feared punter, stud master and administrator who he trained his first double in 1936, said, "Rookie Rebel is the best dog in a field I've ever seen, it was as if he looked up over them to plan a run, an amazing dog."

Finally Bill Pearson founder of the Gold Form Guide 40 years ago and follower of the sport since the early 30's said, "As far as the best stayers I've seen race, I could never split Zoom Top, Bunyip Bint and Rookie Rebel."

White and Fawn Dog

(Dream's Image x lady Janellen)

- Whelped December 1954
- Owner: P.Herman
- Trainer: W.Hooper
- Year of Induction 2001
- Feature Career Wins Included:
- 1957 Melbourne Cup
- 1957 Australian Cup

Temlee

Temlee was whelped March 1972 by top New South Wales galloper Tivoli Chief from the lightly raced New South Wales bitch Temora Lee. Tivoli Chief was an unproven sire at that stage standing at Tony Marino's Diamond Creek property in Victoria. Temlee's breeding is very much part of the Sale clubs history. Sale greyhound racing identity Tom Davidson bought Temora Lee for \$800. Not long after the purchase, Davidson passed away and the family gave the dog to former Sale club President Barry Bailey. He was to choose Tivoli Chief as the sire and although the litter was registered in the name of Tom's daughter, Mary Davidson, Bailey paid the stud fee and whelped down the litter. Eight weeks later, Bailey's friend Frank Cray suggested to Maffra Hotelier Ray Hocken that he buy a pup. Hocken paid \$135 for the brindle pup that was later to race as Temlee. Ray Hocken fondest memories remain setting the track record at Olympic Park and winning the National Sprint Title.

Frank Cray reared the young pup at his Sale property. Early in life, Temlee had a bad bout of hepatitis and distemper and Cray spent weeks nursing the dog back to health. The effort was justified, as early indications were very positive when Temlee trialed just outside the Sale track record before his first start.

Not only was he the most outstanding sprinter of his time but also his overall influence on the breeding scene has not been equaled. As a race dog, he excelled at Olympic Park holding the sprint track record for a 10-year period, a feat that has not been equaled on any city track in the history of the sport.

Temlee raced for the first time at his home track of Sale in August 1973, Starting from box five, he won by six lengths only 2/100ths outside the race record. The champion went on to race 37 times for 25 wins and three placings and a total of \$26,000 in prize money.

Temlee only raced for 15 months but his short career contained many highlights. He won 13 of his 19 starts at Olympic Park. His best performance being his track record run of 29.67 on March 25, 1974 in the Autumn Trophy final. Temlee's major racetrack win was in the final of the National Sprint Championship with an

outstanding performance of 29.71 from box four. His other major highlights included the 1974 Maturity Stake final and the Lord Mayor's Trophy in 30.25. He also won at Sale, Olympic Park, Wentworth Park, Sandown and Traralgon.

Temlee at Olympic Park

Temlee stood his entire stud career at the home of his sire, the Diamond Creek property of Tony Marino. The champion's introductory fee in 1975 was \$300. This was to rise to an Australian record \$1000 such was the success and demand of the brindle flyer.

Temlee sired 735 litters and had 4410 greyhounds named with the champ as their sire. His progeny won over 1800 city races around Australia with prize money totaling around \$500,000. Temlee was the champion Victorian sire from 1978-1982 also winning titles in Queensland and was runner up in N.S.W. His most successful year in Victoria was 1979 when he sired 220 city winners, a record that stood until 1999 when broken by Head Honcho.

After racing virtually injury free for the fifteen months he spent on the racetrack, Temlee's career was cut short after 37 starts on November 25 1974 at Olympic Park. The brindle flying machine cracked a bone in his left hind leg. It was fitting that if his career had to end, it was to be at the track he had made his own.

Section 4: People Who Shaped Greyhound Racing

Bill Collins

When Brian Halpin retired as chairman of the Greyhound racing control board he was succeeded by the high profile media and racing personality Bill Collins. Bill Collins was 58 years old when he was appointed. The son of a bookmaker, he worked as a clerk for the bookmaker father As a teenager before working for the Sale radio, 3TR. He took an active part in local musical comedy see the lead part as Anne in "Annie get your gun".

After short stint at 3UZ, Collins moved to 3DB where he would call a record 34 Melbourne Cups between 1954 and 1997. The advent of television saw Collins working as a compere, newsreader and variety entertainer on Channel 7.

Collins considerable talents extended to administration. He was the chairman of the Board of management of the Melbourne bombing club and president of the Echo foundation that provided affordable holidays for elderly pensioners.

Prior to his Greyhound board appointment, Collins served on the Harness Racing Board and on the Bookmakers and Bookmakers Clark's Registration Committee. During his 10 years as chairman Collins saw the final introduction of centralized writing, significant increases in stake money and market share and the purchase of the new board offices. He was instrumental in introducing the Topgun and the Victorian Breeders Stakes as well as the Greyhound of the Year award. Collins was also a part owner in the champion Greyhound from the mid-19 70s Chief Dingaan. Bill Collins died in 1997 at the age of 68 after a yearlong battle with incurable cancer. The Minister for Sport, Tom Reynolds described Collins as a "versatile star who was truly a legend in his own lifetime. His service as chairman of the Greyhound Racing Control Board and as a member of the Harness racing Board are justifiably recognized."

Bill Pearson

William James Pearson was born on 11th June 1922 the son of a prizefighter who fought under the name of Harry Pearson. Harry once fought his brother George for the Victorian Featherweight title fight at John Wren's West Melbourne stadium. Harry was unhappy with George's controversial win and the next day the brothers decided to settle the matter once and for all with a bare fists fight in the local gardens which lasted until they were both exhausted. Like father like son, Bill never backed away from a fight when he felt right was on his side.

Bill parents divorced in the '20s and Bill became a street kid. In the late 1932 when playing cricket in Ascot Vale, he met Roy Maidment's trainer Haydn Hook who was walking greyhounds.

Bill asked, "Can you make money with that?"

Hooke replied, "Yes".

"I'm coming with you then," said Bill and began walking dogs and a life long association with greyhound racing.

Charlie Hingston ran a dog bus to Ballarat in the 30s and Bill used to jump on the back and hide in amongst the dogs to get a free ride to the races. . In those hard times, Bill had no money to bet at the races so he would pick up race books that had been discarded by bank tellers who had lost all their money on the first race. Bill would then resell the books to get enough money to place his first bet for the night.

He worked with a number of trainers but most notably with legendary bookmaker Chummy Parkes with whom he developed a close relationship living with Parkes and Mary Paine while he was a young man. It was from Chummy Parkes that Bill learned the importance of knowing the form of the dogs. Bill and Chummy would go to the Plumpton and clock the dogs. Bill would stand at the end of the chute and put up a white flag for Chummy to time them to the end. They soon noticed that other bookie stood next to Parks and were also clocking the dogs.

To counter this, Bill would raise his flag late or early to confuse the bookies who "weren't paying my wages". He would keep a careful note of whether he raised the

flag early or late. It was this attention to detail that would set him apart. He would watch which way the hare broke, left or right and allow a length for the dog on the outside of the turn. He would later apply this principle to track racing where he would also watch to see whether a dog galloped with his left foot or right foot striking the ground first. If the left foot struck first, the dog was a railer and would turn well on a circular track. If the right foot struck first then the dog was likely to run wide. He would use his carefully gathered information to great advantage, marking the books for bookies for a fee of as much as £5 (\$250) a night per bookie.

In addition to his developing skills as a greyhound punter, Pearson had great natural ability as a ball player and before the war was becoming well known on the cricket and football fields as well as the pool halls of Essendon. He also ran in foot races over 75yds at the Maribyrnong track. Just before the race, the runners would ask each other "Are you trying?" The person who was trying would then give a special sign, such as running a hand through their hair or hitching up their pants as an indication to their mates to run to the betting ring and put money on them. Usually this worked well, but Bill remembers one night when the entire race was almost running on the spot because no one in the race had been told that they were meant to win.

He attended all greyhound meetings often managing to get a lift to far away Plumpton Coursing meetings all over Victoria where both Chris Flint and Roy Maidment befriended him as "Young Billy". He remembers Maidment saying to him at the track, "Billy, you'll have no luck with them". He has great regard for Maidment in particular because he would put his own money into the industry to keep it going.

During WW2, he served in the AIF as a gun layer at a remote jungle outpost in Dutch New Guinea. It was to prove a shattering experience, and prior to the end of the war he was invalided home with tropical dermatitis, perforated ears and his nerves in tatters.

Bill Pearson was a star in Essendon's 1946 VFL premiership team, injury perhaps costing him the first post-war Brownlow Medal. He polled thirteen votes with Dr. Don Cordner winning with twenty. Bill played in all eighteen home and away games

the following year 1947, but a crippling knee injury in the final game against Collingwood at Victoria Park ended his career. He sat in the stand and watched the Blues take a one-point victory in the Grand Final.

With an injury that had ended his career two years before the great John Coleman came to Essendon, greyhounds became Bill Pearson's sporting passion. He began to think of a form guide which could benefit the sport and perhaps provide a future income for the former orphanage boy.

Bill married Joan Muir at St. Michaels in North Melbourne on the 29th November 1947. In the early 1960's although the father of a young family, Bill decided to launch a form guide with the help of trainer Nat Dale who contributed £500. However, clubs barred him from selling on their tracks to protect the sale of their own race books. He went broke four times before he got the concept off the ground with the help of Jack Dillon, a Moonee Ponds business man.

Another important friend was young Graham Perkin, who was an editor at The Age. Perkin never forgot Bill Pearson's kindness to him when he was a raw cadet sent to Maribyrnong to report on the greyhounds. Bill had seen the well-dressed youth arrive looking so out of place that he befriended him. Perkin never forgot the man he was to refer to as his "dog tipster", devoting considerable space to greyhound racing form in The Age and lifting circulation dramatically during the boom period of the late 1960's and early 1970's.

A prominent businessman who became attracted to betting on greyhounds as a result of "The Age" form said he was winning so consistently that he wanted to insure Pearson's life! He thought the form guides for Olympic Park and Sandown were a "gold mine of information".

Bill Pearson made regular appearances before the N.C.A., the Control Board and clubs to gain necessary financial assistance to support The Gold Greyhound Form Guide. At least one third of all greyhound patrons, many steward and bookmakers purchased the Guide either prior to a meeting or at the track. Bill Pearson was also a

regular on radio programs on 3XY, 3GL and 3DB. Media personality Bert Newton called Bill “the Perry Mason of greyhound racing”.

In November 1973 the Greyhound Weekly published a letter from Bill Pearson discussing the "unreal membership situation at the Geelong Greyhound racing club". Bill, who had been trying to join the Geelong club for many years, why in the city of Geelong with approximately 120,000 people the club presently had only 40 members. He also pointed out that two directors could form a quorum, as was the case when Horrie Capron, the club President, suspended O. W. Nicholson for two years for calling Mr. Capron “a bloody idiot”.

In November of 1973, Bill Pearson clashed with Geelong Greyhound racing club officials before the start of the race meeting. Police were called when Bill attempted to sell his form guides inside the grounds. The news photographer and the reporter, who accompanied Bill, were also threatened with eviction by Geelong Greyhound racing club secretary Mr. Jack Luke. It was clear that the Geelong club had given preference to a new publication called Greyhound Guide, which is the same size, and lay out as Pearson's Golden Guide and was published by racing commentator Wayne Kirby.

Bill’s company National Greyhound Form Pty. Ltd. now publishes National Greyhound Form, a 64-page newspaper containing 29 form guides that is on sale in every state of Australia. Bill has said that the success of National Greyhound Form Pty. Ltd. could not have been achieved without the love, devotion and sacrifices made by his wife Joan during years of their marriage, especially in the financially desperate years, which made National Greyhound Form Pty. Ltd. a viable business. Their children Peter, Joanmary, Mark, Paul, Therese and John all contributed to its success.

Sandown administrator Jack McKenna would say that greyhound racing owed Bill Pearson a debt it could never repay.

His approach to business was set early. As a kid, Bill walked dogs in the plantation in the middle of the old Dandenong Rd outside where Monash University now is. He remembers not being popular, with people trying to run him over, spitting on the dogs and in some cases chasing him with a broom. But he remained throughout his life, undeterred by adversity. He had trouble with the Park ranger when he was walking dogs at Fairburn Park. When challenged Bill would reply, “What the f--- to you expect me to do, I’m just a kid trying to make a bob.”

Chris Flint

With the death of Mr. A L Flint (Snr) on 8th July 1933 40 years of to the National Coursing Club came to an end.

One A.L.Chris Flint, a barrister and solicitor, would soon follow his father into the administration of greyhound sports and was soon elected as Vice-President.

Chris Flint was unswerving in his pursuit of XX ideals: the abolition of propriety racing, and that both field coursing and mechanical hare coursing should be controlled under the NCA banner.

In pursuit of the first he continued to advocate that the NCA should establish a non-proprietary club in competition with White City, Maribyrnong and Napier Park that often brought him into conflict with those clubs representative in the NCA.

In 1956 he had the satisfaction of seeing legislation passed that abolished proprietary racing and brought all racing under the control of one body. It was not to be the NCA but a new Greyhound Racing Control Board but with NCA Secretary Chris Flint as the Chairman.

Much of his time as Secretary of the NCA prior to this was spent trying to heal the rift between White City and the other two metropolitan clubs, Maribyrnong and Napier Park. In this he was to remain unsuccessful.

In many ways, Flint's time in the NCA was turbulent. He was not averse to resigning on a point of principle, which he did over the venue for the running of the Waterloo Cup in 1945.

One journalist likened his departure to "Uncle Joe leaving the Kremlin, Winston walking out of 10 Downing Street, or Franklin D. quitting the White House."

However, Flint bowed to the pressures and returned to the Executive with an attitude suggesting he had never been away.

Disenchantment with his colleagues of the National Coursing Association Executive, particularly over the failure of deputations to the Chief Secretary not to seek the end of proprietary speed racing as the NCA's prime objective, led him to decline nomination at the annual meeting of 1952. He remained as President of the A.N.Z.G.A.

When the Bill was approved during the autumn session of Parliament the appointed Control Board came into being immediately holding an informal meeting on May 26th 1955 with Arthur Loftus Christopher Flint as Chairman; the other four members being Eric Herbert, Frank Kelly, Dave Heneberry and Roy Maidment.

If his reputation as a strong administrator had been established with the National Coursing Association and as President of the A.N.Z.G.A. it reached an even higher pinnacle as the first Control Board Chairman as the Board worked to establish the new industry.

Chris Flint lost his long battle with cancer on October 4th, 1958, having submitted his resignation to the Government as Chairman of the Board two weeks earlier.

Frank Morley of the Sporting Globe wrote of Flint's contribution at many levels especially his role in eliminating proprietary racing, legalizing the mechanical hare and gaining totalizator betting.

In Morley's view legal knowledge as the Control Board's first Chairman had been invaluable in compiling a new code of track rules and more importantly unraveling the multitude of problems confronting a controlling authority in its initial years.

Syl Doyle

In 1951, the NCA Executive welcomed a relatively new delegate from Bendigo, Silvester Doyle. He would join Chris Flint and Roy Maidment and prove indefatigable in the battle for NCA control over the industry, the abolition of proprietary racing, the mechanical hare and totalisator facilities. Despite his support for this cause, Doyle remained a coursing man for his entire time in greyhounds.

Doyle proved a worthy successor to Chris Flint. Stewards who were deficient in their evidence suddenly realized that they could not count on absolute support from the Executive in matters of disqualification. With Doyle, and the influence he brought to bear, evidence had to be presented immaculately and without bias or acrimony, especially if a person's livelihood or reputation was at stake.

From 1952 Doyle along with his NCA colleagues made deputations to the Chief Secretary arguing the NCA case. It was to be a fruitless exercise as the Government changed hands with Labor returning to power just three months later. Syl Doyle did not waste any time dealing with new Chief Secretary in January 1953. The Chief Secretary agreed that reforms in speed coursing were long overdue but not that the National Coursing Association be granted official control.

Syl Doyle continued with his approaches to members of parliament in support of the proposed legislation, making many trips from Bendigo writing letters and making telephone calls. He also put pressure on local branches of the Labor Party and reported to the Executive that without the support of branches the proposed legislation would have already been scrapped. He thought that a contribution from the National Coursing Association to Labor Party funds would be appropriate and certainly encourage further assistance

Doyle also took an active part in the original purchase of Lightwood Rd, which would become the home of the new **Sandown Park Greyhound Racing Club**. He was to be one of the NCA Directors for the NCA on the Sandown Board. What was to follow was 40 years of bitterness and acrimony between Doyle and those who gained control of Sandown. As time went by, Syl Doyle felt that the changing structure of the Sandown directorship was creating a position by which the N.C.A. could be outvoted. He noted that "brother had been turned against brother" and that steps needed to be taken if the N.C.A. was to maintain its position at Sandown.

The early 1960's Silvester Doyle, who was now N.C.A. President, was selected by the Government to join the Control Board. Despite his early association with Sandown, he proved to be not friend of the administration of Henry Harrison. He was concerned at large sums were being wasted on high salaries, trips, amenities and grandiose public relations exercises, whilst the country clubs raced for small stakes and the Plumpton clubs were denied any assistance whatsoever from either the distribution scheme or the bookmakers turnover tax fund.

Throughout his years as a Board member and in his continuing role as President of the National Coursing Association of Victoria, Silvester Doyle often raised his concern about the management of finance at the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club. Doyle's interest was very understandable. He had played a central role in the purchase of the site and with the initial years of administration at the Lightwood Road venue. He had also refused to agree that the N.C.A. licence be transferred to Sandown which, as the years passed, became a matter of bitterness and was at the core of differences between himself and Henry Harrison.

Along with his NCA colleagues, Doyle endeavoured to stem the flow of public opinion against coursing when the use of live hares began to receive media and political attention. For men like Doyle, the pursuit of hares by greyhounds was part of the natural order of things and no more exceptional than the hunting of

prey by any predator. When public opinion swung against the NCA and coursing, Doyle called on QC Eugene Gorman who had long advised the NCA and had described field coursing as an “ancient and noble sport” seeking advice about mounting a legal challenge to the Government legislation. Gorman’s advice was emphatic. A challenge to government legislation in this case would defy commonsense, and would be a costly failure. Nonetheless, the banning of live hare coursing saddened Doyle who saw the end of a proud tradition dating back to the early coursing days of the Chirnsides Sir William Clarke and C.B. Fisher.

Syl Doyle continued his long involvement and was a member of the steering committee for the new Lords raceway in Bendigo which was opened in XXX

Sylvester Doyle resigned from the Board in 1977 at the age of seventy under a new Government policy. He was to serve a further fifteen years as President of the N.C.A. He was replaced on the Board by Ron Nestor.

Sylvester Doyle in 1991 was again elected unopposed President of the N.C.A. for the 32nd consecutive year, becoming its longest serving President. Sylvester Doyle would die in office, passing away in his sleep on February 1st, 1992, six days prior to his 85th birthday. He had made a monumental contribution in the battle for non-proprietary control of greyhound racing and the subsequent purchase of freehold land for Sandown. His long service to the industry was honoured with the award of an M.B.E.

In a eulogy Noel Banks would say that Doyle was “a giant among men, a gentleman to the n-th degree” and “that greyhound racing and coursing, although richer for having known him was now poorer for his passing”.

Dr. Jim Gannon

When Jim Gannon retired from the Board of GRV and as a consultant to the Sandown veterinary clinic on June 30, 2002, he was described as a veterinary icon and more importantly a “true gentleman”. A man universally admired, Jim Gannon lists the four people who have impressed him most as Neville Sanders the popular vet from Ivanhoe, Greyhound Racing Victoria's CEO John Stephens whom Gannon regards as without a peer in the history of Greyhound administration, Judge Gordon Lewis who, in addition to conducting the Integrity Inquiry into the racing industry, is also a keen Greyhound owner, and Norm McCullagh, the Warrnambool training legend for his willingness to listen and learn.

Gannon's life in the greyhound industry has five interwoven strands. The first is his work as a vet at the coalface caring for injured animals. The second is his determined efforts to provide as much technical information for trainers to enable them to provide high quality, well-informed care for their dogs. The third is his role in both Australian and international universities teaching the next generation of vets. The fourth is his work as a greyhound medicine researcher. The fifth is his role in establishing professional associations to disseminate this information to his professional colleagues.

Born in 1930 and from a dairy farming background, he graduated with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science from the University of Queensland in 1952. He then returned to establish a veterinary practice in Maryborough in Queensland. He moved to Kew in Victoria where he established a thriving practice with four vets and nine nurses. He continued there until he developed a severe allergic reaction to the tetanus antitoxin he was using on the thoroughbred and trotting horses. With further contact with horses impossible, he turned his attention to greyhounds. He then moved to the Sandown Veterinary Clinic where he was worked with a number of the top vets in Melbourne. He also trained the number of younger vets who went on to become leading practitioners.

Jim Gannon sees increasing the effectiveness and reach of the Greyhound Adoption Program as one of the major challenges ahead of the racing industry. He also sees this as linked to the Responsible Breeding T.... F.... program, which aims to control the breeding practices of dog owners through the registration process to ensure that

only high quality sires and bitches are used. This will produce a smaller number of better performing dogs. Preventing the breeding of low-quality dogs will mean that fewer dogs will be culled because they are not fast enough. The overall result is that fewer dogs will come up for adoption. When this is combined with higher acceptance rights into the Greyhound Adoption Program significant progress would be made towards solving this ongoing problem.

Jim Gannon played a major role in to the use of frozen semen in the Greyhound industry. After a visit to the USA, where he saw the technology being used, he introduced it to Victoria. The use of frozen semen cuts out the expensive travel costs associated with breeding and reduces the travel stress on the bitches, which in turn can affect ovulation. Gannon argues that the huge advantage of artificial insemination with frozen semen is that semen from a champion sire can be stored, almost indefinitely, until appropriate bitch is available. He remains proud that he introduced the International Greyhound Carnival at Sandown where the quality of the Australia and breeding processes was demonstrated by the fact that Australian greyhounds won this international competition every one of the five years it was held. He sees the next scientific frontier for the Greyhound industry as DNA performance matching, which when combined with use of frozen semen has the potential to provide massive improvement in the quality of racing greyhounds. He remained slightly bemused that the thoroughbred industry is making no attempt to introduce this new and advanced technology.

The Country Club Veterinary Service is perhaps the single clearest indication of the impact that the work of Jim Gannon has had on grassroots Greyhound care and ownership. The Country Club Veterinary Service involved Jim travelling to country clubs and providing day clinics for the local owners. The service was in part recognition of the lack of specialized Greyhound services in country areas but more importantly as part of a lifelong crusade to provide trainers with the skills and knowledge to care for the greyhounds properly. He produced the Home Care Charts, a video entitled "Sound Examination of the Racing Greyhound" and "Injury Detection in the Racing Greyhound" all of which were designed to provide trainers with practical advice on the care of greyhounds. Jim's activities did not make him popular

with other vets, who saw part of their customer base being eroded. Jim remains unperturbed to this day.

His defence of musclemen George Schofield against the attacks of the Australian Veterinary Association is based on a clear view of the contribution the muscle men such as George had to make to the industry. He remains disappointed that the vets were not able to formal working relationship that clearly defined where each group's expertise began and ended.

Gannon sees the major milestones in the development of Greyhound victory science as the significant progression in the use of radiology and surgical techniques, particularly in the application of technologies normally associated with human operations. The exchange of international information through the Australian Greyhound Veterinary Association's annual conference and visits by academics and Greyhound sports medicine experts are also both important contributors to the development of Greyhound science. He also believes the technology at the Racing Analytical Scientific Laboratory, headed by John Viner, is amongst the best in the world but admits of the labs are probably one drug behind the crooks. When asked what he thinks next wave of drug cheating will involve, he smiles but says nothing. His professional activities fell into two categories, his veterinary profession and the medicine and surgery of greyhounds. He was President of the Metropolitan Veterinary Practitioners Association, President of the Victorian Division of the Australian Veterinary Association National President of the Australia Small Animal Veterinary Association and National President of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists.

He was invited to join the Anatomy Department at the University of Melbourne and established a teaching practice in Greyhound medicine on the main campus at Werribee. He was also a guest lecturer in Greyhound medicine and nutrition in all four Australian University veterinary schools.

As visiting American academics became aware of these achievements, he was established as an international lecturer in the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland. He travelled on the University circuits and international conferences

lecturing in the areas of Greyhound injury, the physiology of Greyhound performance, the therapy of Greyhound diseases and metabolic problems and in drug control in the racing industry.

He also co-authored a number of books: *Care of the Racing Greyhound*, *Canine Sports Medicine and Surgery* and *Interpreting Greyhound Urine Testing*.

He was appointed as a Fellow of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists, a Fellow of the Australia Veterinary Association, and as a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (London). He was appointed as an advisor to the Greyhound Racing Control Board and appointed as a board member of the Drug Control Laboratory of the Racing Analytical Services Ltd. in 1988 and to the board of GRV in 1997. He been awarded the Australian Sports Medal and is a Member of the General Division of the Order of Australia.

He has been married to Faith since 1954 and has two daughters and three grandchildren.

George Schofield

George Schofield is now 90 years old and his involvement in Greyhound racing goes back to the early 1930s. He is universally well regarded and popular within the Greyhound industry and in 2006 was awarded the Ken Carr medal. On the night of the presentation at the Crown Casino, there were three generations of the Schofield dynasty present, George, his daughter Maureen who is married to Greyhound Racing Victoria CEO John Stephens and his granddaughter Jennifer who is now the general manager at the Bendigo Greyhound Racing Club.

Other than assisting the industry as the Government elected GRCB member for sixteen years, George was also an MGRA Director for eight years, a GOTBA Executive Committee Member for 32 continuous years and a Ballarat GRC Committeeman for ten years. While Life membership of voluntary organizations does not come easily, George is a foundation and life member of the MGRA and a life member of the GOTBA and Ballarat GRC.

George is what was known in the Greyhound industry as a muscleman and he's been involved for 50 years in what is technically known as canine chiropractic manipulations at his Yuroke residence on outskirts of North West Melbourne. George Schofield is a legend in his field and people travel from all over the state to bring their injured animals, some almost paralysed with pain and unable to move their legs, to him for treatment.

There are no appointments at this informal surgery. You write your name on a blackboard and take a seat. The treatment will cost you \$10. George says, "It started off just a silver donation in the 1960s, then it worked its way up to a dollar and when I was away the kids put it up to two dollars. I don't do it for the money," says George in the ultimate statement of the obvious. "My son does this up in Sydney and charges \$50."

There have been moves to outlaw unqualified muscle men such as George...

And the vets with the university educations have mixed reactions to George's work but many who come to watch him work often send customers to him. They take their place in the queue that keeps George working six days a week. As do from the Victorian Police Dog Squad, the Australian Customs Drug Detector Dog Unit, the Office of Corrections Dog Squad and dogs from the Security and Emergency Services Group.

George was born in 1918 and his involvement in greyhound racing began in 1932 when, at the age of 14, he started walking dogs for Bert Stewart in Albury. He left school early and began milking cows for 5/- a week. When he came to Melbourne in 1936, he worked in a confectionery shop in Nicholson St. and handled Iky and Coburg Laddie for Charley Hayson both of whom won their first race at Napier Park "Five quid for a win to owner. The handler did it for love," recalls George. He moved to Newmarket and worked baking bread and trained whippets, which raced in between greyhound race at White City £2/10/- for a winner. Soon he was working night shifts in Footscray and Brunswick and training dogs for the boss when he knocked off.

George's pride and joy was the great 'Shan's View'. Purchased for the then unheard of price of 2000 pounds just prior to the 1960 Australian Cup – this was a time when 800 pounds bought you a house, so as Tommy Murphy would put it, two and a half houses in anybody's language was – a nice piece of money. However Shan's View broke down in the race when running an odds on favourite behind 'Meadow Vale'.

Fortunately 'Shan's View' later became a truly great sire, the 'Brett Lee' of his day, winning four consecutive sires premierships. George trained 'Tebessa' to set the Sandown distance record. 'Tebessa' later became a foundation brood matron and 'Brett Lee's' dam line, through 'Wee Sal' traces back to 'Shan's View' and 'Tebessa'.

George had a long involvement with GOTBA and when the Ballarat Club was on the point of collapse, he received a late night call and a plea for help. George, Jack McKenna, Henry Harrison (not sure about McKenna and Harrison – check?), Roy Duncan and Les Foran got the Greyhound Control Board to agree to have GOTBA take over the club.

The GOTBA would take the over the committee and the week-by-week running of the club until it was back on its feet financially. This involved George and GOTBA members Roy Duncan and Les Foran, driving to Ballarat every Saturday to run the meetings that now included footraces between players from the local football competition. This move brought many football supporters to race meetings. Eventually, the GOTBA was able to hand the running of the Club back to the local

committee with George continuing to be the GOTBA representative for the next decade.

He was an SP bookie for a while and A good night for a bookie was 3000 quid profit but George left when he found his penciller diddling him.

The death of George's wife, Marie to whom he had been married for more than 50 years was a great blow to George. "I didn't go outside for a week, just as in the house. Just didn't have the energy to do anything." His daughter Maureen recalls and in the end it was the dogs that pulled him through. "The people kept coming with their dogs," she said, "and they slipped notes and cards under the door for George. In the end that was what got him going again."

"I love doing it, so I'm back to it. Having those people send those cards and things, helped pull me through," said George.

George continues to be dismayed that Holloways Pills, Goanna Oil, Treacle and Sulphur and Cider Vinegar are out of production. Nonetheless, he is pleased that sore throats still respond to a dirty sock tied around your neck, or alternatively the gargling of turpentine. Fortunately White King still kills every germ known to mankind. Turps used as a poultice will still pull rusty nails out of mulga planks. And finally the liberal application of Friar's Balsam, to any wound, still stops the bleeding – without leaving too much of a scar.

But perhaps most of all, you really know you have made it into George's extended family when he lets you be part of his own vernacular and this means not necessarily being called by your given name.

He continues to be surrounded by family: brother Rastus, his children Top Odds, Moors, Fluf and Rubberneck, grandchildren Linn and Lore, Tayla, Major and Matty, the Abster and Christi, Jenn, Addy Boy Marco Polo and son-in law Johnna. And old friends, Toothy or Bloodajohn, Willy the Wombat Pearson, Dolly, Smokey, Butch and Smith, the Warrnambool Warriors and many others

Graeme Bate

Graeme Bate came to the sport in the 60s and is now widely regarded as one of the best trainers of all times. He puts his success down to being self-taught and learning from his own mistakes. He began with an 8-hectare track at Anakie, which he ran with his wife, later moving to Geelong where he developed a new greyhound training complex at the cost of \$400,000. It featured 60 racing kennels and a 400 m straight track, took two years to complete and is now regarded as one of the best greyhound establishments in Australian.

Graham started racing in Geelong in the mid-1970s when Horrie Capron ran the Geelong club. A man of firm convictions and forthright way of expressing them, he is scathing in his assessment of Horrie Capron and the way he ran the Geelong club. Amongst other things, Bate maintains that in the early days at the Corio track, a number of the kennels backed on to parklands and had loose boards making it possible to tamper with the dogs before a race. He is similarly direct and highly critical of the greyhound hierarchy for not arresting declining attendances, advocating free admission to the tracks.

He considers he has earned his right to criticise. He was Victorian Trainer of the Year from 1986 to 1990 and from 1992 to 1995 which was an outstanding year even by his standards, with Malawi Law's win in the Easter Egg, Fire Lad's Sydney Cup and Fire Legend's win in the Eukanuba Maturity Classic.

In 1994, he won the prestigious Hobart Thousand final for the second time with Extra's Boy after winning a 1992 with Bomber Gleeson. Extra Boy has 32 starts for 16 wins and 8 placings. He also trained You Idiot but is deeply disillusioned with the major players involved in this promotional event.

He has a long list of top dogs, rating Tangairn's performance in 1984 Australian Cup as amongst the best but overall sees Ibrox as his top dog. Satan's Shroud won the \$75,000 Melbourne Cup in 1982, starting at 10/1, leading start to finish. In 1992, Bate had trained two Melbourne Cup winners Satan's Shroud and Fair Sentence. He has won three GOTYs with Ibrox, Hay Dinney, Fair Sentence.

One of his spectacular successes was with Malawi Law who won the Golden Easter Egg at Wentworth Park in 1995. Before Graeme and his wife Beverly started training Malawi Law for West Australian owner John Maple, the dog had had 27 starts and had suffered a series of injuries in successive races.

Graeme took over the training Malawi Law after it dislocated its shoulder at Angle Park. Since joining the kennel, the dog had been devastating form, smashing the Ballarat 400m record and taking out the Ballarat Cup as well breaking his own record for the race.

Before the Easter Egg, Malawi Law, known for its very strong finish, had been mentioned in the press as being unbeatable. Graeme admits to being nervous before the race, where betting topped \$1m for the first time in Australia. Starting at 6/4 favourite and unbeaten in three previous starts, Malawi Law went on to win the \$100,000 race, which Graeme regards as the highlight of his training career. Malawi Law had \$150,000 in stakes and was on the verge of becoming Australia's high stakes winning greyhound. Owner John Maple revealed in 1994 that, after Malawi Law went to Bate's kennel, he received an offer of \$40K for the dog that he had purchased as a pup for \$1000.

Graham continues to be upset about his two-year suspension in XXX when one of his dogs tested positive to morphine. When his property was inspected, the local policeman pointed to the bread in the freezer and said, "That's where your problem is." The bread, which was bought in bulk and fed to the dogs, had poppy seeds on it. To clear his name, he spent \$68000 appealing the case including running a series of independent trials with the University of Melbourne to demonstrate the effects of poppy seeds on dogs.

During his appeal, Graeme was convinced that the judge was asleep when the results of the critical trials were presented. The general opinion, and also Graeme's, was that he was harshly judged and should have got off. But the judge did not support his appeal and he was fined \$10,000 and got a three-month suspension. Graeme is deeply

disappointed that his service to the Greyhound industry was not taken into account when considering this verdict.

Graeme Bate is widely credited with revolutionizing greyhound training methods. When he first started, the main way of training was by walking. Anything else was taboo. Because he had nearly 200 dogs in work, walking them became very time-consuming and difficult. He bought a trial track at Anakie where he started free galloping the dogs on two sand tracks that measured 100m by 15m. His sense was that 100m was about right to get the dog to the turn first and that the dog's natural fitness would last for the rest of the race. He started training Ibrox in this way and the dog began winning races. When people were very critical of this training method Graeme bought a walking machine but the dog's performance dropped off. Ibrox was VGOTY in 1977.

For the record, Graeme Bate has won two Melbourne Cups, the Silver Chief, three Ballarat Cups, three Geelong Cups, the Sydney Cup, four Horsham Cups, three Maturity Classics, two Hobart Thousands, two Shepparton Cups, the Waterloo Cup and the Golden Easter Egg.

Graeme continues training on a smaller scale at his Geelong track assisted by his family. A keen fisherman, he still remembers catching an 18-pound snapper and a 5m shark. He is also a passionate Hawthorn supporter.

Henry Harrison

Henry Harrison was a giant in the Greyhound industry. He inspired great devotion and loyalty in many who worked for him during his 23 years as the chairman of the Sandown Greyhound racing club. He ruled the club as a personal fiefdom and his rule was, "My way or the highway." There were however, others who hated him with a passion. Much of it was a result of his early actions as a committeeman at Sandown where Harrison, McKenna and Dillon, in an act of Machiavellian cunning and beautiful simplicity arranged transfer of the Sandown license from the NCA of Victoria to the club. It was typical of the man. He achieved the independence of the Sandown club from the traditional and conservative coursing interests in the NCA and throughout his time as Chairman, he continued to put the interests of the Sandown club before anything else. He believed that "What's good for Sandown is good for the industry" and he was prepared to wear the resulting and unending animosity of long time NCA stalwarts such as Sylvester Doyle and Noel Banks.

Henry Harrison was a self-made man. He made a significant fortune through his company that sold Harrisons toolboxes to tradesmen in the boom years after the Second World War. He was also a keen to thoroughbred owner and aspired a position on the board of the VRC. However, self-made men were not necessarily made welcome in these rarefied social circles. Thus Harrison tuned his energies and considerable talents to the Greyhound industry and more specifically, the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club. There are probably two events that have shaped the history of modern Greyhound racing. The first is the abolition of proprietary racing and the establishment of the non-proprietary clubs. The second is TAB betting, particularly off course betting, on Greyhound racing. Harrison can take much of the credit for bringing greyhounds within the TAB "club". TAB coverage meant the clubs received a guaranteed percentage of TAB takings in the guaranteed cash flow to support them. Harrison convinced the other two codes, thoroughbreds and trotting to extend TAB coverage to the greyhounds. That he was able to do this was nothing short of miraculous. The other codes had nothing to gain from sharing the wagering dollar with the "dishlickers"

Yet Harrison convinced them and in doing so, accepted the condition that the country Greyhound clubs would have to forgo off-course betting on the horses at Greyhound meetings. He then had to convince the country comes to accept this condition. He argued that the industry would benefit greatly from TAB coverage and that 9% of

TAB would far outweigh the revenues from bookies fees at country meetings. He was right but what he didn't tell the clubs was that only MGRA and Sandown would get TAB coverage and, more importantly, TAB revenue. This would leave the country clubs reliant upon the largesse of Henry Harrison and Harold Matthews, Chairman at MGRA. Nonetheless, he won the day. Harrison also realized, quite correctly, that the country clubs were not able to guarantee the integrity of racing in the way that the two big Metropolitan clubs could and extending TAB betting to them would not be in the best interest of the industry. Again he was right, but his actions did not endear him to that generation of country club members.

Part of Harrison's success was maintaining an influential and powerful network of political friends. He remained on excellent terms with all the sporting ministers, Trezise Reynolds and Dixon. He also introduced long serving premier and keen punter, Sir Henry Bolte to Greyhound racing by giving him Bold Brat a smart performer over 510m.

In addition to being the chairman at Sandown, Harrison was a cofounder and chairman of the Commonwealth Greyhound Racing Association, which later became the Australian Greyhound racing Association. He was a prominent member of the thoroughbred club of Australia becoming a life member 1998 and sitting as chairman from 1974 until 1999. He was also the inaugural chairman and foundation member of the thoroughbred racehorse owners Association becoming a life member 1988 and setting as chairman for 10 years.

Despite all this, he remained very much a man of the people. He loved standing on the terraces at the Port Melbourne Football Ground, supporting his team and rubbing shoulders with the Painters and Dockers. Many who raced at Sandown recall Henry Harrison with great affection and remember that he was always remained on good personal terms with many owners and trainers.

His favourite race at Sandown was the Melbourne Cup that he first saw in 1927 at Napier Park. In 1956, when Napier Park closed, the race was transferred to Sandown and Harrison made it the most sought-after feature in the Australian Greyhound racing calendar.

In addition to his significant contribution to the industry, he provided the Greyhound industry and Sandown in particular with a dazzling media profile. He brought celebrity glamour to Sandown with a young Greg Norman drawing the raffle for a Mercedes-Benz during a Cup meeting. Film stars Robert Stack and Elke Sommer

attended racing meetings that received front-page coverage in the local press. Many were critical of the expense of these activities, Stack was reputed to of cost \$20,000 (\$110,000) to bring out from America. Harrison's reply was that these activities gave Greyhound racing a profile that would bring people flocking through the gates. And they did flock through the gates, with 10,000 people paying \$5 a head to attend the Melbourne Cup and a normal nights' attendance on a Thursday often topping 5000. There were rivers of cash, more than enough to finance these high profile activities. During this time, the public and glamorous face of the Sandown Greyhound racing club was Marg Scarlett, a Harrison protégé and club secretary.

All this was to unravel in the late 1980s with an unfavourable Price Waterhouse audit of the club finances. There had been continual criticism of the financial arrangements at Sandown by a number of Control Board members with strong NCA affiliations, but particularly from Syl Doyle. The release of the report was followed by the resignation of two senior managers from the club. Harrison had his own problems. When he turned 72, he had to face re-election as club chairman, requiring a two-thirds majority to be reappointed. He was unable to achieve this and, in what must have been a bitter blow, was forced into retirement. In an ironic twist, Harrison's son-in-law, Geoff Dawson, was immediately elected chairman, a position he still held in 2007.

The Henry Harrison grandstand at Sandown, opened in 1986 is a memorial to this giant of the industry. Built during Harrison's time as chairman and reduced from an original design to hold 15,000 people, it is a reminder of the vision of the man and of the past glories of the Greyhound industry.

John Stephens

In an industry where experience and success is rated above all else, John Stephens has an impressive pedigree. He has been an owner and a trainer, published a form guide, prepared the Stud Book, served on the Sandown and MGRA committees, been CEO at Sandown and is now the CEO of Greyhound Racing Victoria. His father-in-law is greyhound legend, George Schofield and his wife Maureen is a successful owner and trainer in her own right. His daughter, Jennifer is the General Manager at the Bendigo club.

In the early 1970s, John Stephens was going to Sandown, which he described then as a "community of rogues", after football training at St Kilda. A talented all rounder, he also played cricket for Victoria and of his team mates and opposition he remembers, John McIntosh and Kevin Bartlett, in football and Bill Lawry and Barry Richards in cricket as champions of their day. In his younger days, he was typical of a young sportsman with "an interest". His interest however was instructive of the man. Like the legendary bookmaker, Chummy Parks, he timed the dogs to the first turn to predict who would lead in races. But unlike Parks, Stephens had graduated in mathematics from Melbourne University so he also correlated the dogs' behaviour as they came out of the boxes to give him a more accurate estimate of their performance. A night when he was showing a visitor around Sandown is illustrative of his approach to his work. He was asked, "Which dog is going to win the next race?" "Number six," he replied. When Number 6 duly won the race and he was asked how he knew, he replied, "It's the fastest dog in the race. They usually win. All things being equal, dogs will run within .05 seconds of their normal time. So a dog that runs 24.50 seconds is never going to have any chance of beating one that runs 24.00. You need to understand that a lot of greyhound racing is about statistical probability."

After his undergraduate study at University, John Stephens became a secondary school teacher. But he was soon drawn to the Greyhound industry, establishing his own form guide, becoming a committeeman for the MGRA and later a Control Board member. He spent a brief time as Secretary of the NCA before being recruited as Chief Executive to Sandown shortly after the Price Waterhouse report on the club finances was made public.

The Sandown club that Stephens inherited was in a difficult financial position. It had built a stand originally designed to hold 15,000 fans. The club had borrowed \$2.5 million and was now facing interest rates that were soaring over 20% p.a. The

problem was compounded by the overall decline in track attendances across Victoria with the arrival off- course betting. Eventually the Control board intervened. With Hec Caruana from the Board, Stephens was able to steer Sandown through this crisis without any collateral damage. During this time he was greatly supported by the local MP Jan Wilson who would later go on to become GRV chairman and appoint Stephens to his position as CEO

A critical initiative during this period was the establishment of the Tabaret at Sandown. Sandown club offered debentures to the other Victorian greyhound clubs but only the MGRA took up the offer becoming an equal partner with Sandown in the new venture. However things were not to go smoothly for relationship between John Stephens and the MGRA as the budgets for refurbishing the old 'Club Bar' went from \$460,000 to \$1.2 million. . Despite some bumps in the road, the clubs made \$100,000 from the new venture in the first year. The Tabaret now returns over \$1 million to its two owners. When John Stephens left Sandown to become the CEO of GRV the track and facilities had been completely rebuilt, the financial woes of the early 1990s had been reversed now seeing over \$1.6 million in reserves and strong cash flow from the TAB and Sandown had regained an envied reputation on a world scale.

He sums up the fundamental approach to his professional life, "You have to be smarter than the system you trying to manage." For John Stephens, this means applying sound theoretical ideas to the practices of the everyday world. When he finished his Ph.D. at Monash University, he applied the theoretical knowledge that he gained there to improving the GRV system for prosecuting people who disobeyed the rules of greyhound racing including the doping of dogs. "We have to be smarter than the system we're trying to manage," he told his staff. So they went about becoming smarter than the drug cheats and other offenders. The first successful Supreme Court defence of a prosecution in nearly 30 years sent shockwaves through the industry. The continuing success of the new system has sent a clear message about the determination of GRV to ensure the integrity of the industry.

During his time at GRV, John Stephens has transformed the role of the CEO. Much of his time is now spent negotiating with government, the TAB board and the other codes on issues primarily involving the financing of the industry. Turnover in Greyhound racing in Victoria currently runs at nearly \$700 million a year and the board has seen its market share growth from 9% of a \$2.3 Billion business to 18% of

a \$3.5 Billion business in the last decade, eight years of which have been under Stephen's leadership.

As CEO, John Stephens now deals with range of issues that include the perennial battle for equitable TAB funding, distribution channels, television rights, intellectual property and integrity. This has led to a quantum leap in the professionalism and skill of human resources across the industry as Stephens is placing a strong emphasis not only on professional and academic qualifications, but also on recruiting relatively young administrators into senior positions For the greyhound racing industry

Ken Carr

Ken grew up in Essendon and went to school in Canterbury completing fifth form. He played cricket and football when he was young and had a run in the Essendon thirds. His early involvement in the industry was through his parents who were keen race goers. This led to his part-time job as gate attendant at North Melbourne in 1958. He became a part-time office copy boy until appointed as the club grader in 1966, which continued his involvement with the MGRA until he joined the board in 1989.

Ken Carr is remembered as one of the great administrators of Greyhound racing. He is considered an icon as an administrator based on his work at the MGRA and as appointed as Executive Director of the Control Board.

His time as executive director of the MGRA at Olympic Park was during the golden period of Greyhound racing in Melbourne. He remembered his favourite era in Greyhound racing as the late 60s and early 70s when there wasn't much competition and there were big crowds and some great championship racing. It was also a time when Ken Carr was instrumental in putting the sport on the map.

Like Henry Harrison at Sandown, Ken Carr set about defining Greyhound racing by the glamour of the Olympic Park hostesses, including Miss Victoria, Judy Greene, and the star quality of people such as Joe Frazier and Louis Armstrong? Local stars were not forgotten and linking the Australia Cup to the Moomba Festival saw a young king of Moomba, Molly Meldrum, appearing in the press embracing a Greyhound. You also achieved great fame for the posters of scantily clad models promoting races Olympic Park. However, the TAB thought he'd gone too far and found the posters offensive, refusing to put them up in the pub TABs.

He was a strong supporter of central grading and in particular in the system of telephone nominations in which he regarded Victoria as leading the way. He also recognized that, despite club protests, the involvement of the TAB betting made centralized grading was inevitable.

During his time at the board, there was a continued investment of \$2 million of Development Board money in existing tracks, particularly upgrading the lighting at all the clubs and installing new starting boxes. He also recognized that the bookmakers were finding the going tough even with telephone betting.

Carr was appointed Executive Director of the Control Board by Racing Minister Trezise and Board Chairman Bill Collins. Carr is believed to have insisted that, as Executive Director, he would be a board member. Many saw his move from the MGRA to the more senior position at the Control Board as an evitable progression for a man who was regarded as one of the most respected club administrators in Victoria. He had a great capacity for friendship and for returning loyalty and was much admired by the staff both Olympic Park and later at the Board. His outgoing personality made him the right man in the right place for the boom years of the 1970s when he dealt with politicians, controlling bodies, sponsors and the media with consummate skill. He was particularly adept at maintaining good relations with the local media. His Friday lunches at the Red Emperor have become the stuff of legend and his relationship with the press was so good that he was unable to hold a "Press Hurdles Race" with members of the press would run round Olympic Park jumping over the Greyhound hurdles.

During his time at Olympic Park, he underwent major surgery for cancer. Cancer was to reappear during his term at the Control Board. Ken Carr had died on the 25th of November 1996 at the age of 58. His friend and colleague, Bill Collins, who also had terminal cancer, spoke at his funeral. Ken Carr was survived by his wife Brenda and three children.

Marg Long

Marg Long was born in 1949 in Powong. Her earliest memories of the greyhounds were listening to her father, who was born in 1890; tell stories of the early coursing days. She was married at the age of 19 and she and her husband, Kevin trained 8 to 10 racing dogs on their property called Yrmar. Marg's day job was as office manager at Peter's Icecream in Traralgon. Her other job was as a secretary for the GTOBA branch in Traralgon. In the early 80s, the position of secretary at the Traralgon club came up and the club president, Stan Johnson, approached Marg to apply for the job. When she started at Traralgon, the club was a non-TAB club and one of the most significant achievements during her six years at the club was building the club to full TAB coverage of the club's 12 race meetings. With the club in debt to the tune of \$60,000, TAB coverage ensured that the debt would be paid off and that the club would survive financially. In those days, the club's secretary did everything which often included making sure there were enough dogs for a meeting. Marg was also responsible for the grading and her guiding principle was grading from the best dogs down and then trying to give every a start in a race. She made a point of being quite upfront with the people who were graded into the tough races and of being accessible to owners and trainers. She remembers this led to what she described as "a few vigorous exchanges" over the years.

During her time of the club, Marg saw the introduction of central grading under Board Chairman Brian Halpin. The move effectively removed grading from the hands of the club secretaries and was widely unpopular with the country clubs and many of whom found the rationale for the move, that centralized grading remove the possibility of favouritism and corruptions within the country clubs, deeply insulting. Marg Long was one of the critics of the way the change was implemented and horrified when she found that off-the-record comments made to a journalist were reported on the front page of the leading newspaper.

When asked to reflect on her experiences as a woman in a male dominated industry, Marg Long is philosophical. Being a woman *and* coming from a small country club was not an advantage in dealing with some of the senior administrators of the board in those days, one of whom she remembers as "a pig of a man." Her motto when she

worked at Traralgon was "Just deal with the crap and get on with the job". However the pressures of the job took their toll on her marriage and she and Kevin separated.

While working at Traralgon, Marg filled in for Kerry Askew at the Geelong Club and developed a good working rapport with him. In the late 1990s, two attractive jobs became available. One was with the NCA with responsibility for maintaining the studbook and the other was as assistant-secretary at Geelong. John Stephens moved to the NCA and Marg took the job at Geelong, soon succeeding Kerry Askew when he left.

Marg admires the work that Kerry Askew did at Geelong particularly in relation to his work with club president Horrie Capron. Capron and his sidekick, Jack Luke, exercised complete control over the racing operations at Geelong and as one insider from those days observed "if you weren't prepared to do things Horrie's way then you could forget racing a dog at Geelong".

Kerry Askew and future president Steve McKee worked to broaden the membership base at Geelong and end Capron's reign. When Marg took over from Askew, she was left with a highly supportive committee that included Chairman Jack Howard Fred Gillett and Ron Nestor. However the break with the previous era was not complete and was fraught with tensions between the new committee and some members of the old guard. The situation was not helped by the Friedman scandal. The time proved expensive for the club as a committee was frequently seeking legal advice to defend itself from accusations and political infighting particularly over the issue of the administration of the Saturday market.

In 1992, Marg moved to Olympic Park to work as the racing manager, becoming general manager in 1993. The halcyon days of crowds of 5000 people attending the racing at Olympic Park were over. Marg inherited the club that was facing financial difficulties exacerbated by a stakes war that had broken out with Sandown. Her Directors put an end to it by cutting the stake money at Olympic Park.

One Monday, she received a knock on the door and was told that the City Link tunnel was going through and that the MGRA would need to vacate the Olympic Park site

for three years. Marg believes that Michael Fielding, who was appointed as a negotiator for City Link, indicated that the MGRA could return to Olympic Park after that time. However, Olympic Park Trust Chairman Graeme Samuels did not support this and the Trust's plans for the future made no mention of an MGRA return to the Olympic Park site.

Negotiating the club's departure from Olympic Park with City Link and the establishment of the club at the Meadows is now part of the club history. Marg remembers that as the track is located on a high point in Melbourne, it is subject to particularly strong winds. With a highly unionised workforce, this was a significant problem in maintaining continuity of work on a project with a very tight deadline. Marg remembers carrying many slabs of beer onto the site to maintain the motivation of the builders to complete the work on time. The final days were particularly hectic and at one stage she addressed the builders with a plea to complete the track on time. The ever-persuasive Marg Long convinced the Builders Union to work round-the-clock to complete the track for the opening night. Later, the club put on a special race night to recognize the work of the subcontractors and labourers who had worked on the site.

Marg singles out three individuals for special mention in her time as a Greyhound administrator. The first is trainer Graeme Bate, who Marg regards as a genius in his ability and intuition to pick good dogs from the large numbers he trained and then prepare them to win big races. Like Graeme himself, she believes he was unfairly treated in the two suspensions he received from racing authorities. The second stand out individual is the widely regarded administrator Ken Carr who endeared himself for working his way up from selling race books as a kid to being the CEO of the Control Board. Marg admired his common sense and practical experience and the fact that he was highly approachable and a "straight shooter". The final stand out was Carr's boss, the legendary race caller and Board Chairman Bill Collins. He was, according to Marg "the right man for the industry at the time" who provided Greyhound racing with a high profile leader.

Marg Long continues as General Manager at the Meadows. She is the first of only two women to be appointed to lead a Greyhound Racing Club. She now runs a highly

successful operation, one that is a far cry from the early Traralgon days one which Marg sees not only as a greyhound racing club but as a business operating in a complex and competitive market.

Ned Bryant

Ned Bryant, known as the Silver Fox, was remembered as a lovable larrikin. The “Silver Fox” was a reference to the legendary Australian tennis coach, Harry Hopman who pulled off many tactical masterstrokes for Australia in the Davis cup. Bryant, like his tennis counterpart, was a master tactician who turned Greyhound training into an art form. In his 50-year association with Greyhound racing, Bryant won virtually every major feature on the Victorian racing calendar including the 1995 Melbourne cup quinella and the 1991 Australian Cup, which were considered by Bryant as his highest achievements. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest trainers in Victorian greyhound history.

He was a lifetime committeeman at Cranbourne when he retired from training after winning the 1991 Australian Cup was Franklin Deano. Only nine days before the cup final, Ned was fighting for his life in Dandenong hospital's intensive care unit after suffering a ruptured aorta in a car accident. He underwent emergency surgery for five hours and was reported to have a 50-50 chance of surviving. In true character, he made a remarkable recovery and realized a lifetime goal by winning the cup and the \$65,000 prize. However, he didn't know the Cup result until midnight that evening as he fell asleep after listening to only half the race.

A love-hate relationship between Bryant and the Melbourne race-goers developed over Olympic Park 732m record holder, Supplier. Fans were unhappy with the improvement shown by Supplier in the finals of the fighters in the peaks at Olympic Park and greeted the dog on two occasions was a noisy demonstration. After finishing fourth in the eight, supplier won the final seven days later by nine banks and in a new track record of 43.58. A month later in the heat of the anniversary trophy, supplies finished third in seven days late scored a comfortable victory in the final. This lack of one of the most hostile demonstrations witnessed three years. Bryant and owner Paul Deakin were shocked when the punters lined the fence Olympic Park and hurled threats and abuse at them. Hostilities continued right through the presentation. In September, Supplier did it all again. Entered in the Sir John Dillon trophy and red-hot favourite in the heat, Supplier was only able to manage fourth place, 12 lengths

behind the winner. Seven days later in the final, Supplier proved too good for the field, finishing in 43.99.

In 1986, Bryant had his first ever success at the Melbourne Cup winning the quinella with Sydney Dingaan and Shining Chariot. Sydney Dingaan took her prize money to \$44,000 that the night and Bryant walked away with \$45,000 for the night. Bryant had a brush with the Control Board stewards, which almost ended his association with the industry when he was fined \$300 for having contravened the rules of Greyhound racing. The fine was as result of the kennelling arrangements and the care of the staying greyhound Lady Gramar, owned by Killarney owner Kevin Mugavin. Mugavin had left Lady Gramar with Bryant to two weeks without notifying the Board of the kennel change. Mugavin was fined \$400 as well as being disqualified for three months for giving false and misleading evidence. When Bryant was fined \$300 for the same offence, he immediately announced his retirement. He said he would rather be out of the game than put up with the stewards measures. He said is only doing a favour for a friend and that nothing underhand or sinister took place. However, after some soul searching in the following days, he decided that his decision had been hasty. "While I'm happy to be back, I do feel a bit foolish making a comeback only a few days after announcing it was all over."

1994 Ned Bryant won the Arnott-Harper Silver Chief Classic final over 511m with Rumpus Pappa. He had been waiting for 40 years for a Silver Chief victory. Bryant, who was never one to show a lot of emotion, could hardly conceal his grin. "I was really starting to wonder whether I would ever breakthrough in this race now I have, I must say the wait was worthwhile."

In 1995, the MGRA paid tribute to the legend, hosted by the "Silver Chief Club" attended by 200 guests. It was a "Roast to Ned Bryant" night when the anecdotes flew thick and fast prompting roars of laughter from Bryant's peers. In reply Bryant said, "Greyhound racing has really been my life and I've made some wonderful friends. I love the sport. It's as simple as that."

Ned Bryant, the man known as the Silver Fox, died at the age of 76 on May 18th 1997. Remembered as a lovable larrikin, he was survived by his wife Maureen, daughters Colleen, Shari and Christine and sons Michael and John.

Noel Banks

Born in Dalmore near Tooradin in May 1921, Noel Banks spent his early childhood in Oakleigh where he went to Oakleigh state primary school and then to Caulfield Tech. His first job was for a year with the Singer sewing machine company in Melbourne for 17/6 a week. He then worked at the West Oakleigh abattoirs for a year and graduated to the Oakleigh Brickyards where his father and three brothers worked. He returned to the Brickyards after World War II and eventually bought a truck to cart bricks until the late 1960s.

When he was 11 he was given his first Greyhound by an uncle who had rescued the dog from injury after it was bewildered by the traffic in Flinders Street. He began following coursing in 1934 following the opening of the Sandown Speed Coursing track, where he won his first Plumpton competition. His first dog was Winnellie, bought for £10. He also raced one of Silver Chief's pups, a dog named Cansia, which had his first win on the tin hare at Harold Park. He took a strong interest in breeding and bred dogs one of which Merrileigh Belle won the Waterloo cup and also recorded wins with the tin hare in Melbourne and Sydney. He also won Waterloo cups with Coonega, Merrileigh Master and Loem in the 1950s. The next seven years 1956-1962 in the history of the Waterloo Cup would see the newly appointed National Coursing Association Executive member Noel Banks carve his name into coursing history winning six of the seven cups decided,

He devoted a lifetime to sport but particularly to his first passion, coursing. He became a member of the NCA executive in 1955 representing the Tynong coursing club. He began as secretary 1969 albeit reluctantly, for a three month period and stayed in the position to 17 years.

Before joining the NCA, he was one of the original directors of the MGRA and was appointed to the Greyhound racing control board 1964 and served on the board for 24 years during which time he worked with Petty, Halpin as Chairmen.

In 1973, Banks was appointed as chief steward for the Victorian Greyhound Racing control board.

In addition to his work in greyhounds, he was a Justice of the Peace and a committeeman of the Bendigo Coursing Association. For 10 years, he was President of the Kyneton Shire, the government nominee on the Kyneton Water Trust and a member of the Kyneton Sewerage Authority. He was also President of the Kyneton Football Club to six years, President of the Bendigo Football League for 14 years and President of the Victorian Country Leagues Association for six years and acted as President and Treasurer of the Kyneton Golf-Bowling club. From Neil Brown He was awarded the OAM. In 1986 and he died at the age of 70 in November 1991.

Peter Giles

Peter Giles was born in Tasmania, working on a sheep farm in Victoria before taking a bookmakers license in 1975 and 1995 changed directions and became a car salesman in partnership with a friend for five years. Through all this he continued to have a number of dogs in his kennels but first started racing greyhounds in the early 60s at Warragul when he got at a “giveaway” called Wingette from Les Foran. He raced the dog over maiden distances at Olympic Park on Monday and Thursday nights where, driving to Melbourne with the dog in his Morris Minor.

He was making £8 a week working on a sheep farm and when he got a couple of placings with his early dog, he decided to become more involved. He noticed that while there were a lot of dogs around the Moe area but that there were no big trainers with large numbers of dogs in work. No one had runs for the dogs in those days, relying on walking the dogs as training. He visited Graeme Bate, one of the state’s most successful trainers and saw the run that he was using. Impressed by Bate’s methods, he decided to copy them by putting a run in on the sheep farm where he now lives in the La Trobe Valley. Like Bate, he trained his dogs by alternating galloping for couple of days and then walking for couple. He gradually build his team up to fifty racing dogs and at times had between 50 and 60 including the dogs were being broken in.

He worked as a bookie at Traralgon but said there was a limited amount of money available for betting on dogs that were managed from shopkeepers and pizza delivery boys. Despite this, it was still relatively easy to make some money as a bookie as TAB betting was hampered by the next-day pay out and the early betting shops were not allowed radios, coffee bars or anything that made the place attractive.

Being a bookie, he made it his business to know most of the dogs racing in the area and he found that Pearson’s form guides invaluable. He also watched the videos of the races to get a better understanding of the dogs’ form. He noticed that the actual betting on a race was normally done in about 15 minutes before the race and he confident that if anything was going he would normally be told in time. Part of his strategy was to lay any bets likely to lose \$1000 with other bookies. For him a good night would be clearing between \$800 and \$1000 and holding \$10,000 for the meeting.

When he first started racing, racing on a Saturday afternoon was a big day out and the trip to Melbourne to try for the bigger stakes was a very big event and you needed to

take the afternoon off work. Although the stake money was not that high and winning at Sale was only worth around \$160. While this was not a lot of money, he was the first local trainer to decide to try train dogs for a living.

It wasn't easy and given the struggle to make a living, he believed that film stars and the promotions at Olympic Park and Sandown were not greatly appreciated by the industry's grassroots and that they didn't have a lasting impact on attendance.

However, he remembers Henry Harrison fondly and says that he would always stop and say hello and chat with the owners. He is also very conscious of the fact that people look down on the greyhounds and remembers that Harrison was a great ambassador lifting the image of the sport.

He was deeply involved getting the track established at Warragul and process of getting the track established there. He has strong views on track design and his ideal track would be very similar to the Horsham track believing that a circle is better for the spectators ahead of the big horseshoe style track.

He has also been involved with other clubs in the area. He recalls the contribution of Leo Longmore and his family at Traralgon, and the hard working Jack Callaghan as the kind of man who couldn't do enough for you. He remembers Marg Long, now General Manager at the Meadows, as being a very good secretary during her time at Traralgon. However, he believes that Traralgon had a period when it couldn't get its committee relationships right and it was Marg Thomas who got things sorted out.

Over time Peter's reputation as a trainer of stayers has led to his being offered increasing numbers of this type of dog. Like all big trainers, he recognizes the necessity to turn dogs over if they're not earning and he emphasizes the importance of putting dogs into the Greyhound Adoption Program. He also recognizes that the program will not meet the needs of all the retiring dogs and that it is a very good idea that dogs with more than a hundred starts are given preference.

Winning the Melbourne Cup with City Blitz has been a highlight particularly as Giles describes, "He came from the clouds to snatch victory in the shadows of the post in a sensational performance. It was a great thrill."

Another was Puzzle Prize, which won five big events in one year, including the Sydney Cup and the Gold Cup in Brisbane. The most satisfying was Jack Junior's win in the Adelaide Cup win in 2000 when he broke the race record with a dog with wife Jeanine owned and he bred owned trained. He later bred the dog and the litter had a number of group 5 winners.

He attributes some of his success to having a number of good owners who supply them with quality dogs and that this combination makes his job much easier. He is increasingly turning his attention to breeding in the belief that with good bloodlines, "You can keep the youngsters coming through and hopefully unearth a top liner in each batch. It's the only way you can survive." The rest of his success comes from the great team he has around him his wife, Jeanine, his daughter Lauren, his son Michael Michael's girlfriend Anne and Janelle Day.

At the time of the interview, Peter had a mother and a litter of 10 pups in the living room. The 10 pups were delivered by caesarean section, the second that the bitch. He was expecting to get about \$10,000 per dog and said that a good return on such a dog would be \$200,000 during its racing life.

He is optimistic about the future and believes that "the sport is going exceptionally well, the stakemoney is fantastic, the facilities are excellent and the board is doing a great job to ensure the sport will get better"

Ron Nestor

Ron Nestor was a big man in every aspect of his life, his size, his character, his sense of duty, his sense of fun, his capacity for hard work and above all his generosity.

Two stories recounted by his daughter, Pauline, during her eulogy at his funeral capture the essence of the man.

Ron was a Senior Constable in the Victorian police. He once chased a villain into a laneway North Melbourne and the guy turned on him with a knife. Ron disarmed the villain by saying, "Put that down or I'll break your bloody neck."

The second story was from Pauline's schooldays when a pair of shoes went missing after a physical education class. It turned out that a child, who didn't have proper shoes, had stolen her classmate's. Under pressure the girl confessed and returned to shoes. Pauline recounted the story at dinner that night. The Senior Constable did not see a thief but rather a child who was so embarrassed by not having proper shoes that she was compelled to steal. Next day, without telling anyone, Ron went to the school and gave the Principal the money for new shoes for the child.

Ron's involvement with greyhounds began in 1943. He recalled, "It was open coursing in the winter that took my fancy most of all. Out in the paddocks around Diggers Rest, Toolen Vale, Sunbury and the Werribee district. To me coursing was the best sport ever and track racing was where you tried to beat the Bookmaker." Nestor slipped and judged open coursing until it was outlawed in 1964.

Ron believed that Plumpton was the purest form of Greyhound racing and it was his lifelong ambition to go to Clonmel, which he finally did with Gavin Fitzpatrick and Adam Wallish on a promotional trip. Anne remembers going to Plumpton meetings with the kids and recalls those days as a much simpler time with the picnic atmosphere, braziers to keep you warm and her daughter Pauline winning 2/- in a foot race.

As a trainer, Nestor won his first race at Tatura in 1951 with a bitch called 'Mondalla Pearl ". He trained winners at all the old tracks including the old Sandown Park when it was on the old racecourse site, Gracedale Park, North Melbourne, Olympic Park, Napier Park, Maribyrnong, White City, Nelson Park and Corio Parks in Geelong, Broadway Park in Ballarat, Warrnambool and Wonthaggi. He won races behind the Pacemaker and the Tin Hare.

Nestor found the current standard stake money quite unbelievable. " The only way we could get a quid was out of the punt in our day. No one had any money, and the

train was our main form transport. To get to a coursing meeting, we would pay two shillings for a ride in Charlie Hingston's bus. They were the best trips of my life. We raced for £5 - £10 in the country and £17/10/- in the city. It cost 10/6 to enter. When you consider the average wage in the 40's was £5 and about £15 in the 50's, stake money has come a long way."

Ron's proudest boast was that he always provided for his family of five children, in his words, "There is always meat on the table and you kids always had a decent pair of shoes". But to do this he often worked three jobs, in the police force, at the Brunswick ice works and as a bouncer. In addition, he was the Superintendent of the Main Arena and a Life Member of the Royal Agricultural Society. He worked for the great thoroughbred trainer, Colin Hayes and was proud to be a part-owner of How Now, a Caulfield Cup winner.

Nestor became a member of the National Coursing Association executive in 1954 and the treasurer in 1976, a position he filled till 1994. He was the Vice President to the late Silvester Doyle and upon his death Ron became President, a position he held until resigning in 2001. He was also a committee member of the Geelong Club for twelve years and at one time was the official clocker at Corio Park and Broadway Park in Ballarat.

In 1977, he was appointed by the Minister to be a Director of the Greyhound Racing Control Board, a position he held for 22 years. He also served as Delegate and Treasurer of the Australian and New Zealand Greyhound Racing Association from 1967 till 1999. Ron Nestor died of a heart attack on March 19, 2006 while driving home from work to a family birthday party. He is survived by his wife and his five children, 10 grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

ROY MAIDMENT

Roy's parents had migrated from Somerset in England settling first in Queensland then Cranbourne where Roy was born in 1886 later moving to Malvern saw the family conduct a business of dairying. Generations of children in Malvern, Caulfield and surrounding suburbs would be raised on Maidment's milk.

In the immediate years prior to World War 1, Maidment was elected to the National Coursing Club Executive. He soon made his mark as a greyhound administrator gaining such respect that in four years of absence serving with the A.I.F. overseas in World War 1 he was re-elected in absentia.

His experience in the UK during the war helped him understand the enormous that success of the new sport of speed coursing in the USA and England foreshadowed a similar outcome in Australia. It was Maidment's steadfast view was that speed coursing in Victoria was inevitable, and it was important that the National Coursing Club should take control. He was aware that future greyhound participation would involve new generations of Victorians who would have no appreciation or interest in coursing, as he and his colleagues had known it.

Roy Maidment was Vice-President of the NCA from 1919 to 1929. In 1930, Roy Maidment was elected President of the National Coursing Club. The year following, A.L. Flint accepted the official position of Secretary formalizing a partnership that would last for three decades. It seems certain that Maidment, along with Flint and then Doyle, played a significant role behind official scenes in the long political campaign leading up to the passing of the Dog Control Act when he was appointed to the Dog Racing Control Board along with Christopher Flint as Chairman, Eric Herbert, Frank Kelly, Dave Heneberry.

In the early stages, the Board required finance but a deputation to Government was unsuccessful, Premier Cain's reply being "not one thrupenny bit for dog racing".

Roy Maidment immediately loaned the Board £500 (\$16,000) free of interest to see it through.

Maidment's service to the Control Board had been largely honorary although he had agreed to take a nominal salary over his final years. He had been Secretary of the N.C.A., A.N.Z.G.A. and keeper of the registrar since 1933. He had produced the Australian Stud Book since 1940.

In 1964 Roy Maidment resigned from his three secretarial posts and as keeper of the studbook. Age had caught up with him and his sight was failing. It was a tribute to Maidment that the N.C.A. re-elected him to the executive immediately.

Roy Maidment's departure from the day-to-day administration of the three bodies marked the end of an era. He had always been an impressive advocate for the sport and a fine public speaker. In a speech at the 1932 Waterloo Cup function at Benalla, Maidment spoke with passion about the debt owed to his predecessors back to Sir William Clarke.

By late 1966, he found himself unable to read the agenda and associated documents. Roy Maidment would also apologise for his absence from the 1967 annual meeting of the N.C.A., the first he had missed since service in the A.I.F. had taken him overseas during World War I. His remaining hope was that he would survive for the centenary celebrations being planned for 1973. This was not to be. Robert John Maidment died on June 11th, 1973 exactly three months prior to the centenary dinner. He was 87 years of age.