

THE PIGEON FANCIERS SOCIETY OF NSW SOUTH WALES INC.

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- PAVILION MANAGERS:** PETER RYAN
- PUBLICITY OFFICER:** LISA WEEKES
- CHIEF STEWARD:** PETER RYAN
- MEMBERSHIP PARTICULARS:** NEW MEMBERS - \$20.00
JUNIOR'S (UNDER 16'S) - \$5.00
RENEWAL – PENSIONER - \$8.00
RENEWAL – SENIOR & COMBINED FAMILY RATE - \$15.00

Please note that the renewal of membership falls due on the 1st July each year. Cheques and money orders must be made payable to the PFS of NSW Inc. and can be mailed to the Membership Co-Coordinator, TONY DESSMANN, address as indicated above, New Membership enquires and membership forms can be obtained from the secretary, either show secretaries or from the PFS website – www.pfsnsw.com

CLUB MEETINGS: ARE CONDUCTED ON THE THIRD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM, VENUE BEING THE PIGEON & POULTRY PAVILION, FAIRFIELD SHOWGROUNDS, SMITHFIELD RD, FAIRFIELD. VISITORS ARE WELCOME.

CLUBS NEWSLETTER: THE EDITOR INVITES SUBMISSIONS AND ARTICLES FROM MEMBERS, INCLUDING REPORTS, ESPECIALLY FROM COUNTRY AREAS.

RINGS: PIGEON RINGS CAN BE PURCHASED FROM OUR RING SECRETARY FOR \$0.45 EACH, ONLY AVAILABLE IN LOTS OF TEN. (COST \$4.50 FOR TEN RINGS) PLUS \$2.50 POSTAGE.

**THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS HEREIN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE PFS OF NSW INC.,
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NEWS FROM THE PUBLICITY OFFICER

By Lisa Weekes



This year has certainly been a busy year for most fanciers, after vaccinating our birds and getting our birds into condition for the show season. This year Catherine Weekes and I had the opportunity to travel to Sydney in January 2013 for exhibition of works by Ho Hai Tran featuring pigeon portraits - "Fancy". There was a large turn-out for this exhibition, even the one of the hottest Sydney days couldn't keep the large crowds that turned up to see this exhibition. For those who have attended our shows in the last two years, you would have seen a photographer - Ho Hai Tran taking pictures and his assistant Chloe Cadhill.

We were both very excited to see this exhibit, it see all the hard work everyone involved in this project, come to light. To see the pigeon fancy promoted so well to showcase the hobby of the fancy pigeon to the general public.



Above: Ho Hai Tran, Chloe Cadhill and Lisa Weekes at the Exhibition.



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it's a great way to keep up to date on the PFS.

MYSTERIES OF PIGEON MILK EXPLAINED



Pigeon mothers produce 'milk' that has similar nutrients to the milk mammals produce, new research shows. Lactation may seem a uniquely mammalian trait, but some birds are more like us than you think. Australian researchers have found that pigeons produce a type of 'milk' in their gut that is similar to the milk that mammalian mothers produce to feed their young. "We looked at the genes involved in the production of pigeon milk and found that it contains antioxidants and immune-enhancing factors," says Deakin University and CSIRO research fellow Dr Tamsyn Crowley. "This suggests that, like mammalian milk, it plays a key role in enhancing the immune system of the developing baby." Pigeon throat pouch like a mammary gland both male and female pigeons produce the nutrient- and fat-rich substance in their crop (a pouch found in the bird's throat), which they regurgitate to their chicks, known as squabs. Meagan Gillespie, Deakin PhD student and co-author of the study, says that a pigeon's crop would usually be used to store food. "However, in the pigeon, the crop changes prior to 'lactation' - in response to hormones - and returns to its 'non-lactating' state at the end of the lactation period, a bit like the mammary gland."



Milk production is found in all pigeon and dove species, as well as flamingos and male emperor penguins, she told *Australian Geographic*. While the phenomenon is still not well understood, in the case of emperor penguins it is believed milk is only produced by males, and only when their partners take too long to return to the nest with food.

PIGEON MILK MYSTERY - "This work has provided an insight into the process of pigeon milk production, by studying the genes expressed in the lactating crop," Meagan says. But many questions still remain about how the process has evolved.

The similarity between this process and lactation in mammals is striking, but is a case of convergent evolution, where unrelated species independently evolve similar traits. "Even these bird species that produce milk are not directly related to each other, so the best we can say is that this trait must have evolved separately in each one," says the CSIRO's Tamsyn.

Dr Nelson Horseman a physiologist at the University of Cincinnati in the US, says that a kind of milk production is found in many species. "In some fishes the 'milk' that is fed to their young is a mucous secretion on the skin. Certain amphibians shed actual skin cells that are fed to the young. [But the] milk of pigeons and doves is the most highly specialized of any non-mammalian milk."

FARMING PIGEON MILK - "Pigeon's milk is extremely nutritious, to be sure, so understanding how it can provide a jump-start to the immature squabs is important," she says. A study where pigeon milk was fed to chickens showed that it increased the growth rate of chicks by 38 per cent.

"I would like to have more answers about this question," agrees Tamsyn. "For the moment, though, we have more questions about how this process evolved and what it may be used for than we have time to research."

BIGGEST BUDGIE FLOCKS IN A DECADE



THE RESIDENTS OF Alice Springs have sighted plenty of small flocks of budgies in recent months. Now, reports of flocks between 10,000 and 60,000 strong, darkening the skies over local water sources, have been confirmed. Budgies normally travel in flocks of around 100, but they have been breeding prolifically over the last few years due to good rain. This is a normal part of the boom-bust cycle of central Australia. When the rains dry up, the inflated population goes in search of water and massive numbers converge on available sources – often manmade dams and bore holes – creating an impressive spectacle.

Residents report that they haven't seen anything quite on the current scale for over a decade. Huge budgie flocks in central Australia "There were high numbers about 4-6 weeks ago," says Timothy Hill, a local archaeologist and photographer. "Then we had a little bit of rain, and all the flocks spread out again... now that's it's starting to dry up they're coming back."



Budgies massing 40km south of Alice Springs. (Credit: Timothy Hill)

Bird watching at Alice Springs - The flocks is also drawing in hungry raptors, such as brown falcons, says Tim, who took the photos illustrating this story. However, these big birds don't necessarily get an easy meal. The budgie flocks display high speed and fluid motion, something like a shoal of fish. "They'll go along, and all of a sudden switch and change direction," he says. "It's a real behavioral mechanism to defend the group." All in all it's pretty magical, Tim adds. "It's not just the sight, but the sound it. Not just the budgies cheeping, but of all those thousands of wings fluttering and keeping them aloft."

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OIL GLAND

By Dr. Türker Savaş



One of my German friends told me about his observation while back. According to him, pigeons with 14 or more tail feathers do not have the oil gland above their tails and they are much more vulnerable to diseases. I did a small research on this:

Commonly known function of the oil gland is oiling of the feathers. This function is much less important in pigeons compared to water birds. However, as you know oiling of the feathers prevent water penetration for pigeons in some level also. In the same time by trapping air between the feathers, working as insulation, allows the bird to loose its body heat in a slower pace during the cold days. In my opinion, birds unable to oil their feathers spend much more energy to contain their body heat than the birds with oil glands. Their metabolism, in relation to this, works on heat production much more. Therefore, pushes the immune system to second in importance and makes the birds much more sensitive to illnesses. Studies on oil gland are very limited. Especially for pigeons, it is almost none existent.

Because of this, I am going to summarize important points of some of the oil gland studies done on other bird species.

A study of surgical removal of oil gland in rock pigeons shows no effects on the physical and general condition of the birds. A similar study in quails shows no difference in physical growth, body heat and hematological (blood values) between normal birds and the ones with removed oil glands. However, one of the important things to keep in mind is the limited observation period of both studies.

Another study on titmouse "Parus" shows a positive relationship between the size of the oil gland, amount of oil secretion and the amount of feather mites that lived on each bird. The birds with large oil glands and high oil secretion have more feather mites on them. Researchers conclude, the smell of the oil gland secretion has an attractive effect on the parasites. According to this, the breeds with no oil glands have an advantage over others against the parasite I also want to talk about an interesting study:

This is done on chickens. Numbers of chickens are divided into two groups and the oil gland of the chickens in one of the groups removed. When these birds were examined after 60 days, the type of microorganisms on chickens without oil glands were found to be different than the chickens with oil glands. While non-pathogen (type that does not cause sickness) microorganisms were found on the normal chickens, the chickens without the oil glands had pathogen microorganisms. Non-pathogen microorganisms on the normal chickens also prevented pathogen microorganisms from multiplying by their antibiotic secretions. Oil gland must be functioning as a nutrition source for the microorganisms that symbiotically live on the birds.

Besides this, it is a known fact that the oil gland secretion works as a fungicide on birds. All of these findings make the idea of birds without the oil gland being more open to illnesses sound real.



Above: our new ring secretary/membership coordinator Derek Garland hard at work.

2013 PIGEON FANCIERS SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES ANNUAL YOUNG BIRD SHOW VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

By Richard Henderson UK



It had been 8 years since my last visit to Australia and the PFS show in Fairfield near Sydney. That time it was for the annual all age show and I had hoped then to return sooner. John Hanson had in fact asked me to judge about 3 years ago, but due to family and work commitments I couldn't make it. This time when he asked if I would be willing to judge I'm glad to say I could, although only for a few days.

On arriving in Sydney it was just like being back home with cool wet weather, although the next day back in Sydney on the Friday the sun was out and it was sunny all weekend. John and I stayed at a local Motel with fellow Judges Terry Stevenson and his lovely wife Pam, Phil Cleghorn, and Max Healy and from America Tom Bollinger, plus John Hickman and his wife. Two very enjoyable evenings and meals were spent with them in the excellent restaurant. Some of the breeds I was to judge had no entries, Nuns, Long Faced Tumblers and Old Dutch Capuchines, however I still had over 200 to do on the Saturday.

The first breed I judged were the Show Racing Homers. Fred Frendo had Champion with a very nice Red Chequer hen. Fred also had Reserve Champion with a self white that had a blue grizzle tail. Other birds that stood out were the self whites, immaculate in condition, a colour that would look impressive on the British Show Racers.



These Australian Show Racing Homers look like photos I have seen of British Show Racers from 40 plus years ago. Not as angular in head as a Racing Pigeon, but not as full between beak and eye as a British Show Racer. They are good handling pigeons but do not have the chest muscle of British Show Racers, therefore should actually Race.

Next up were in fact the British Show Racers that over the past decade have become one of the most popular breeds in Australia, and my biggest section. There were some good classes and many of the leading birds would hold their own in the UK.

The blue bars were mainly powder blue, a beautiful colour especially with the correct full black bar and very good in the hand, however for me were too fine and narrow in the head and beak. Fred Frendo had best with a cock. The blue chequers had slightly fuller heads than the blues, with most having very good chequering right on to the wing butts. Fred again took best, but with a hen this time. In red chequer there were some very good birds in both sexes. Best belonged to John Hanson and Blenhaven Stud. A great bird to handle with just the sort of head I like, well filled in between beak and eye and good width between the eyes. In the mealy section was the bird I gave Champion to.



Again belonging to Blenhaven Stud it was great in the hand, had a beautiful head and faultless in condition. It would definitely do well in the UK as would several more of the mealies. B. Shoobridge won the pied section with a blue chequer pied of very good quality. The last section was for any other colour. The winning bird and Reserve Champion went to a lavender hen from Blenhaven Stud. I think in Australia this colour is usually called opal. A beautiful hen that pushed the mealy very hard. I must also mention two other AOC's that both belonged to Murray Hayes that I liked a lot.

The winning lavender cock and the mosaic cock that came second to it were quality youngsters. I know that this report will get read in both Australia and the UK, so what I say may be controversial, but it is my opinion based on over 30 years keeping, breeding, judging and sometimes exhibiting British Show Racers. My father also had them going back into the 1960's. In the UK rightly or wrongly this breed has no "written" standard, even though there have been "guidelines" written down through the years as to what they should look like. To me a written guideline is a standard, even so every single judge of this breed judges it to a "standard"!!!! I do to my own standard. A couple of the exhibitors at the show asked me about the birds entered and my placing therefore I will state here what I look for when judging British Show Racers.

I like and have always done so a British Show Racer with good chest muscle, a long straight keel to hold that muscle and a full head, well filled in between beak and eye, plus top feather quality with plenty of back cover (wing covert feathers that hide the birds back). I good coloured eye, strong beak and bold stance are also important. Even though the breed has a proud history being developed from Racing Pigeons, it is now as its name states a show breed, therefore the look of a bird is to me as important as its handling and feather qualities. Birds with narrow, snipey, angular or pinched heads will not go far with me. The type that always wins under me more often than not wins at most shows in the Northern part of the UK under other judges, whatever size of show so I can't be far wrong. The modern British Show Racer is purely a show breed, and most could not fly round a loft let alone actually race, if any has for decades. Anybody just has to look at the breed to see that it is so much more than a pretty Racing Pigeon. On handling British Show Racers they have far too much heavy chest muscle to fly properly and I don't know of any breeders or judges who would want the chest muscle of a Racing Pigeon on a winning British Show Racer and vice versa. Birds that are too narrow or small in head tend to look out of proportion, as do birds with too big a body. Proportion and balance I think are very important, both in looks and handling. The thing is as there is

no standard nobody can complain at whatever bird wins, if a judge likes a certain bird that is the best one, the judge cannot be wrong. If a breed has a standard poor judging can be rectified. Quite honestly unless a breed is judged on condition and feather quality only like Racing Pigeons are, every breed put in a show pen and judged even partially for its looks should have a written standard. Until then I will continue to judge British Show Racers to my own standard.



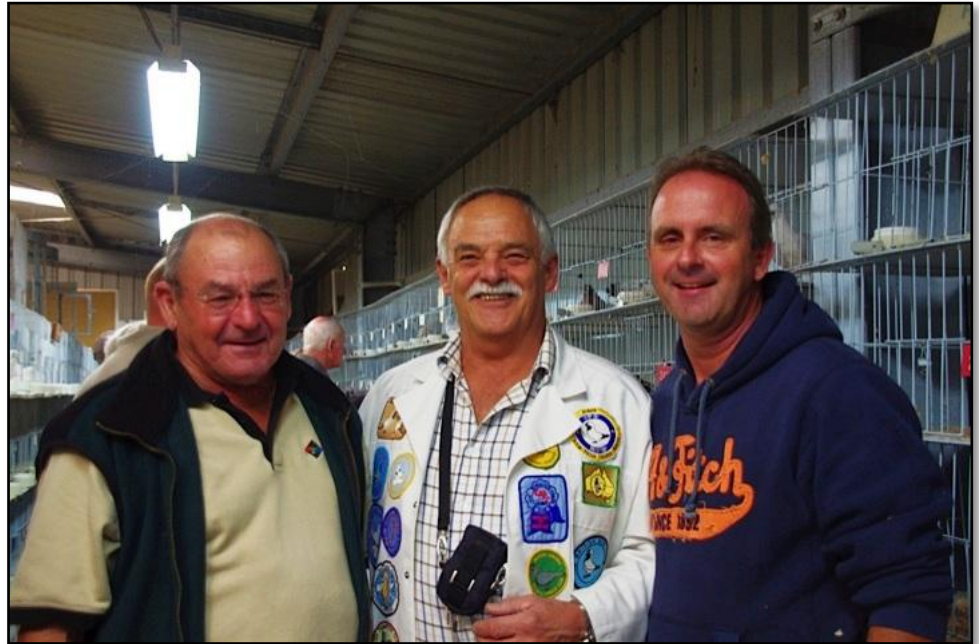
The next section I judged and my second largest was for Racing Pigeons. Most birds exhibited had fantastic feather quality, although unlike the Show Racing Homers and British Show Racers a few were not in show condition due to the moult and a couple had lice. Champion and Reserve Champion both went to Blenheim Stud with Houbens. The champion blue chequer cock stood out, but the blue chequer pied hen had just as much handling quality. It's a long time since I have handled so many quality Racing Pigeons as those from Blenheim Stud. Well done John. I'd also like to thank PFS President John Hickman for stewarding these three breeds for me, because as a show secretary I know time is limited.

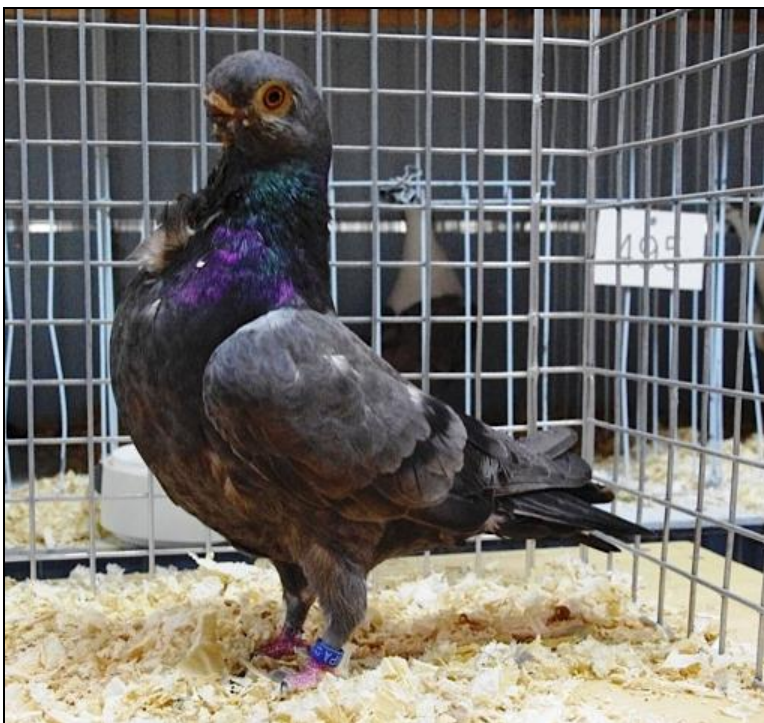
After a bit of a rest Terry Stevenson kindly offered to steward whilst I judged my final three breeds. All the Dragoons entered were of a much better quality than I remember from my last visit when I also judged them. Then they were far too coarse in both wattle and cere. Champion was a very good all round blue cock from B.Guran. His Grizzle would have pushed it hard if its beak had been trimmed. This was a fault on several birds and would have made them so much better if the beaks had been filed as otherwise most had good beak size and shape. All the blues, blue chequers and grizzles had good damson ceres. A lot of the birds had very good bodies too.

The black self's had very good colour and a nice mealy stood out due to its lovely colour. I have a small stud of Dragoons and several birds I would gladly have in my lofts. The next breed I drew the short straw with, as it seemed like I was the only judge who had any idea what a Konigsberg Tumbler is, and what I knew was limited. Unfortunately all eight birds entered were poor quality and not in any form of show condition, but to try to help and encourage their owner I did judge them and speak with him afterwards. Apart from better condition only two were near to show marked.

My last breed was the Lahores with only two on show from Phil Dew. Both were good birds of good size, markings and condition. Best was a kite cock. Once all breed judging was completed I was invited along with Terry Stevenson and Phil Cleghorn to judge for Show Champion. There were 8 birds in total to select from, the blue chequer English Show Homer, red Carneau, blue grizzle King, black splash Jacobin all had to finish the moult or had slight feather faults which left a red Australian Performing Tumbler of beautiful colour and feather quality, a red chequer Australian Showpen Homer very hard to fault, an immaculate white Brunner Pouter and the mealy English Show Racer that I had judged. In the end we all decided that fourth was the English Show Racer from Blenhaven Stud with the Australian Performing Tumbler of Phil Dew third. After much

deliberation as both birds were top quality, Reserve Show Champion went to the Australian Showpen Homer belonging to Murray Hayes, well done Murray. This left the Brunner as Show Champion. Even late in the day this beautiful hen blew every time you asked it which swung it for me. Congratulations to Blenhaven Stud and John Hanson on another fine achievement. I would like to thank all the members and exhibitors at the PFS show for their hospitality and friendship, and especially John Hanson for his time, generosity and hospitality in making my all too brief visit so enjoyable. It was a pleasure to look round your lofts John, as well as the fancy breeds the quality racers were a joy to handle. I must say that I left knowing a lot more about blowers than when I arrived.







THE SCANDAROOON

By John Ross

The Scandaroon pigeon is one of the more unusual amongst the many types of fancy pigeons. It is a large size pigeon and in Victorian times was often referred to as the Scandaroon Runt (Runts were a name used for a large table breed of pigeon). The beak has a downward curve accompanied by a large wattle. The bull eyes are surrounded by a bright red eye cere so with its large size and in the very striking pied marking is certainly a pigeon which gets noticed. The breed is closely related to the original Carrier pigeon, the group which also includes Barbs is known as wattle varieties. The origins of the Scandaroon go right the way back in time to ancient Mesopotamia civilizations between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, present day Iraq.

Scandaroons are powerful birds and are lean to handle with little excess fat, have tight, short feathering and this fact shows they are a flying breed and not just a fancy bird. They were probably used for message carrying over 50 mile stages in a type of message post system and in this way the birds could be returned by land caravan to their starting points.



The breed name is only used in U.K. and the reason for this is the British had a company called the Levant Company which traded from a port named after Alexander the Great from 1650 till 1850.

This was in present day Syria where the name now called Eskanderoon, the Turkish language translation of Alexander. This was on a direct trading route from old Baghdad and the birds are called Baghdad's by the French and Germans whilst the original birds came to England from this port and the name came with them, from then on we called them Scandaroon.

The Scandaroon has always had two types as far as wattling is concerned and those with larger wattles are not good to fly out however the so called Spanish type have much less wattling and fly very well. I have a mate in Brighton who flew his with his racers; they fly like arrows across the sky with their curved hawk like beaks clearly visible.



Other local racing men used to rib him they scared the life out of their birds whilst exercising, He parted with them when extra long distance birds were offered him and still wishes he had space to have them back. I keep a couple of pairs and like all Scandaroons they are great parents especially for other more difficult breeds.

The Scandaroon is a very proud pigeon and has a reputation for being standoffish however if the pigeon fancier has good management they become very trusting of their owner but still do not like you to pick them up, yes they will come to you but pick them up and they go back a couple of days. When I show mine I put them in a show pen the night before from where they are steady and easy to put into the larger continental individual show baskets on the morning of the show.

So next time you see the Scandaroon at Blackpool or Doncaster you are looking at an early ancestor of your racers at home. To see more Scandaroons or if you require stock visit www.scandaroon.co.uk



Above and Below: Adult Hen Scandaroon



FANCY PIGEONS

By Jonny Ess



Are you sitting comfortably?
Good, then I will begin.

Once upon a time long, long ago there were these very clever chaps called Charles Darwin who resided in Kent and an Austrian Monk called Gregor Mendel, both of whom with their own individual theories have been responsible for the direction and outcomes of our pigeon breeding and their ultimate development. It is of course well documented that Darwin himself was a pigeon breeder, though almost certainly for vastly different reasons than those that you and I may have. Anyway, not wishing to delve into the scientific reasoning behind the involvement of these two great men it is suffice to say that the vast majority of their thoughts and conclusions are still very valid today and as a direct, and sometimes indirect consequence our current pigeons, from our racers and show racers right through the genetic maze to the most spectacular of our fancy pigeons have been developed to amazing degrees, and indeed are continuing to be so. I doubt though that even Darwin himself could ever have envisaged that racing pigeons would be capable of racing to 700 miles or of flying at speeds in excess of 2000 ypm. Equally I suspect that he could never have imagined even a quarter of the colours, shapes, sizes or the flying capability variations that, by using many of

his and Mendel's techniques we have discovered and developed in our fancy birds since his time on this earth.

The amazing developments achieved with the racing birds, particularly concerning both speed and distance have been and are continuing to be well documented in books and within publications such as this super paper. The equally amazing results of fancy pigeon development on the other hand is not nearly so clearly documented in modern literature, lots of pictures accompanied by a few limited notations to be sure but with a few notable exceptions there is very little of the how's, why's and when's currently available in modern book form. An open opportunity here maybe for some budding ornithologist, genetics devotee or wannabe author to get the keyboard flashing or the quill pen scratching away?

I do not, indeed cannot, intend to attempt to rectify that omission here. What I can do is to try and indicate to the many fanciers, both established and new who would like to take the plunge, or maybe even just dip their toes in to our side of this fabulous and absorbing hobby just what a wonderful selection they now have to choose from.

As mentioned in my previous notes the fancy, over many years, has sought to group the varieties in to their specific physical or geographical groups such as Cropper, Wattle, Colour, Swiss and Tumblers amongst others. Also in my previous notes I mentioned the fact that many of the current racing fraternity had claimed some early experiences with fancy pigeons, often loosely classified as being with 'tumblers'. Therefore for this issue I will start off by giving you a very brief introduction in to the wonderful world of the 'Tumbler' breeds. In the EE breeds listings here are currently over 150 widely differing breeds that are categorised as being in the Tumbler group. These include all of the high flying and aerial performing varieties as well as those that have been developed specifically for the show pen. Amongst the current popular tumbler breeds are the likes of the all purpose West of England tumblers, Rollers, Tipplers, Nuns, English Long Faced, English Short Faced and English Muffed Tumblers, Felegyhazers, Mookees, Danzig HF, Budapesters, Stargard Shakers, Amsterdam Tumblers, Berliners, Kormorners and the Old Dutch Tumblers to name just a few.

Before progressing I must point out that taking on some of the more extreme examples of these breeds, from all categories, should not be considered lightly due to major peculiarities of feeding, breeding, housing etc with some of the more highly developed varieties. However a telephone call to the National Pigeon Association (NPA) or a visit to their web site will furnish you with Breed Club information where you will be given every assistance to help you get started in the variety of your choice. Under current DEFRA legislation it is also the duty of sellers to indicate to buyers any anomalies connected to the birds being offered, ie special food, housing and breeding requirements etc. This is particularly important with the short faced/short-beaked varieties that may need feeders in order to successfully rear youngsters, though even most these are quite capable of raising young but not necessarily their own. The high fliers and aerial performers will of

course require stricter dietary considerations in order to perform to their full potential, but that is something that should be an almost natural consideration with experienced racing orientated fanciers.

Firstly the prospective fancier must decide what it is they want to achieve, ie to become showmen, have or develop a team of high fliers or perhaps performing birds such as rollers or maybe just a small stud of 'something different' for the fancier or members of the family to enjoy. Once that decision has been formulated the next suggestion is that they visit either a local fancier with similar interests or attend a show where many of the breeds can be seen, these shows are held over all the regions of the UK but for the racing enthusiasts 'Blackpool' could be a very good place to start looking for unusual fancy pigeon breeds.

Talk to the exhibitors or judges and ask as many questions as you feel necessary in order to satisfy your needs and don't be afraid of trying out several different breeds before settling on the variety of your choice, ones that suit your level of involvement, your location and nowadays of course your pocket – an important consideration in this time of austerity.

In the attached photographs you will find examples of just some of the popular members of the of Tumbler family, not shown will be the vast selection of colours and markings available in each family which range through the spectrum including Yellow, Red, Brown, Blue, Black and includes their dilutes along with barred, barless, chequered, grizzle, pideds and spangle. If you spot your favourite, or just one that appeals to you, the www.pfsnsw.com where you will find information on the breed clubs, show dates, rings, application forms etc.

