

1963 Review of the Year

During the year the Greyhound Afternoon Service was established, tracks supplied afternoon racing for the bookmaking clients. However the promoters were unhappy because only some bookmakers were paying fees and the tracks could not make a profit running these meetings. A request was made for a guaranteed payment for the off course rights, this was the first missed opportunity for the industry to sell their product for what it was worth.

Negotiations would continually take place between the stadiums, the NGRS and the bookmakers. Arguments would break out and Clapton Stadiums Ltd owners of Clapton, Slough and Reading scrapped evening starting times in an attempt to scupper the bookmaker's shops. Afternoon tracks had already implemented this procedure.

A further development resulted in the tracks ending the annual £100,000 agreement with the off course bookmakers to provide forecast and tricast tote odds. The bookmakers announce that they will provide their own odds based on SP's.

Tracks continued to close thick and fast, greyhound racing came to an end at the Somerton Park (Newport). The Welsh track had provided twice-weekly meetings every Tuesday and Friday but attendances had dropped significantly. Only 700 gathered to witness the death knell of the sport in Newport. The mechanical hare had the last laugh as the final race was about to start, the traps opened too soon and the hare was left chasing the dogs. Len Davies, secretary at Somerton Park, told a local newspaper: "Some of the best dogs in the country have raced at Somerton Park. Perhaps the best of them all was Antarctica, a white bitch which set a track 450 yards record in a Somerton Stakes heat in 1958."

More bad news followed as Clydeholm in Scotland and Hanley in Stoke closed. The final meeting at Clydeholm took place on 28th November before the track was demolished and the site redeveloped into a shopping Centre.

The Rank Organisation approached Southampton owner Charlie Knott with the intention of buying the whole site and an offer was made and subsequently accepted. Rank's original plans were to retain the land for building houses after closing the facilities but Knott refused to sell under these circumstances. Rank then backed off and agreed to run the ice rink and bowling alley, but their long term ambition would remain to sell the land on to a developer. As it was, a large parcel of the land was sold almost immediately and luxury houses were built. The town council honoured Mr Knott by naming one of the new residential roads as Charles Knott Gardens but it did not save the greyhound track.

Some small consolation for the industry was the opening of Milton Keynes on the Groveway near Ashland, Bletchley on 25th July.

A relatively new competition known as the 'The Merit Puppy Championship' was renamed and rebranded with more prize money, it would be called the 'Juvenile'. The event would remain at Wimbledon.

Clapton hosted Pinewood Studios as they shot scenes for a new film starring Rita Tushingham and Mike Sarne called Bethnal Green.

The Gold Collar at Catford was won by Music Guest from Lucky Boy Boy, Irish Derby champion Shanes Legacy finished last in the final and apart from winning the 1,000 Guineas would not live up to the expectations of his owner since he bought him the previous year.

The 1963 Greyhound Derby

Dromin Glory returned for the Derby and the popular runner topped the ante-post betting which came as no surprise considering his brilliant finish to the previous year. Trainer John Bassett had two more very useful performers taking their place as well; they were recent Gold Collar runner up Lucky Boy Boy and Misty King. Scottish based Bessie Lewis travelled down with a greyhound Called Crazy Platinum a son of Crazy Parachute.

The first round yet again left the punters fuming as three greyhounds quoted at 250-1 and 500-1 ante-post won heats. Then Dromin Glory fell victim to the first round jinx and failed to qualify, connections were perplexed at his poor run. Dual Derby finalist Black July was next to tumble out in round two.

Consolation for John Bassett came with Lucky Boy Boy who was successful in both the heats and second round. Dalcassian Son matched Lucky Boy Boy by doing the same and even recording the same win time in the second round. Bassett scored again with Misty King and the remaining race was won by Greenane Wonder, a heat that ended with the disqualification of Lowerton Hero. Jack Harvey the trainer of Greenane Wonder had earlier announced that the great Mile Bush Pride had passed away.

The opening semi was taken by 20-1 shot Bulgaden Glory from Barronstown King and Misty King in a race marred by trouble that led to the elimination of Dalcassian Son. The field flashed past the winning line together in a much cleaner second semi-final resulting in Greenane Wonder pipping Hack It About by a short head with Lucky Boy Boy holding on for the final qualification spot by a short head from Irish challenger Jamie Serra. Gold Collar champion Music Guest's campaign also came to an end at this stage.

Although Lucky Boy Boy lost his unbeaten record in the semi-finals he merited a starting price of even money favourite for the big one. Greenane Wonder was fast out the traps and moved wide at the bend, as he had throughout the competition and this caused Bulgaden Glory and Misty King to be bumped leaving them no chance. Lucky Boy Boy took advantage of the trouble and never looked back after winning by six and three quarter lengths.

Bob Burls based at Wembley managed to steer two hounds through to the Welsh Derby final and came out top with Fairys Chum. The DeMulder name appeared in a major final for only the second time with Cahara Rover finishing fourth and Fitzs Star finished fifth, three years after winning the title. Dromin Glory had a Welsh campaign to forget, he weighed in too heavy in a trial and therefore another was organised at the last minute but the star arrived late for kennelling and didn't make the first round.

The Derby finalists would be prominent throughout the year. Hack It About was fourth in the Oaks final behind Cranog Bet and both Misty King and Bulgaden Glory finished unplaced in the Scurry Gold Cup, as did Oaks champion Cranog Bet.

Black July returned to have another go at the Irish Derby; the black dog had been unlucky the year before and had since had a decent English Derby campaign but of course faced tough opposition. One not lining up was General Courtnowski who had just won the Easter Cup and St Leger double. In the first round Black Julys luck was out again as he finished lame whilst the fastest heat winner was Drumahiskey Venture trained by Eithne Hammond. Venture duly posted the fastest time again in round two recording a smart 29.40. Before the semi-finals Trigo Cup winner was sold and withdrawn after being found lame. Laundry Maid beat Drumahiskey Venture and Hi Spark defeated Powerstown Proper in the first two semis before a sensation in the third. Rocks Commander was caught by Jamie Serra after leading easily to lose by a short head; the stewards then disqualified the latter for fighting and the pre competition ante post favourite Melody Wonder was promoted to the final after finishing third.

Drumahiskey Venture drew trap one and was sent off at 5-4f and after Venture caught the outsider Powerstown Proper he drew clear to win by 4 1/2 lengths. Melody Wonder ran on well again to finish third and would go on to lift the National Sprint. Powerstown Proper also gained further honours by winning the Laurels.

Dalcassian Son fresh from a short rest after a decent English Derby campaign picked up the £1,000 Laurels prize, Cranog Bet made a classic final for a third time in a row.

The autumn events were the Scottish Derby and Cesarewitch with Bob Burls classic winner Fairys Chum losing out to Tom Johnstons We'll See in the Carntyne decider before Lucky Boy Boy was well beaten in the West Ham event.

The end of year Silver Greyhound Awards in the Great Room at Grosvenor House the British Greyhound Breeders & Owners Association celebrated the stars of the year. We'll See was named greyhound of the year and Cranog Bet took best bitch. The Best British bred went to Tripaway and the best British bred bitch went to Precious Margo. Finally the award for best dam went to Creeting Magic.



Scurry champion Lucky Joan II with trainer John Bassett.

Greyhound Derby Final (29th June - White City 525y, £3,000)

Pos	Greyhound	Trap	Trainer	SP	Time
1	Lucky Boy Boy	1	John Bassett (Clapton)	1-1F	29.00
2	Greenane Wonder	2	Jack Harvey (Wembley)	4-1	6 ¾
3	Barronstown King	6	Clare Orton (Wimbledon)	25-1	1
4	Hack It About	3	Jack Harvey (Wembley)	4-1	12
5	Misty King	5	John Bassett (Clapton)	8-1	2 ½
6	Bulgaden Glory	4	John Haynes (Private)	20-1	1 ¼

Grand National (White City 525yH – Apr 27 - £500)

1	Indoor Sport (Barney O'Connor)	4-5f	29.98	6
2	Sabena's Prince (Les Parry)	8-1	30.28	1
3	Mood Indigo II	10-1	30.52	2
4	Corsican Reward (Gordon Hodson)	5-1	30.55	5
5	Forever Corville (Dennis Hannafin)	10-1	31.19	4
6	Fairyfield Surprise (G.Jackson)	11-2	31.59	3

Grand Prix (Walthamstow 500y – May 7 £500)

1	Monday's Ranger (Tom Reilly)	4-5f	28.03	3
2	Adamstown Chief	100-8	28.31	2
3	Hi Longford (Tom Reilly)	13-2	28.43	1
4	Toasted	25-1	28.51	4
5	Killinarden Wonder (Tom Reilly)	11-4	28.67	6
6	Nearly Blue	25-1	28.91	5

Gold Collar (Catford 570y – May 18 £1,000)

1	Music Guest (Tommy Johnston Jr.)	5-2	33.36	5
2	Lucky Boy Boy (John Bassett)	2-1f	33.56	6
3	Brookville Genius (John Haynes)	20-1	33.80	3
4	Boula Rattler (A.Forman)	8-1	34.28	1
5	Shannon Spirit (Phil Rees)	3-1	34.32	4
6	Shanes Legacy (Tony Dennis)	6-1	34.96	2

Welsh Derby (Arms Park, Cardiff 525y – July 6 £500)

1	Fairys Chum (Bob Burls)	4-1	29.49	5
2	Crazy Peach (George Waterman)	20-1	29.61	6
3	Some Edition (Tom Reilly)	8-1	29.62	2
4	Cahara Rover (Joe DeMulder)	4-5f	29.66	4
5	Fitzs Hall (Tom Reilly)	3-1	29.92	1
6	Darn Hall (Bob Burls)	33-1	30.08	3

Oaks (Harringay 525y – July 8 £500)

1	Cranog Bet (Phil Rees Sr.)	7-2	29.31	4
2	Witching Flare (Jim Singleton)	10-1	29.59	2
3	Hack It About (Jack Harvey)	13-8f	29.67	5
4	Right on Time	10-1	29.75	1
5	Shady Mermaid (Phil Rees)	4-1	29.99	3
6	Beauties Dash	7-1	30.05	6

Scurry Gold Cup (Clapton 400y – July 20 £1,000)

1	Lucky Joan II (John Bassett)	3-1	22.70	2
2	Orange Grove II (Stan Gudgin)	25-1	23.04	3
3	Cranog Bet (Phil Rees)	5-2	23.10	1
4	Misty King (Phil Rees)	100-8	23.38	6
5	Larrys Model (Bill Kelly)	6-4f	23.50	5
6	Bulgaden Glory (Clare Orton)	6-1	23.68	4

Laurels (Wimbledon 500y – Aug 16 £1,000)

1	Dalcassian Son (A.G.Hiscock)	7-2	28.08	2
2	Coup Leader (Clare Orton)	5-1	28.22	5
3	Badge of Flame (Jack Harvey)	100-8	28.28	3
4	Lucky Hi There (Jimmy Jowett)	10-3	28.42	6
5	Cranog Bet (Phil Rees)	9-2	28.52	4
6	Dancing Point (Clare Orton)	11-4	28.53	1

St Leger (Wembley 700y – Sep 2 £1,000)

1	Friendly Lass (Tony Dennis)	2-1	40.15	6
2	Massan (Jack Kinsley)	11-10f	40.31	1
3	Crazy Peach (George Waterman)	8-1	40.87	3
4	Strelka	5-1	41.27	4
5	Prairie Kim	100-6	41.49	2
	Leinster Elm (Percy Stagg)	N/R		5

Scottish Derby (Carntyne 525y – Sep 7 £750)

1	We'll See (Tom Johnston Jr.)	4-6f	28.91	5
2	Fairys Chum (Bob Burls)	3-1	28.97	1
3	Free Hand	12-1	29.45	2
4	Lowfield King (P.O'Loughlin)	4-1	29.93	4
5	Super Car (Norman Oliver)	16-1	30.17	6
6	Better Fame	20-1	30.49	3

Cesarewitch (West Ham 600y – Oct 4 £1,000)

1	Jehu II (Gordon Hodson)	9-4	33.15	1
2	Music Guest (Tommy Johnston Jr.)	8-1	33.35	5
3	Jamaica Inn (Paddy McEllistrim)	13-2	33.47	2
4	Lucky Boy Boy (John Bassett)	6-4f	33.67	3
5	Melting Moments (Jimmy Clubb)	100-8	33.91	6
6	Hi Over (Harry Bamford)	9-2	34.13	4

Irish Derby (Harolds Cross 525y £1,250, Aug 9)

1	Drumahiskey Venture (Eithne Hammond)	5-4f	29.60	1
2	Powerstown Proper (Sean Murphy)	20-1	29.96	5
3	Melody Wonder (Jack Mullan)	5-1	30.02	4
4	Laundry Maid	4-1		2
5	Rocks Commander	9-2		6
6	Hi Spark	7-1		3