History of the Horsham Greyhound Racing Club

Live coursing began in Horsham in the early 1900s land 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 surprisingly, it was not until 1971 that the Horsham Greyhound Racing Club IHGRCI 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, the Member for Lowan, was elected as the clubs first President. Jim played a Large part in obtaining Horsham's racing licence and paid tribute to the GRCB, Department of youth, Sport and Recreation, the Greyhound Development Board and the Horsham Agricultural and pastoral Society for allowing the HGRC to share its grounds.

When work began on the track construction. The Trotting Club was still racing at the Showgrounds and it had requested that sufficient room be allowed for an ambulance to follow the trotting races. Track design is a critical issue for new club's 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 greyhounds 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 one of the best in Australia. Former 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 40m track.

Legend has it that there was also an unacknowledged contribution to the track shape. Club stalwart Bluey Kemp related the story at fellow club member 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 greyhounds were returning slower times than expected the track sprint distance was remeasured. 0riginally designed to be 320m, the actual distance was found to be 336 metres presumably as a result of the intervention of Messrs Forbes and Kemp. Early racing at Horsham 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 greyhounds 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 youthful Allan 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. Craig Parkes.

Racing at Horsham became a regular Monday night attraction with a large contingent of bookmakers betting Win & Place and Concession on both the local races and the metropolitan meeting at Olympic Park. The granting of the license in Horsham had stimulated greyhound ownership in the area early on, the tracks were very heavy, and the racing was tough. Races over 450m could be won in 29 seconds. Over many years, many improvements have been made to the grounds and the racing surface now with track improvements, winning times are closer to 27 seconds.

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 off-course on a Horsham meeting has now become $300,000, making a significant contribution to the financial, wellbeing of the HRGC and the industry. The club has been privileged to see some of the best greyhounds in the country race at Horsham including former track record holder Tempix, superstar Brett Lee and current 480m track record holder Crash, now at stud in Ireland. The HRGC owes much to the hard work and dedication of the people who contributed to volunteer Committees over the years, 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 Club Committee in 1984 and Sylvia joined in 1977, the first woman to be on the committee. When she was first appointed Sylvia remembers one mate member of the committee resigning in disgust however, he later returned and apologising 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. ln addition, she has been running trials, cooking for the raffles and running the bingo. When a Local greyhound, Eight West, which raced for a child who was in the Eight West wing at Royal Children's Hospital, bolted and disappeared for three days, it was eventually spotted by an ex-Lure driver for the cub. He notified Sylvia who found the greyhound still with its racing jacket and muzzle on, coaxed it into her car and nursed it back to health. The greyhound went on to win more races for the Royal Children's. ln 2002, Sylvia Penny's efforts were recognised when she 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. She became President of the club in 2011 serving until 2013.

The Horsham Greyhound Racing Club started hosting race meetings at the Horsham Showgrounds in December, 1973. The Horsham Cup is held in March, on its recently upgraded track, which is now regarded as one of Australia's best. In recent times the Club has supported Wimmera Hospice Care, Horsham PAWS, Halls Gap Zoo, Blue Ribbon Foundation, Sunnyside Lutheran Retirement Village High Care Unit, PCFA, Warracknabeal RSL, as well as many sporting clubs.

The Horsham Greyhound Racing Club offers a large undercover Grandstand and a formal dining area available for social and business events and functions.

The Horsham Greyhound Racing Club is committed to managing its operations with the community in mind and organises and hosts many events to support good causes and give local groups and residents opportunities to meet, raise funds and enjoy themselves.

The club directly employs a number of permanent and casual staff and greyhound racing contributes more than $13 million to the region, along with indirect jobs and a market for local suppliers of goods and services.

The Great Chase

This annual event raises money for community groups that work with the aged and disabled and gives their clients a great day out at the races. Since 2003 the Horsham Great Chase Community Days have donated around $20,000 to local community groups.

Club legend Bill Powell's first greyhound was passed onto him by his grandfather and by his teens he was training them for coursing before going on to race greyhounds for several decades, picking up some very nice wins along the way. In 1971, Bill and other members of the Wimmera greyhound community got together to form the Horsham Greyhound Racing Club and he served as club President for 23 years, In 2005, Bill was awarded the 2005 Ken Carr medal for services to the sport. Off the track Bill still plays the saxophone in a local jazz band as he has for nearly 50 years. While Bill has retired from racing, he is still very much involved with the club and still likes to take "Ninety-Five", one of his old racers, and now a family pet, for a good run on the family farm.

HORSHAM CUP

Listed below are the previous winners of the Horsham Cup, famous for many years when run as an Easter carnival. The race has been won by some of the best sprinters to ever grace Victorian racetracks.

1978 **Temsonny**, 1979 **Chukka Khan**, 1980 **Tempix**, 1981 **Time Bonus**, 1982 **Satan's Shroud**, 1983 **Virgo Rose**, 1984 **Propellant**, 1985 **SavageTouch**, 1986 **Aidan**, 1987 **Buka Sunset**, 1988 **Hay Dinney**, 1989 **Daisy Clover**, 1990 **Go Georgie**, 1991 **Rare Drop**, 1992 **Noble Stranger**, 1993 **Casino Tom**, 1994 **No Object**, 1995 **Midnight Flirt**, 1996 **True Type**, 1997 **Another Express**, 1998 **Lansley Bale**, 1999 **Legs Ahoy**, 2000 **Kantarn Bale** 2001 **Classic Capri**, 2002 **Timjim Bale**, 2003 **Monsters Inc**, 2004 **Brumby Lad**, 2005 **Foreign Legion**, 2006 **Marungi Blaze**, 2007 **Winsome History**, 2008 **Kendale Bale**, 2009 **Velocette,** 2010 **Our Toyman**, 2011 **Enry Walt**, 2012 **Dyna Tron**, 2013 **Peter Rocket**, 2014 **Crump,** 2015 **Margins**, 2016 **Zambora Brockie**, 2017 **Not Held**, 2018 **Jimmy Newob**, 2019 **Orson Allen**, 2020 **Tiggeralong Tonk**.

Club Presidents

Brian Murray 1973 - 1983

Doug Hughes 1983 - 1988

Bill Powell 1988 - 2011

Jenni Coustley 2011 - 2013

David O'Loughlin 2013 - 2014

Bill Hartigan 2014 - 2015

Ian Bibby 2015 - Current