

**Submission  
No 656**

## **INQUIRY INTO GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW**

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Greyhounds nearly became extinct during times of famine in the Middle Ages. They were saved by clergymen who protected them and bred them for the nobility. From this point on, they came to be considered the dogs of the aristocracy. In the tenth century, King Howel of Wales made killing a greyhound punishable by death. King Canute of England established the Forest Laws in 1014, reserving large areas of the country for hunting by the nobility. Only such persons could own greyhounds; any "meane person" (commoner) caught owning a greyhound would be severely punished and the dog's toes "lawed" (mutilated) to prevent it from hunting. The value of a Greyhound exceeded that of a serf, and the punishment for causing death of a Greyhound was equivalent to the punishment for murder. In 1066 William the Conqueror introduced even more stringent forest laws. Commoners who hunted with greyhounds in defiance of these laws favored dogs whose coloring made them harder to spot: black, red, fawn, and brindle. Nobles by contrast favored white and spotted dogs who could be spotted and recovered more easily if lost in the forest. It became common among the English aristocracy to say, "You could tell a gentleman by his horses and his greyhounds."

<http://www.gulfcoastgreyhounds.org/hist-mid-ren.html>