

Comfort zone on track for local 'doggie' fans

Limerick seen as the heartland of the greyhound industry

By John O'Shaughnessy

THE proposed euro m16 greyhound stadium at Greenpark has the potential to be the country's flagship, says Abbeyfeale's John Ward, general manager at Tralee's Kingdom

fallen behind, but the upside is, Greenpark will reap all the benefits of improved technology and building techniques. Sixteen million is a lot of money from which to plan".

gin site on which to build, there was no reason why the new facility should not be a leader.

"With all due respects to us here in Tralee - the Kingdom stadium was built for two million euro in the mid 90s - it is Limerick that is seen as being the heartland of the greyhound world.

"The Markets Field has lost it appeal, and once Greenpark is up and running, it will be the best supported in the country.

His experience in Tralee, a stadium which this writer attended last week, is they carved a new generation of greyhound followers after they reopened their refurbished stadium.

"We have 140 covers in our restaurant, filled most evenings. We have several private suites overhead, the preferred choice of the corporate sector and for office outings, etc.

"We charge 45 euro in our restaurant, including admission to the track, a programme and four-course meal. There is no necessity for patrons to stand out in the rain".

John, who started his career at the Markets Field back in 1975, says that their fast food outlet, on the ground floor, together with bar facilities, attracts the three nights per week brigade - "the very people who are the lifeblood of greyhound racing.

"I can say that all associated with the industry are looking forward to what Limerick will have to offer".

Meanwhile, Gus Ryan, manager at the Markets Field, predicts that Greenpark will be open well in time for Christmas 2009.

"Curraheen (Cork), took only 14 months to build; we are hopeful that planning permission will come through very shortly, allowing us to get started by summer".

The Limerick plans, he told the Limerick Post, had already created quite a buzz.

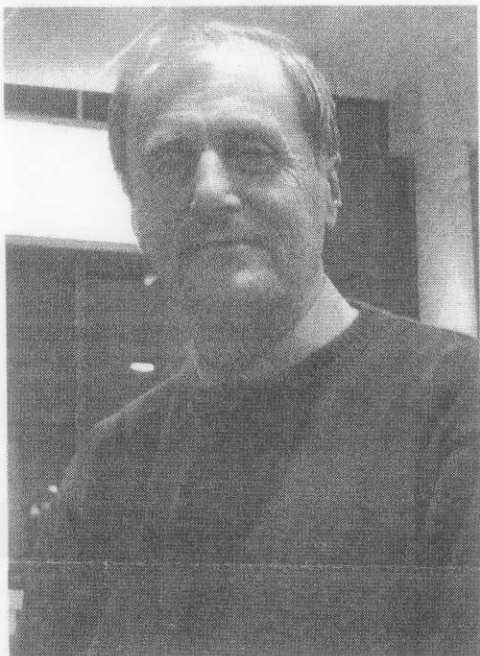
"Track regulars will con-

firm that up to a few years ago, Limerick was a firm favourite with tourists. That business fell away

when Cork, Galway and Tralee were upgraded, but we will be nicely positioned to win it back.

"We have been fighting for a new stadium for over a decade...we are near to achieving our goal and,

like John Ward, I believe we will set standards for all others," concluded Gus.



John Ward, general manager at Kingdom Stadium.

Stadium.

He described Limerick as home to the greyhound industry - "and the pity was, that when Bord Na gCon embarked on their stadium refurbishment in the 1990s, that Limerick was not top of the agenda.

"The Markets Field has

With such a massive investment programme, he pointed out, and a vir-

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Diners pictured in the glass-fronted restaurant at the Tralee facility, the type which Limerick will have on its doorstep.

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