

hound meeting at the Market's Field, the Irish greyhound Board has invited the last 50 winners of the classic St Leger to take part in a special presentation ceremony on Saturday night. A number of other presentations will also take place. "It will be a special night and there will be a combination of sadness and excitement as we look forward," said Davn Quinn, IGB marketing executive.

Prof Mike Cronin and Dr Roisin Higgins, who are overseeing the Market Field History Project, will also attend on the night to record the final night's racing at the venue.

The Markets Field has played a vital part in the history of sport in the city. In addition to greyhound racing, it has been home to athletics, GAA, rugby, soccer as well as carnivals, circuses and wrestling contests.

Sport was first played there in 1886 when the Irish Cycling Association and the Gaelic Athletic Association paid £8 a day to organise athletic events over the course of three consecutive Sundays.

During the following decade the Markets Field established itself as an important venue and, in 1896, the Limerick county senior hurling championship final was played there between Caherline and Ballingarry.

winning score and had a huge postbag. When rugby and Gaelic games had departed from the Markets Field greyhound racing and soccer made their homes there. The first greyhound race to be staged in Ireland was held in Celtic Park in Belfast in 1927. The sport arrived south of the border in Shelbourne Park, Dublin later that year.

Three decades later Bord na gCon was established as a semi-state body in the Republic of Ireland. It made its home in Limerick where greyhound racing had first come to the Markets Field in 1932. The track staged the Irish Derby in 1939 and the Irish Oaks in 1944.

Many Limerick soccer fans also consider the Markets Field to be their spiritual home. Limerick AFC was founded in 1934 and (through several guises) made the Markets Field its home until 1984 when it left in move that was unpopular with supporters. The Markets Field is owned by the IGB.

The Irish St Leger, is one of the most prestigious classic events in the greyhound calendar, and has taken place in Limerick since 1944. The Sean Dunphy-owned Bar Blackstone became the final ever winner of the Classic at the Markets Field, this June.



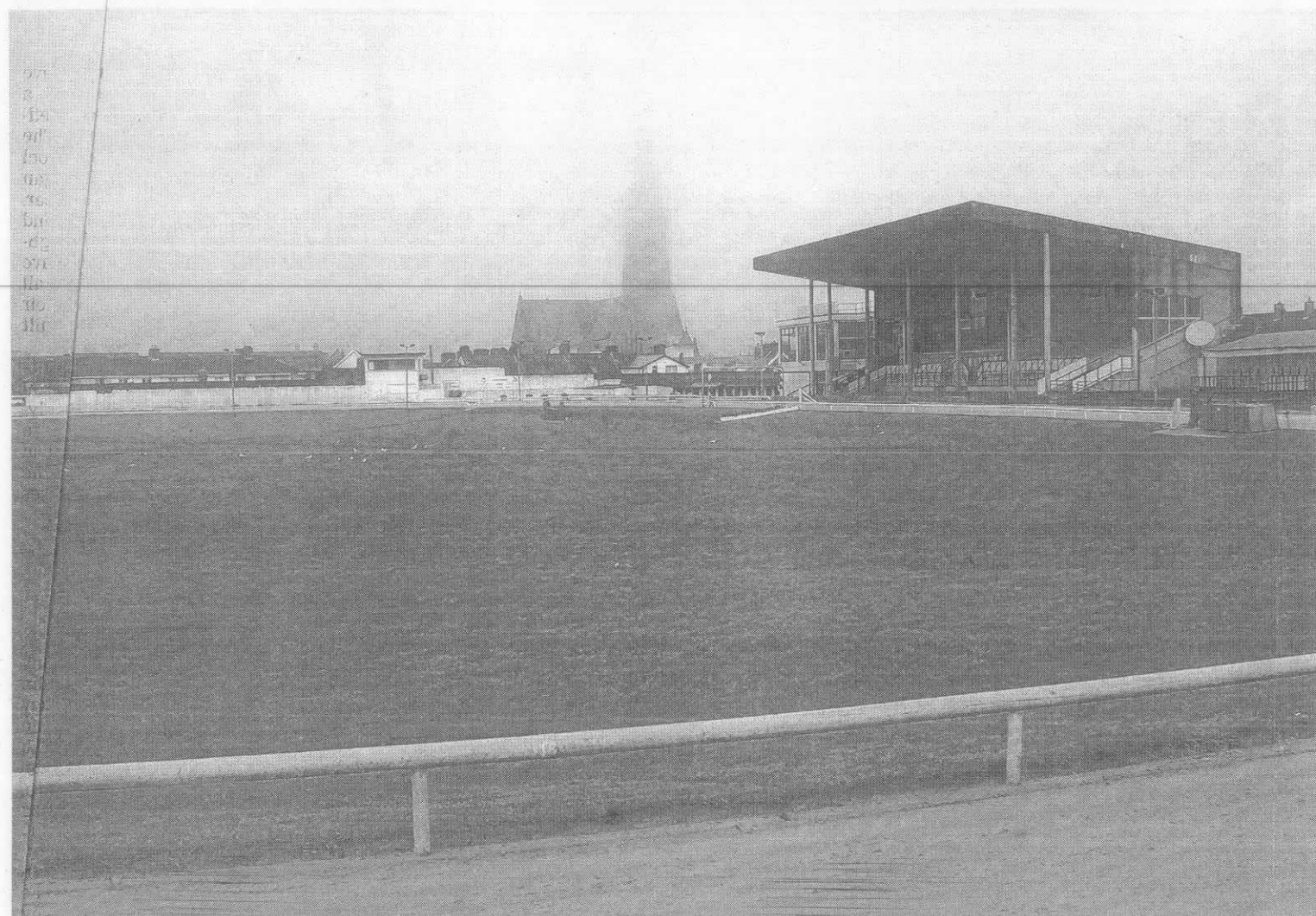
Dapper parade: local men get ready to bring the finalists out for the Irish St Leger, the classic competition synonymous with the Markets Field



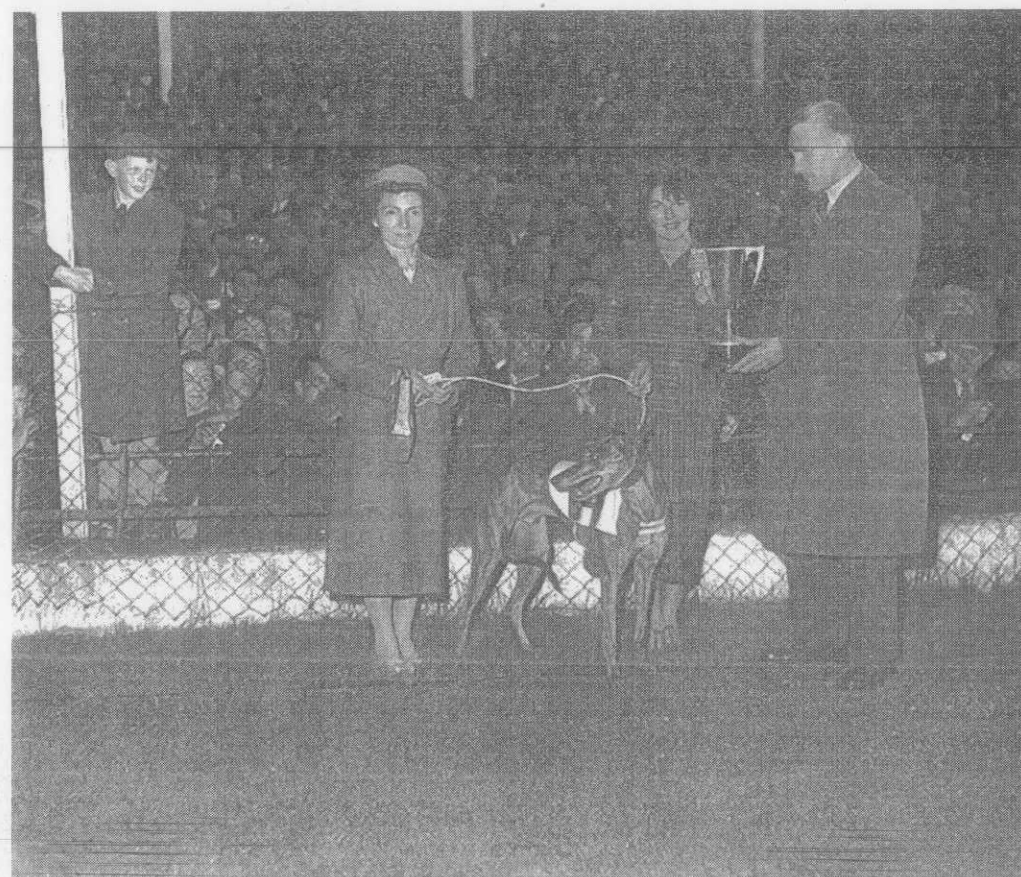
Racegoers at the Markets Field in 1955 discussing the form before the races



The packed crowd at the Markets Field in 1955 pay tribute to a sweep winner and his owner



Markets Field has hosted greyhound racing since 1932 and is the home of the classic Irish St Leger, the last renewal of which was won by Bar Blackstone



Mayor Ted Russell presents the Leger trophy to a Miss Roche from Mallow on July 3, 1954

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