

# *Pommy Kev just loves OZ*

By **DAVID BRASCH**

**“POMMY”** Kevin Robinson doesn't like to boast, but he reckons he's seen more dog racing throughout the world than most.

That's because Kevin is an in-flight supervisor for British Airways and has spent the past 28 years flitting about the world ... and taking in greyhound racing on three continents as he goes.

Kevin recently came to Australia to see a bit of country dog racing and ended up creating a bit of a stir ... it was he who was the centre of attention at a Bundaberg race meeting late in November.

“It all started as an inquiry to go racing in the country and ended up being much, much more than I expected,” Kevin told *The Journal*.

As a member of [globalgreyhounds.com](http://globalgreyhounds.com), Kevin regularly keeps in touch with greyhound followers in Australia. He even has dogs being reared at Torbanlea south of Bundaberg.

This is how he came to inquire about a day at the races, country-style.

“I said I would bring along a trophy and it all went from there.”

Kevin has come and gone but not without enjoying the hospitality of greyhound racing Oz style.

And after 28 years he believes racing is at its best in the UK and Australia with racing US style “soul-less”.

“Australia and the UK are about on par, but it is tougher to win eight-dog races than it is with only six runners,” he said. “Irish



dogs have more early pace than Aussie dogs, but most Irish dogs need to lead to win.”

Kevin says Australians should not judge UK racing on the dogs sent to Australia for the International Topgun races of a few years ago, nor on the success Aussie sires are having in Ireland now.

“It is an amazing situation in England for instance,” he said.

“Take Hove track as an example. The A1 dogs, the best on a card, or Free For All if you like, will race for \$250 in prizemoney, but the six dogs might have a worth of \$150,000.

“The track will have 500 in the restaurant and another 1500 to 2000 at the track for a night out.

“There are seven bookmakers who will bet you to lose \$6000 each. It's great atmosphere, great racing and a great track.

“Prices to buy dogs are inflated in the UK though. A FFA dog will cost between \$15,000 and \$25,000.”

That is why Kevin turned his own interest to owning greyhounds in Australia, not that he hasn't been a successful owner back home.

His introduction to the sport was as a 22-year-old in 1982 through Move N Groove a city class marathoner which retired after winning nine races.

“The first litter I bred included Gissajob which won the 1984 St Leger at 33-1. I'd caught the bug by then,” he said.

While that sort of success hasn't embraced Kevin since then, he has always had a litter or two each year.

“I spent nine years on the short haul with British Airways flying to Europe and it was easy to have greyhounds myself then,” he said.

But seven years ago he switched to longhaul flights to the US, South Africa and Australia. He visits Australia five or six times a year.

“Initially I bought a few pups in Australia as a hobby,” he said.

At home he sold his greyhound property and now has a couple of kennels at his home for dogs he might train himself when the opportunity arises.

Vulcan Bomber won a second round of the Derby and broke a record at Reading. He had a dog called Box Of Secrets which looked the goods after winning at Bendigo in 24.69 but died after being bitten by a snake.

He now has a young dog in Victoria, a Bobniak-Mary Wana Tree dog he bought through the Internet, and plans for more.

While in Australia Kevin made a number of inquiries about buying frozen semen from stud dogs here. “I believe in 18 months we will see an explosion of the use

of frozen semen around the world,” he said.

He believes the life has gone out of racing in the US. “The dogs are in good condition, the vet care is fine, the dogs are fit, and the prizemoney is good,” he said. “But the racing is not as good as it was 15 years ago. Flagler would attract 3000 people every Saturday night, but now that is down to 300 or 400.”

One thing he does regret about UK greyhound racing is the influence of the major bookmaking firms.

“All the profits in the UK go into the bookies bags,” he said.

“There are few big crowds at greyhound race meetings in Australia, but at least a percentage of the punting dollar goes back into the sport.”

He claims rearing costs of pups in Australia is one-third the price in the UK.

But with the drop in the conversion rate, this was becoming more expensive.

