

History of the Cranbourne Cup

By Neil Brown

The Cranbourne Cup has long been regarded as one of Victoria's prized trophies. It has been contested over the years by most of the top sprinters in training and has been won by some of the great champions of the sport.

The Cranbourne Club commenced racing in August of 1974 and staged its first cup in January **1975**. The race series was traditionally run in January - February until recent times when it has been held in November, September and during this year in June.

Cranbourne's originally distance was 510 metres before it was changed to the longer 520 metres in 1977. The first cup was won by 8/1 chance Great Power trained Joe Paturzo. The fawn dog upset the favourite and track specialist Garner Bin with Manhattan Dash third. By Holding from Bashful Sal he recorded the time of 31.32 and started from box three.

In **1976** another fawn dog won the cup, Ragmaker owned and trained by Ted Sallows. Ragmaker had almost been put down four months before the cup with a very bad blood infection. Only for the expertise of Dr Jim Gannon saved the Ragsie x Delvee dog. He ran down early leader Fiore's King to win in 30.70 from box six after starting 7/4 favourite. Walk Off finished third.

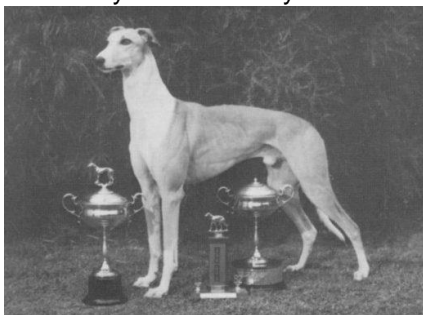
In **1977** the brilliant Granulator won the cup over the 520 metres after the distance had been changed at the track. The red fawn dog by Tivoli Chief from Francine Vee had been bred and was trained by Peter Seabrook and was a grandson of his former outstanding sprinter Miss Billy Vee. Sandown Chairman Henry Harrison presented the trophy to owner Norm Fletcher. Starting 7/4 favourite Granulator beat the 1976 winner Ragmaker with Spot Monaro third in 31.59.

The first bitch to win the cup came in **1978** by way of the speedy Elsie Belinda, she was in rare form at the time setting a track record in the heat and lowered it again in the final. She led all the way to defeat Belamour Prince and Australian Cup winner Count D'Argent in 30.79. For the second year in a row the winner was sired by Tivoli Chief from the bitch Crystolite Gem and was trained by Les Zahra. Elsie Belinda started 4 to 1 on.

In **1979** 2/1 equal favourites Panther Bay and Helrakil and 3/1 chance Back O'Bourke from the red box were expected to fight the race out. Panther Bay had beaten Back O'Bourke in the Cranbourne Puppy Classic in August. The result was to be repeated when the blue dog raced past the early leader in the home straight going on to win by two lengths in 31.27 with Tootsie Girl third. By Temlee from Alesia Moss, Panther Bay was raced and trained by Ken Eales of Geelong.

The superbly bred Brindle Pixie took out the "Trusty" Cranbourne Cup in **1980**. Starting 2/1 she proved too strong on her favourite track to beat Boston Scout and Black Troubador in 31.51. Bred, raced and trained by Bob & Mavis Smith from a fantastic litter which included champion Tempix. She was another winner from leading sire Temlee from top producing dam Pixie Dianne. The brindle & white bitch was later to prove a good producer herself.

Two thousand dollars and a two berth Toledo trailer was the prize for **1981** winner Bianca Lee. In a crowd-pulling club promotion former champion cricketers Doug Walters, Tony Greig, Bill Lawry and Keith Stackpole attended the meeting by helicopter and not only presented trophies but conducted a sportsman's night after the races finished. Bianca Lee a solid second favourite at 3/1 lead most of the way to defeat Peco Again and Australian Cup winner Pete's Advice the 5/4 fav. By Temlee from New Diro the brindle bitch was raced by Ivan Draffin and trained by Marlene Riley. Time for the 520 metres was 31.01 for the final.



Consistent sprinter Golden Impulse was successful in the **1982** Cup, taking full advantage of a first corner scrimmage. He shot to the lead and was never headed defeating 6/4 favourite Hameron with Karen Noeline (33/1) third in a fast 30.87. It was a classy field with a number of notable sprinters among the unplaced being Westona Earl, Smooth Orator and Silverchief winner Tempix Image. The fawn dog by Tempix from Vera Noir started 5/1 was owned and trained by Rick and Joy Brunton.

I can't explain why but the **1983**-cup was my first, I had attended opening night at Cranbourne but perhaps Saturday nights weren't a dog night for me. In any case it was a memorable race as I recall backing the winner Prince of Eaton. He was the first dog to win the cup from box one and I recall he railed brilliantly around the first turn to take the lead and was home at that point. Starting 9/4 he beat the outstanding Ding's

Wonder (5/4 fav) with Pacific United third in front of a crowd of 1000. Federal member for Holt Michael Duffy presented first prize cheque of \$2000 and the trophy to owner Ken Timms. Local Darrel Connor trained the brindle dog by Prince of All from Forever Eaton and he recorded 31.28 with World Vision and Wynlee Spirit unplaced.



1984 and 85 the cup for the only time in history was won by the same dog, Reg Johnson's super chaser National Star. In a bold promotion the club put up a brand new Ford Telstar as well as the \$2000. A star studded field went to the boxes for the final and the 2000 patrons on course witnessed a battle royal when National Star (7/4) and 4/6 favourite Tangairn made it a race in two with National Star answering all the challenges to win by a length in 30.88. The beautifully bred black dog by Chief Dingaan from Zulu Moss had been a very expensive purchase by Johnson but he paid for his outlay several times over. Third home was 66/1 chance Bold Ranger and the likes of Rare Girl, Blue Echo, Etzel Rhythm and the previous years winner Prince Of Eaton unplaced. Sports Minister Neil Tresize handed over the cheque and the keys to the Telstar.



In **85** Johnson needed a bigger garage when he won another Ford Telstar GL as part of first prize, along with a cheque that had increased to \$6000. After winning his heat by 15 and half-lengths in a brilliant 30.59. The even money favourite made a one-act affair of the final proving too good for litter brother National Poppy (12/1) and 33/1 chance Noble Rip third in 30.95.

It was a top training performance by Johnson to return the champ to his best after he broke a leg in the Maturity series at Olympic Park in April of the previous year. Former popular actor and MLA for Noble Park Terry Norris presented the spoils to the Johnson clan.

1986 and the club continued with the car promotion changing from Coffey Ford's to Fairbairn Ford as it's sponsor. A new Telstar and \$3000 was the prize for a delighted Tom Meulman and his wife Lyn. Lightning Boy a fawn dog by Chief Dingaan from Lively Mille starting 20/1 and held on winning by a head to beat Reg Johnson's Scotgaan who after coming from last, almost made it a hat trick of cups for his owner-trainer. Dunn's Flyer was third in 30.98. The cup was the highlight of Meulman's 17-year involvement in the sport. The prize of the new car couldn't have been more timely as Meulman was driving a 1971 clapped out model that was

more than ready for replacement. Sports Minister Neil Trezise was again on hand to handle presentation duties.

In what was arguably the best assembled Cup field ever to take their place in the final of **1987**. The winner was a very disserving Shinning Chariot who starting the 3/1 equal favourite. Trained by Cranbourne foundation committeeman Ned Bryant he also had Sydney Dingaan in the final. Shinning Chariot had been the bridesmaid in a host of feature race finals and after leading early from box five proved too good for Brother Ken (6/1) and Galaxy Spirit (6/1) in a fast 30.81. Pharaoh's Mask sensational fell at the first turn causing massive interference to the unplaced Lightning Boy, Miss Quinita, Thorgil Magic and Sydney Dingaan.

Purchased for \$30,000 by Publican Nick Correale, Shinning Chariot was later to prove a great stud dog. A youthful Andrew Bensley handled presentation proceedings with the exchange of a cheque and a Ford Meteor L Wagon in front of a crowd of 1500.

1988 holds a special significance for me, as not only was it a great field but I made the final with a dog-called Ron's Champ (20/1). It was a great thrill and we enjoyed the night immensely pretty well knowing we couldn't win. He ran a creditable fifth behind some brilliant sprinters.

Silverchief winner Calamity Kid was all the rage at 4/6 and became only the third winner from box one recording the smart time of 30.85. He beat his litter brother and kennel mate Julius (20/1) with Tim Hardie (5/1) third. Raced and trained by Wallingford couple Darrell & Rose Booth, it was their biggest triumph in a career spanning 30 years. By Kid Campbell from Juliet the couple bred the litter and later sold Calamity Kid when he was trained by Ned Bryant. Minister Neil Trezise a regular presenter of the cup praised the club for its continued outstanding promotion of their blue ribbon event. A cheque of \$4000 and another Ford Meteor GL went to connections; notable beaten runners included Marceena, Like Horace, Rapid Champ and Blazing Bub who fell.

Prizemoney took over from cars and a major boost saw the **1989** cup go to \$15,000 to the winner sponsored by Classic Couriers. The Bendigo trained National Asset coming from seventh on the first turn railed home brilliantly to win by a length. Bred, raced and trained by Alan Inglis the fawn dog by Roy Trease from Cainoka was yet another fast sprinter from dam line that produced many. Starting 14/1 he beat the 2/1 favourite Dark Midori and Linden Midnight (3/1) a length away third in 31.06. Some handy dogs made the final including Indiana, Foxstroll, Rio Osti and Supreme Legend. A good group attended again with a healthy turnover of \$750,000. The cup held over \$45,000.

In **1990** a couple of Australian Cup winners quinnella the event when the outstanding Spread Eagle was way too good for Franklin Deano winning by four lengths in the race record time of 30.76. Classic Couriers sponsored the race again with \$15,000 to the winner. The club again lead the way for other clubs and were to the fore with a local shopping centre promotion on the three days leading up to the race.

Owner Peter Campbell who brought Spread Eagle at six weeks for \$400 adored his sprinter, trained by Geelong Irishman Joe Pearl. The fawn dog by Roy Trease from Strand Belle started 6/4 favourite from box three with Short Mined (33/1) third. A mini controversy surrounded the post race celebrations, when over zealous stewards rushed the winner off the dais to be swabbed before any decent media photos could be taken. The matter was taken up by the GRCB and it never happened again.

Ken Patterson's iron dog Eureka Man (4/1) was too classy in **1991** defeating Franklin Deano (9/2) runner up for the second year in succession. Finding the front from box six, the black dog by Pretty Fearless from Pride Of Quanne would be later judged Victorian Greyhound Of the Year when on points he beat superstar Highly Blessed. 5/4 favourite Top Hand finished third with Wynlee Supreme, Kinta's Way and Liberator unplaced. Classic Couriers were cup sponsors for a third time and the winner's prizemoney went to a record \$17,500.

Prizemoney climbed to \$20,000 to the winner in **1992** when speedy fawn bitch China Trip (5/2) opening up a break of 10 lengths at one stage, but only hung on to win by a length and quarter from the fast finishing Our Boy Laddie (10/1) with Shady Nitro third in fast 30.95. It was first of many features for the superstar as she was later to create history by winning two Australian Cups. Raced by workmates Helen Gorman and Ernie Baulch she was trained by former racehorse strapper Gary Ball. A novice to the training caper he was a quick learner and guided the Brother Fox from La Paz bitch through a brilliant career. Some notable unplaced runners Soldier On, Kinta's way and Close To Tears. Classic Couriers had become loyal sponsors of the Cup and were to fore again.

In a major boilover, rank outsider Kelvin's Pride at 14/1 won the **1993** Classic Couriers Cranbourne Cup. Rich Return fell in a first turn scrimmage and Kelvin's Pride held off all the challenges to win by 4 and ¾ lengths in 30.65 from Kiwi Tekka (6/1) and Top Gun winner

Worth Backing (11/2) third. By Pop Gun from 1981 Laurels winner Sarah Kuda, Kelvin's Pride had been nursed back from injury by owner-trainer Siegfried Ruopp of Ringwood to pocket the \$20,000 first prize. The brilliant Dallas Duo who started 6/4 favourite had no luck in running and finished fifth.

With crowds on the wane the Cranbourne Club came up with brilliant crowd puller for the **94** Cup promotion. Club stalwart Ross Mitchell arranged for the Melbourne Tigers basketball team to attend Cup night. The NBA at the time was very popular and a huge crowd turned up to see the boys in person. For the first time in five years the Cup had a new sponsor when Conways Printers Engineering took over the race. Melbourne's very own superstar Andrew Gaze presented the \$20,000 winners cheque to Jamb Kid's trained by Ken Vitue. Starting 10/9 favourite he scored in race record time of 30.55 when he defeated Montroyal (8/1) and Starlight Rebel (9/4) third. The white and brindle dog by Ginger from La Elegance had overcome a serious operation late the year before and was lucky to be racing at all. Australian Cup and Easter Egg winner Mancunian Girl finished fourth.

1995 and the very talented World Champ Stan won the cup. Starting 2/1 equal favourite he raced brilliantly around the first turn and was never headed. Raced and trained by Werribee resident Con Maniatis the black dog by Walkabout Sid from Say Hello only had a short race career when it was cut down by injury. Mac Talent (4/1) finished second Silent Assassin (2/1) third. The race was hand timed at 30.54 due to a fierce electrical storm that hit the area the day before. A bolt of lightning hit the winning post rendering the semaphore board useless and causing faults to other equipment that had to be hurriedly repaired. In fact I don't think the semaphore ever recovered to function at 100%. Conway Printers Engineers were again the sponsor with Robert Conway presenting the \$20,000 first prize.

In what was one of the most effortless cup wins ever seen in **1996** Koo-Wee-Rup speedster Wild Season bolted in by eight lengths leading all the way and setting a race record time of 30.49. The black dog by Head Honcho from Seasonal Girl started 11/4, 10/9 favourite and Top Gun winner Wylie Boy broke down in the run and was retired to stud. Laurels winner Hanson Kelly (10/1) finished second and classy sprinter Son Of Hilda (7/2) third. Popular Owner-trainer Frank Ryan was delighted to accept the \$20,000 cheque from Robert Conway of Conway's Greyhound Complex, while radio personality Marty Heagney rugged the dog. Wild Season became a very underrated sire and has now found himself standing at stud in Ireland.

Graeme Bate had surprisingly never won the cup, but that was about to change in **1997** when his cups king Lansley Bale added to his already impressive collection. An outstanding field made the final on one of the wettest days I've seen greyhound racing conducted in. In a torrential downpour the fawn dog by Farloe Melody from Carmel Bale over took the leader Mepunga Streak (10/1) in the home straight and was too strong in the run to the line winning by ¾ of a length with a battling Awesome Assassin the even money favourite was third in 30.88. Conways Greyhound Complex again sponsored the race and presented the \$20,000 first prize, while hostess Elisa Mangan rugged the dog. Lansley Bale a product of the Wheeler factory has made quite a name for himself as one of our leading stud dogs.

It was a satisfied Tom Maulman who trained his second cup winner in **1998** when Fiery Sal a 4/5 favourite defeated Bravest Tears (7/1) and Mountain Drifter (4/1) third. It had been a long time between drinks having won in 1986 with Lightening Boy. An unlucky fourth in the Top Gun behind superstar Rapid Journey, the Journey had been a major draw card in the heats only to suffer defeat. Raced by Les Parker the blue bitch by Head Honcho from Buderium Three used the red box to full advantage winning by a length in 30.68. Conways Greyhound Complex again sponsored with a prize of \$20,000, some of the notable unplaced were Greyhound Of The Year Totally Ablaze and Australian Cup winner Mandatario.

1999 and the seventh winner from box one claimed victory by way of Australian Cup winner Arvo's Express. The brindle dog by Billy Binjang from former top notch performer Bon Jamie proved to good for a smart field to score the \$25,000 first prize sponsored Conways for a fifth time. Lasting by ¾ of a length he beat track specialist Gunnar Bale (6/1) and Graeme Bate's consistent Moonambel Tiger (14/1) third in 30.51. Bate also had the favourite Suellen Bale (6/4) who had no luck but was to go on to bigger and better things. Trained by Tina Womann Arvo's Express became a very versatile performer winning over most distances in an outstanding career.

In the year **2000** one of the most popular wins in the history of the cup went too local trainer Des Carlson's brindle bitch Marsha Brady (11/1). She defied all the challengers to win by a half a length from the 7/4 favourite; the well performed Dutch's Angel. Stylish Blossom was third in race record time of 30.07. The Carlson's bred the Heading West x Your Thoughts litter with the dam going on to produce a number of class chasers from subsequent litters. The club

like many others found it almost impossible to find a sponsor so they came up with the concept of a number of smaller ones who participated in a draw for naming rights of the cup. Long time greyhound sponsor David Gleeson came out of the hat and his company Gleeson and Tonta Electrical. Gleeson made the presentation of \$30,000 winner's cheque to delighted connections on very cold November night.

2001 Graeme Bate scored his second Cranbourne Cup when his Laurels winner Hail A Harley held on to win by a half a length from the fast finishing Jeanie's Queen (5/1) and Boss Cockey (4/1) third in 30.30. By former winner Lansley Bale from Flying Maud she was raced by Brian Lellmann and proved a consistent top class performer for Bate. Two of our very best chasers finished unplaced Modern Assassin and Hotshow Vintage. AWM Electrical came out of the hat as the sponsors but prizemoney plunged back a number of years to be \$16,500 to the winner.

2002 The race run for the first time in June. Heats were held on the very successful tri-codes Sunday meeting and the final proved a very easy win to Australian Cup winner Isa Brown (3/1). Finding the front quickly from box eight she opened up a winning break down the back and was never in danger. The black bitch by American import Fortified Speed from prolific producer Goddess Of Fire has really put her sire on the map. Isa Brown's owner Geoff Collins took the punt in bring Fortified speed to Australia and has hit pay dirt with one of his daughters. Trained by leading Victorian trainer Robert Britton she beat Final Conflict and Vite Shiraz in a fast 30.19. Prizemoney remained at \$16,500 and AWM Electrical were the lucky sponsor for a second time.

2003 The Guinner Bale at Stud Cranbourne Cup held on January 10 with a first Prize \$20,000 was won by WATERVIEW STAR (Just The Best x Stargari) Whelped January 2000. Owner D.J..Humphreys. Trainer Peter Dapiran. Others (in finishing order) Hotshow Jackson, Modern Assassin, Excite Ability, Fidler Bale, Krumbles, Azz I'm English, Golden Phaeton. Margins 4.5 x 3.75. Time 30.12.

2004 The Kingston Trophies Cranbourne Cup held on January 9, with a first Prize \$20,000 was won by SMACK WALLOP (Token Prince x Sheila Blue) Whelped June 2001 Owner Dennis Trewin. Trainer Tina.Womann. Others (in finishing order) Ferguson Bale, Henderson Bale, Arvo's Junior, Arvo's Blitz, Clockwork, Petite Verdot, Half A Grand Margins 6.25 x 2. Time 30.13.

2005 The Wattle Tree Park Cranbourne Cup held on January 7, 2005. Cranbourne GRC. First Prize \$25,000 was won by Winner PASTRANA BALE (Fortified Speed x Suellen Bale) Whelped May 2002 Owner Paul Wheeler. Trainer Andrea Dailly. Others in finishing order Sun Hero, Weetbix, Panicked, Ceejay's Vioxen, Amaroo Gift, Sun Alert, Mepunga East. Margins 3 x 3. Time 30.20.

2006 In what has been somewhat of an amazing transformation current sprint sensation Pororoca produced another extraordinary effort to win the Group Two Leader Newspapers Cranbourne Cup final.

Sent to the boxes a \$1.60 favourite most in attendance expected the black flyer to win once he drew the red box after qualifying as the fastest second, he had staged a herculean effort to be beaten a nose behind leader All The Moves in the heats.

However, it was the authority with which Pororoca won the Cranbourne Cup that astounded all onlookers. Beginning well from his inside draw he was beaten for early pace at the first turn by the talented Leefull (\$11.90), who opened up a handy break down the back straight. A dog noted for his strength once in the lead Leefull was travelling beautifully through the second section in a fast 21.14 after recording a first split of 5.84.

Pororoca at that point made his move and similar to his Albion Park Brisbane Cup win he railed up on the inside of Leefull and raced past him like he was nailed to the ground. Opening up a big break around the home turn he spaced the opposition in what seemed a couple of strides and sizzled to the line in an extraordinary 29.68. Winning by eight and a quarter lengths he treated the quality field like they were maidens.



2007 Outstanding Victorian sprinter Vapour Whirl (\$2.90) blitzed the quality field assembled for the Group 2 Kingston Trophies Cranbourne Cup final on Monday night. Surprisingly the multi group winner didn't start popular elect after his blistering heat win in a fastest of the night 30.02. Punters made Jaimandy Coops the 2.70 favourite even from box seven and after he failed to lead early last week.

The \$25,000 first prize was on its way back to Ballarat shortly after box rise when Vapour Whirl found the

fence and was just off the leader Sonador (\$26.60), she raced through the first split in a quick 5.43. Vapour Whirl soon after took over in front and opened a big break down the back, at that point the race was over. He clocked 21.26 for the second split which wasn't as fast as his heat back mark record of 21.10. The result was a case of times and margins as Vapour Whirl increased his lead to eight lengths on the line defeating a fast finishing Dyna Redbull (\$9.20) who grabbed second from Sonador in the shadows of the post. Overall time for the final was a best of the night 30.21.

2008 Talented Victorian sprinter Sonador (\$7.10) broke through for her first group success in the final of the Group 2 Karingal Hub Tab Cranbourne Cup final last Monday night. An interesting field of top sprinters made the final after many of the bigger names entered fell by the way in the heats on a night of upsets. In a wide open betting race punters made the Jason Thompson trained Proven Alias favourite at \$3.10 from box eight.

At box rise the favourite Proven Alias (\$3.10) missed the start as he usually does, also poorly away was equal fastest heat winner Randle from box one. As the field sorted themselves out in the run to the first turn Ballarat Cup winner Go Wild Jack (\$3.60) found the early lead and recorded a slick 5.38 first split. He led down the back with Coultas Bomber (\$7.60) in hot pursuit, Sonador next from Avon Lee (\$29.00) with the rest going to find it hard winning from that point.

As the field approached the home turn Go Wild Jack started to come back to them and the big danger appeared to be Coultas Bomber, however Sonador was not done with and saving all the ground she could, she chased hard along the rail getting too the front metres from the post landing the prize in fine style.

2009 Master mentor Graeme Bate was effusive in his praise of Stoner Bale following last night's Group 2 Ram Security Cranbourne Cup (520m).

Ironically, Bate finished second with Turanza Bale in the \$30,000-to-the-winner event – but in reality much of the polish on Stoner Bale can be attributed to the iconic 12-time Victorian Trainer of the Year.

Bate and his stepson, Peter Hunt, have formidable teams and the Lara legend is upbeat on their future prospects.

Stoner Bale (February 2006 Stately Bird-Saffron Bale) has mostly been under the tutelage of Hunt, who no doubt is the 'master's apprentice'. Hunt also had Kendale Bale (4th) in the final while Bate also had Beware (6th).

Bate (who was chasing his third Cranbourne Cup) was a willing spokesman on Stoner Bale, who he believes is one of the state's most improved sprinters.

Stoner Bale clocked the second-fastest time ever on the circuit and was around four lengths off the track record – his 29.92sec making him one of only five greyhounds to break the magical 30-second barrier. The others being Pororoca (29.68sec), who set the track record in the 2006 final, Sonador (29.94sec), who semaphored that time in this year's cup heats, and Brokenwood and Flying Titan (both 29.96sec).

2010 Arvo's Florence has had to follow in some illustrious paw prints – being a younger half-brother of champion stayer Arvo's Junior and country cups finalist Arvo's Blitz.

But in claiming the Group 2 Karingal Hub TAB Cranbourne Cup (520m) on Australia Day eve, Arvo's Florence achieved what his decorated siblings couldn't six years earlier.

Littermates Arvo's Junior and Arvo's Blitz finished fourth and fifth respectively to Smack Wallop in the 2004 Cranbourne Cup.

Prepared by Terry Burns of Koo Wee Rup, Arvo's Florence descends from a pre-potent pedigree that harks back to immortal producer Wee Sal.

And he is displaying all of the genetic traits – particularly since finishing fourth, at only his eighth start, in the Group 2 Great Chase in late November last year.

Arvo's Florence, who notched his sixth win (with five seconds and two thirds) from 18 starts in the \$30,000-to-the-winner Cranbourne Cup, showed his 30.26sec fastest heat win was no flash in the pan.

In the final, Arvo's Florence (\$9.10) defeated Ultra Rumble (\$4.40) by three and three-quarter lengths, with Curwen Walker (\$15.20) one and three-quarter lengths away third in 30.17sec – around one and a half lengths quicker than his heat victory.

2011 Under trying track conditions, the Group 2 Cranbourne Cup was won on Monday night by Junortoun trained Gold Heritage.

Taking out the fastest run of the night, the Box eight drawn Gold Heritage saluted in 30.53, aided by her outside draw.

Having missed the kick from the boxes, Gold Heritage (\$3.30) was placed second coming in to the first turn, behind Finbar McCool (box seven). However, she set up the win in the back straight striding away from the field to win by four lengths.

It was only her second start at Cranbourne for as many wins after winning her heat in the second fastest time of the night 30.39 from another outside draw box seven. Raced and bred by Junortoun couple Des and Evonne Downing the family have been involved in greyhound racing for many decades.

Gold Heritage has always shown above average ability in her short 20 start career which includes six city wins three at Sandown with a best of 29.86 and likewise at the Meadows with a best of 30.20. The talented Black bitch seems to have a bright future in front of her as her Cranbourne Cup win was her seventh in a row.

2012 Mystic Apple (\$5.10) made it consecutive country cup wins when showing amazing versatility to drop back in distance and claim the Cranbourne Cup [520m] on Sunday.



Just 20 days after winning Group 1 staying race, the Sale Cup [650m] on Boxing Day, the Val Awramenko-trained Mystic Apple dropped back to sprinting to lead all the way and win Cranbourne greyhound racing's premier event in a smart 30.39sec. Awramenko told in the days leading up to the \$40,000 to-the-winner Cranbourne Cup how Mystic Apple boasted an extremely relaxed nature, and that came to the fore pre-race as greyhounds were held up at the boxes for several

minutes before being loaded into the traps. "Nothing bothers him", Awramenko revealed. "He has an incredibly calm nature." Mystic Apple, who is trained in the Geelong region, took his record to 26 wins from just 57 starts, and he has now won \$231,000 in prize money.

2013 A 30-year drought was broken when Cintiarna won the Cranbourne Cup on Monday night, handing Gippsland owner/trainer Sandra Collins her first ever win at Group level. Cintiarna, a daughter of Bombastic Shiraz and Hello Sienna, led virtually all the way to stun punters and win at odds of \$18.30 by three lengths over Peter Hunt's Gold Town (\$11) and the fast finishing Destini Fireball (\$5.20) in the spectacular time of 29.93sec over the 520m journey.

For more than three decades Sandra and husband Tom have battled gamely in the sport of greyhound racing without reaching any dizzy heights.

However, Cintiarna's victory earned \$42,000 first prize money plus a \$10,000 GOBIS bonus. Amazingly, the windfall may never have happened had it not be for the persistence of a pup and a life changing decision.



2014 Banjo Boy (box one - \$3.30) brilliantly won the 2014 Ken Hickey Concreting Cranbourne Cup in the stunning time of 30.03 for trainer Ken Virtue.

Coming into the race under an injury cloud, Banjo Boy put all fears to bed at box rise as he bounced straight to the front from box one.

A son of Vee Man Vane and Off Springer, Banjo Boy has been a highly regarded greyhound for much of his career, having competed in the Group 3 Shootout at Sandown Park among a number of impressive victories which have included a 29.01s run at Sandown and a 29.73s run at The Meadows.

After the race, Virtue was full of gratitude to all that have helped him with the greyhound along the way, commenting that the dog has brought his family closer together.



2015 It took a longer than expected, but former NSW sprinter Avondale Porche (\$2.90Fav) finally landed her first Group race win when taking out the \$65,000 2015 Kingston Trophies Cranbourne Cup (520m) in thrilling fashion on Wednesday night for trainer Kelvyn Greenough.

The stadium was filled with tension when Oakdale Destiny (\$3.60) (6) flew home to almost pinch the race from Avondale Porche (5), who as expected found the early lead, and it took the Judge about 60 seconds to separate the blue-coloured pair by a nose after calling for a photo finish in 29.977sec.

"Kel said today that Oakdale Destiny was the main danger because she ran Avondale Porche down at Sandown two starts ago."

"But early speed won the day today, as it so often does in greyhound racing," explained Kelvyn's wife, Jackie Greenough after the greyhound had snared the \$45,000 first prize.

2016 Former Kiwi sprinter Above All won Saturday night's \$67,000 Group 2 Cranbourne Cup (520m) leaving trainer Robert Britton in awe.

"He is the best and most determined greyhound I've ever trained," the highly successful Britton said after his star greyhound claimed the \$47,000 first prize.

Little over 12 months ago Above All won the Group 1 Hobart Thousand and Group 1 Silver Chief in the space of 16 days and was touted as one of the premier greyhounds in Australia.



However, it has been a tale of frustration since then as two stints on the sidelines totalling nine months because of stopper bone injuries saw Above All grace the track a total of 10 times in 2015.

"It has been an unbelievable effort to come back from these injuries," Britton said.

"He's not the dog he once was but he's only six runs into this campaign so he may improve a little bit on what we've seen tonight."

"But he doesn't have the same zip he used to have."

"When he won the Silver Chief (in January 2015) he came from behind to win running away against the likes of (Melbourne Cup winners) Dyna Villa and Dyna Double One, which gives you an idea of the potential he was showing." Above All (\$20.80) began well in the Cranbourne Cup, settling second behind early pace setter Shared Equity, who tracked wide on the first turn allowing Above All to cut to the lead along the rail.

From that position he was always going to be hard to beat, and he eventually scored by two lengths over Shared Equity (\$5.60) with Rare Pearl (\$10.60) third in 30.00sec.

2017 Crackerjack Choc caused a boilover on Saturday night when winning the Group 2 Cranbourne Cup (520m) at double figure odds.

Beginning from box two, the Anita Courts-trained dog was only fairly away, but was able to secure a valuable spot on the fence in the run around the first turn behind leaders Archie Fields (box six) and Don't Kid Me (box seven).

Down the back, Archie Fields drifted off the track, giving Crackerjack Choc the perfect run through along the fence to assume the lead.

Swinging for home, Crackerjack Choc kicked clear at \$33 and was able to hold on despite a late challenge from Archie Fields to score by 0.31 lengths in 30.14.

Don't Kid Me ran a solid race to finish third, with race favourite Big Flood (box three) never in contention after missing the start.

A son of Cosmic Rumble and Lizzie's Memory, Crackerjack Choc has now won 14 of his 55 starts, with prize money now in excess of \$93,000.

2018 The powerful Dailly/Wheeler partnership returned to the spotlight on Saturday night when Mossimo Bale followed in the footsteps of his illustrious sire Fernando Bale in the Group 2 Casey Steel Cranbourne Cup Final (520m).

The many feature race conquests of Fernando Bale, which was also trained by Andrea Dailly, included country cups successes at Bendigo and Traralgon and Mossimo Bale's Cranbourne triumph continued the sensational start to his champion father's stud career."

We haven't had as many group winners lately compared to a couple of years ago, so this is a really nice feeling, and it's even more special because he's a son of Fernando Bale," Andrea Dailly said.

The complexion of the \$47,000 to-the-winner Cranbourne Cup changed dramatically with the scratching of superstar Up Hill Jill, which saw Traralgon Cup hero Poke The Bear, another son of Fernando Bale, trained by Seona Thompson, start \$2.40 favourite from box eight.

Kate Gorman's Monster Fish, runner-up to Poke The Bear in the Traralgon Cup and then again in the Cranbourne heats, was the \$4.40 second elect from box two, while Mossimo Bale was an \$11.10 outsider from box six after a 30.26sec heat victory at his Cranbourne debut.

Striving to go one better than at Traralgon, Monster Fish was best to begin and led Mossimo Bale rounding the first turn, while punter's fancy Poke The Bear was awkwardly positioned, trapped wide outside reserve Jesaulenko.

Monster Fish and Mossimo Bale broke clear down the back and Mossimo Bale wore down the gallant Monster Fish in the home straight to score by 1.41 lengths in 30.12sec, at an impressive 14 from 30 strike rate, with a luckless Poke The Bear rattling home to finish third.

2019 Orson Allen celebrated the biggest win of his career on Saturday night, adding a deserved country cup triumph to his resume with a brilliant all-the-way victory in the Group 2 Spolly's Syndication Cranbourne Cup Final (520m).



Trained by 25-year-old Correy Grenfell, Orson Allen was making his fourth appearance in a provincial Cup, having previously contested finals at Geelong (2nd), Bendigo (4th) and Warragul (6th).

Orson Allen's previous feature titles had both come at Sandown in the Group 3 Shootout and Listed Australian Sprint.

"This is what we train for; to get the rewards like this," Grenfell said.

A superbly-bred son of US sire KC And All and Group winner Desalle Bale, Orson Allen was the fastest qualifier for the \$47,000 to-the-winner Cranbourne Cup

after a near-record 29.61sec heat victory, just .01 outside Pop The Cork's 520m benchmark.

Drawn in box three, Orson Allen was the \$3.20 second elect, behind Seona Thompson's \$1.70 favourite Poke The Bear (box 2), with Poke The Bear's kennelmate Azkaban (\$9.10) the only other runner at single figures.

Orson Allen came out running and Grenfell's pre-race confidence was vindicated in breathtaking style as he opened up a race-winning lead in the back straight, going on to defeat Poke The Bear by 4.13 lengths in another scorching run of 29.77sec.

2020 After careering away with her hometown Cranbourne Cup, versatile Victorian blueblood Often Imitated will take aim at her first Group 1 trophy in Saturday night's Rookie Rebel invitational (600m) at The Meadows.



Often Imitated, a daughter of former superstar stayer Sweet It Is, claimed her second Group 2 title with a dominant display in the Cranbourne Cup Final (520m), having previously won the McKenna Memorial (595m) at Sandown Park last July.

Trained locally by Kel and Jackie Greenough, Often Imitated started \$2.20 favourite from box one in the Cranbourne Cup and she took full advantage of the rails alley to lead all-the-

way in a best of night 30.09s in extremely windy conditions.

In defeating Jaro Bale by 5.14 lengths, Often Imitated took her earnings past the \$200,000 mark and gave the Pearcedale-based Greenough's their second Cranbourne Cup, having won the race in 2015 with Avondale Porche.

Well that brings the history to a close and in detail explains what a great race the Cranbourne Cup has been over the years. The club has always been at the fore front of promotion and maximum exposure for the race which has no doubt placed it as the major provincial cup series conducted anywhere in Australia.