

# Amanda's Diary

**We continue our monthly update with RGT co-ordinator Amanda Ainsworth on some of the issues that she and the headquarters staff have been tackling in recent weeks.**



WITH almost all the figures in, the RGT expect to have homed between 4,000 and 4,100 greyhounds in 2011.

The figure will represent a second successive fall in numbers, down from 4,247 last year and somewhere in the region of 500 from the record breaking 2009.

While no fall is welcome, a political spin-doctor would have little difficulty in 'sexying up' the figures.

Taking aside the recession and the RGT's drop in funding, it will be the fifth consecutive year that the homing figures have topped 4,000.

Furthermore, the percentage of dogs being 'officially' homed through the Trust continues to rise.

Last year there were 7,972 new registrations. Five years earlier, the NGRC registered 10,101 greyhounds and the RGT homed 3,932.

There are no figures available for the homing of dogs beyond

the figures produced by the RGT.

Some have remained in racing kennels, others have gone for breeding or racing on the independent circuit.

Despite the best efforts and likely sanctions from the GBGB, some owners refuse to submit homing forms - particularly those leaving the industry and therefore under no pressure to do so.

There are presently 71 official RGT branches, plus four who have their own charity registration. There are also other independent home finding schemes who do not submit figures to the RGT.

The four independent home-finding schemes who do contribute figures are Brighton, Romford, Wimbledon plus one in Lincoln.

So why are they not part of the RGT?

Amanda said: "In the cases of Brighton and Romford, they are reasonably historical.

"The issue for some branches is that if you are an official branch, you have to abide by the rules of the RGT.

"That might sound a bit strange but it is only common sense if you think about it.

"If a branch is going to operate as 'RGT' you cannot have different methods and standards between branches because if things go wrong, it reflects on the whole organisation.

"Conversely, there are, and always have been, people involved in non-RGT branches who feel 'we are volunteers and we don't want to be told what to do by the RGT', which I think is quite understandable.

"Despite the wishes of those four branches to be independent, we have good relations with all of them. Some of them even use our homing forms and we are always there to help if required."

THE news that the British Veterinary Nurses Association have chosen the RGT as their charity of the year was well received in the Worcester Park head office.

Amanda said: "The fact that the nurses will be holding fundraisers for us is obviously good news, but the implications of the decision are much bigger than that in my opinion.

"The veterinary nurses often have a big say in the sort of literature and information that goes on display in vets' surgeries.

"For example, in my local vets there are posters and collection boxes for the Cat Protection League all over the place.

"Just increasing the awareness of retired greyhounds is of huge benefit.

"There is also the slightly more delicate matter of pets being put to sleep. It can do no harm at all, when owners are looking at replacing their pets, to have veterinary nurses speaking up on behalf of retired greyhounds."

A couple of ex-Newcastle greyhounds that came from Amanda Varley's kennel, are likely to be among those heading off to the Czech Republic in the next couple of weeks.

Amanda said: "There are nine due to go by transporter and most are already reserved.

"They are a wonderful group of enthusiasts. When the dogs arrive there is a big party including TV coverage.

"Any dogs that don't have homes are fostered by the people at Greyhound Adoption Czech Republic who are absolutely fantastic."

In 2011 the RGT also sent small numbers of greyhounds for adoption in Belgium and Italy."

**PLANS are progressing for a second RGT Bi-Annual Conference at the Holiday Inn in Birmingham.**



## Retirement Plans

FEBRUARY EVENTS		
Greyhound Walk - Ripon	Saturday 4	North Yorkshire
Phoenix Stroke Appeal - Fundraiser	Saturday 4	Cornwall
GRSB Meeting - Oswestry	Sunday 7	Shropshire and Borders
Collection at Farm & Pet Place, Chirk	Saturday 11	Shropshire and Borders
Pets at Home - Bridlington	Saturday 25	Bridlington
Grey Walk - Anglers C. Park, Winterset	Sunday 26	West Yorkshire

Spread over Saturday/Sunday April 28/29, Amanda is hoping for around 200 representatives from branches nationwide to be in attendance.

She said: "The first conference was a huge success because it enabled people doing the same job and faced with the same issues, a chance to discuss them.

"It also enabled volunteers to get to know people who they might only have known by reputation.

"The last meeting certainly saw a few preconceptions altered once people got to know each other.

"We get the opportunity to update branches on any changes that have come in, as well as learn from the speakers.

"I am hoping to hear from a representative of the veterinary nurses, as well as someone talking about blood banks.

"We also have someone explaining the position of the law in relation to dogs and I think a few people will be surprised, if not shocked, with what he has to say.

"For example, I was always of the opinion that if you had a dog on a lead, you were legally safe, if he was approached by another dog and a fight broke out.

"Well apparently, that is not strictly true in all cases.

"The whole subject is a little more complicated than most people probably imagine and working with dogs it is important to know where you stand."

In the meantime, Amanda is keen to find a sponsor for the event.

Anybody interest is asked to contact her on 0844 8268424.

THE RGT enters new territory with an advertisement for a Media & PR Manager (below).

Amanda said: "Over the last few years we have used agencies for PR but it has been difficult to balance the need for both regional and national coverage.

"Overall, I think they did a competent job.

"However, the trustees are keen to try a new approach, hence the new position.

"The plan is for the new manager to work from here but also be available to the branches for assistance at local level."

## Teach old dog, new tricks?

Former Hove runner Tootsie is enjoying even more success as an obedience competitor than she did on a race track.

Known in her first life as lamsaynothing (Knockeevan Star-Noirs Nora, Jan 03), 'Tootsie' last went to traps for John Gammon in an A8 at Crayford in June 2007.

New owner Gaynor Kendall introduced the extractor to a different type of dog training the following year.

In 2010 she won her first Certificate Of Merit, and has since won another five.

Her proud owner - who has kept 'racing owner' Yvonne Murray, informed of Tootsie's progress: "Now that she is nine years old and has of course had a racing life as well, I think that this might be her last year competing.

"We are going to do all we can to qualify in the Kennel Club Special Pre Beginner Stakes heats at least for Discover Dogs in November then maybe with luck go forward to Crufts next March."



Photo: Dave Scott

# Astonishing Monmore!

**MONMORE'S** branch of the Retired Greyhound Trust had a record breaking year during 2011 writes Jason Craddock and Floyd Amphlett.

The trust re-homed 335 retired runners over twelve months which is amazing considering the numbers had been falling over the past two years during the economic crisis.

Trust co-ordinator Alison Bandurak told the Star: "Our previous best year was back in 2008 when we homed well over 300 retired runners and in the two following years we struggled to get anywhere near that figure.

"However interest picked up at the start of last year and to eventually home 335 in 12 months was just brilliant."

The kennels in Wolverhampton have a great team of staff who are backed up by a huge team of volunteers.

Alison said: "Having a fantastic year like that in 2011 is all thanks to a fantastic team effort as well as the management at the stadium and of course Ladbrokes.

"We have over 100 volunteers who come to the kennels regularly and help with the walking, feeding and grooming.

"There are people that take dogs to our awareness days at

local supermarkets, town centres and city and country shows and events, while others donate their time to help on the organising side of things.

"The management at the stadium are also very committed to our cause.

"Nothing is too much trouble for general manager Richard Brankley, while the racing office is also very supportive.

"We are also very grateful to Ladbrokes who are always donating in various ways to our cause and the year-end party for our staff, volunteers and their families that they put on was very well received."

The evening included free food and over 200 attended.

(Brankley quipped, "Given the extensive bar take, it was probably cost effective!")

Mrs Bandurak reports that the surge of interest in retired greyhounds has continued into 2012.

She says: "Interest is still high as we find ever more ways of increasing awareness of what we do and the fact that greyhounds make fantastic pets.

"Our website [rgtwolverhampton.co.uk](http://rgtwolverhampton.co.uk) is getting plenty of traffic, especially after our awareness campaigns and we've also been helped by Wolverhampton and Wales goalkeeper Wayne Hennessy's interest in our cause.

"Wayne and his family recently took on one of our fawn bitches called Belle and is a regular at our kennels.

"People are amazed when they see him here and he just mucks in like everyone else.

"He recently opened our isolation wing at the kennels which obviously attracted lots of attention."

Richard Brankley responded: "Alison is the reason for the success of the scheme, of which we are extremely proud.

"She has all the skills needed to make it work irrespective of whatever resources we are able to provide.

"It all comes together through her and because of her; she does an astonishing job."

The RGT's Amanda Ainsworth added: "We don't, as a matter of policy, normally publish home-finding figures for individual branches.

"However, a total of 335 greyhounds in a single year is a national record.

"The Monmore team had the previous two records, 326 and 324, set in 2007 and 2008, followed by Perry Barr with 321.

"By any standards 335 greyhounds homed in a single year (around 8% of the national total) is a remarkable achievement and behalf of homefinders everywhere, we congratulate them for their efforts.



retired greyhound trust

MEDIA & PR MANAGER

The Retired Greyhound Trust (RGT) is a national charity, established in 1976 and dedicated to finding loving homes for greyhounds when their racing days are over. We operate a network of 72 volunteer-led branches across Britain from which we find approximately 4,000 homes each year.

The Trust is now seeking a first, full time Media and PR Manager to join its small head office team in Worcester Park, Surrey.

Reporting to the Chief Executive, the successful candidate will be responsible for managing all aspects of the Trust's media relations. The role will be exciting and varied and will include:

- Working with the Trust's branches to secure local press coverage to promote their work and the suitability of ex-racing greyhounds as pets.
- Working with internal and external partners to develop initiatives to secure national press coverage for the RGT.
- Establishing a Press Office, dealing with enquiries from members of the media and acting as spokesperson for the charity on occasions.
- Developing and implementing national and local advertising strategies and managing an advertising budget.
- Editing and producing the Trust's biannual newsletter, Homer.
- Developing the Trust's online presence, including use of social media.
- Co-ordinating a series of events during the year to include annual greyhound shows, receptions for supporters and the Trust's presence at other shows including Crufts and Discover Dogs.
- Assisting with the implementation of a national fundraising strategy.

The successful candidate will be:

- Educated to degree level or equivalent.
- An exceptional communicator with proven written, editing and proof-reading skills.
- A motivated and organised self-starter, comfortable working on their own or in a team.

He or she will have:

- A strong work ethic, a creative flair and a passion for getting results.
- At least three years relevant experience in a role that includes press and/or PR.
- Empathy with the objectives of the Retired Greyhound Trust.

Experience of one or more of the following would be desirable: the charity sector; marketing; advertising; sales and negotiation.

Salary: £28 - 30,000 depending on experience.

To apply please send a CV and covering letter to: Peter Laurie, Chief Executive, Retired Greyhound Trust, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Park House, 1-4 Park Terrace, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 7JZ

Closing date: Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012.

For more information about the work of the RGT, please visit [www.retiredgreyhounds.co.uk](http://www.retiredgreyhounds.co.uk)

Retired Greyhound Trust is an equal opportunities employer.



Ivor Stocker

**IVOR STOCKER** was the recipient of the 2011 Services to Retired Greyhounds award at the recent London ceremony writes Floyd Amphlett.

In 11 years at the RGT Executive Director, Ivor has transformed the organisation. He has secured record funding, seen homing figures go through the stratosphere and raised awareness of the charity to unprecedented heights.

He introduced initiatives such as the Great Greyhound Gathering and Greyhound Extravaganza and saw the 50,000th greyhound homed.

Sometimes controversial, frequently challenging, Ivor nevertheless managed to create a unity among branches never previously witnessed.

Amanda said: "We are so sad to see Ivor go, but it has been a pleasure to work with him.

"His political and leadership skills made him an outstanding boss.

"He was a great planner, never forgot anything, but was always prepared to roll up his sleeves and do any task no matter how menial.

"Ivor has been an inspiration to us all and we are thrilled that his achievements have been recognised."