

Hardman Vinny to attend greyhound race

Leger final will be third last before new track opens in 2008

by John O'Shaughnessy

HARDMAN Vinny The former Jones is expected to lead a host of Wimbledon star turned actor,

prestigious greyhound stakes in the country.

His dog, Smoking Again, trained by Pat

Said Markets Field manager Gus Ryan: "Vinny is a regular at Limerick track. At the moment he is filming

He is a hugely popular character here, mingling with the crowd and signing autographs."

Mr Ryan predicts a thrilling final to what has been the most successful Leger, an event which dates back to the 1930s.

It will, he told the Limerick Post, be his 39th final. "I spent five years as manager at Clonmel but always returned for the big night here."

Competing against Smoking Again are Coolboy George, Alimo, Dalcash Sweet tea, Indesacjack and Wizard Dream.

There are several other finals on Saturday's programme, with combined prize money of 100,000 euro.

The Limerick Greyhound Track, Mr Ryan recalled, first opened its doors in 1934 - and two of those in attendance that night will be with us again on Saturday. They are

former League of Ireland soccer referee Paddy Kiely and the Dyke O'Sullivan from Hospital, County Limerick.

Mr Ryan predicts that this will be the third last Leger to be run at the Mulgrave Street venue.

"Our new track near Coonagh should be up and running by 2008 - we may not be ready in time for the scheduled opening in March of that year, but we are aiming for the autumn."

The architects, he continued, had drawn up plans and were ready to submit them for planning approval within the next three years.

"We have made a few alterations to the original drawings. The project is costing 14 million euro. Yes, concerns had been expressed about traffic flow but it must be remembered that our meetings are held off peak hours, so there should be no real

problems."

The stadium is to have a capacity of 3,000. "That might seem small but there are only about four occasions each year when we achieve that figure at the Markets Field."

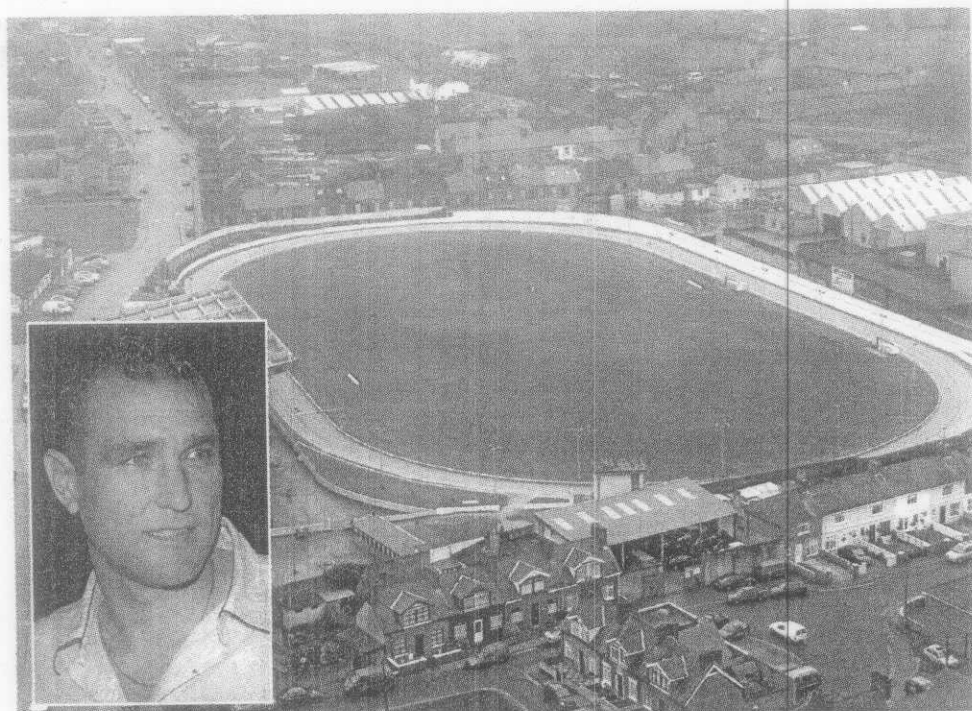
The Limerick Stadium will be similar to that at Curraheen Park in Cork, a venue which has proved to be a resounding success.

"It will open a whole new dimension for greyhound racing in Limerick, with state of the art facilities. Let's be honest, but the Markets Field is outdated. Bord na gCon are to be congratulated on giving Limerick the track that it deserves and all associated with the industry are looking forward to the opening."

Mr Ryan promises a great programme on Saturday and has advised patrons to arrive in plenty of time for the opening

race on the card.

"This is the highlight of the greyhound calendar and greyhound enthusiasts will be travelling from all over the country and further afield."



Vinny Jones (inset) is set to pay the Markets Field a visit this Saturday for the St Leger.

celebrities attending the Kerry Agri Business St Leger final at the Markets Field this Saturday.

might well walk away with the 35,000 euro prize money for the winner of the Leger, one of the most

Curtin from Monard, County Tipperary, has been drawn in trap five.

in Australia but has indicated his intention to jet back for the final on Saturday.

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