Spring at last

After what has seemed to be a long and cold winter, with the onset of September we are into spring and hopefully better weather conditions. In other years I have paired in July but have intentionally left it later this year in order to have better breeding conditions for them. I have also vaccinated my birds against salmonella after my best hen went down with the malady and I didn’t wish to lose any more to it. A course of antibiotic was necessary prior to the vaccination and now I have another jab to administer before I can think about pairing the birds. I am hoping that all the effort and expense will be worthwhile.

I still have to spend time to think about pairings and this is in itself unusual as I normally plan for this throughout the year. I have small numbers so the task should be a little easier. Some of my birds are nearing the end of their productive cycle but I will be hoping that they are able to fill eggs at least once more. I have just spoken to Fred Frendo who tells me that his breeding has been going to plan and that they are enjoying warm weather and sunshine.
Dr Colin Walker

I recently went out to visit Colin at his new address, some fifteen miles from here. His new address is almost completed and in due course I hope to be able to include a few photos of his wonderful establishment. Suffice to say that in Colin there is a pigeon-mad individual who not only maintains a racing stud, a team of show racers and teams of fancy pigeons including Damascenes. I went out to borrow a powder blue hen as my blues are now rather short in numbers. As always he is always pleased to help and I came away with three decent hens. He is now my nearest show racer fancier so it is so good to be able to take a trip out to see some good birds.

One of the main drawbacks in living in this huge country is that it is no longer feasible to make loft visits. I have been hoping to come across a good red cock as I have only one and should anything happen to him, where would I go? Gone are the days when I could make a call or two to source a suitable pigeon and the local shows in Devon and Cornwall would have allowed an opportunity to look at what was around. Roland Thresher came down at least once a year and was always willing to assist, not that I often used other birds in those days.

Les Carter

I was extremely sorry to read about the passing of Les senior. The obituary notice supplied by Les jnr was extremely good and obviously came from the heart. I am sure that fellow fanciers will provide plenty of support to our Les and his family. The showing side of the sport can ill-afford losing such members.

The same can be said about the death of Geoff Bannister of the South Humberside SRS who was a most genial and hard-working fancier. Our paths didn’t often cross thanks to the geographical distance between us, but whenever there was always a huge Bannister smile and greeting. My sincere condolences to the Bannister family.

Royal Welsh

It was good to see the results of the Royal Welsh show which was judged by Bill Carney and to note that Tony Baugh is back in winning mode again. He has applied himself to the show over many years both as a loyal supporter of Bert Dougal, and now for many years as the secretary/organiser. I have photos of some of my earliest visits to Builth including one which included Bill Pooley of Plympton and Tony’s then young daughter and my son and daughter, also young. For some reason Ann couldn’t go that year so I took the children and Bill. Those were the days of Bert Dougal, Duke Hallett and others when we found great enjoyment in social relaxation in connection with a show which was growing in stature annually.

Later, Dave Williams from Swansea came along and provided another source of fun and interest as well as a top quality curry night and a large supply of shellfish. There
was never a dull minute when Dave was around and on form. As I see it, the sport should be about enjoyment and not merely about winning and losing. People who lose sight of this are destined to endure lots of disappointments and will end up as bitter and twisted.

Over the years I have seen countless people come into the show racer fancy and after a success or two; they feel as though they should always be winning. They find fault with the winning pigeons of others and rarely have anything good to say about the birds of other fanciers. The biggest danger really is to have early success – perhaps with pigeons bought in, and then to expect the winning to continue. There is nothing like having to work hard for the successes and not to have them on the efforts of others. This is why I rarely showed birds other than those I bred myself for my great pleasure was in presenting a team of home-bred birds as this enabled me to not only have pride in them but to know every part of them and their breeding.

Jim Dyer (Echo)

Jim’s tribute to Arthur Goacher was a very good one and well deserved by a man who served the sport in general so well but who served the Show of the Year with loyal distinction.

Spring shows

After so many years of writing about shows and showing I always found myself grateful when the spring and summer events came along. The West Country always had a few shows on which to report but I always managed to get news of some of the Yorkshire shows. Colin Farndale has kindly kept the results coming in and the first is the well-known Ryedale show held at the end of July. this was judged by Colin and Ingrid who liked the efforts of Dixon and Dodgson, giving them five of the six classes but it was the winning sixth which was a dark chequer hen owned by Keith Story which won the best show racer award.

Ryedale Show which was held on Tuesday 28th July 2015.
Judged by C & I C Farndale

Cock Adult
1st Dixon & Dodgson.
2nd Dixon & Dodgson.
3rd Keith Story.

Hen Adult
1st Keith Story, this bird is a Dark Ch & won Best Show Racer
2nd Dixon & Dodgson.
3rd Keith Story.

Cock 2015
1st Dixon & Dodgson.
2nd Dixon & Dodgson.
3rd Dixon & Dodgson

Hen 2015
1st Dixon & Dodgson.
2nd Dixon & Dodgson.
3rd Keith Story.

Wire Cock
1st Dixon & Dodgson.
The next event to report is the Tockwith Show which was held on 2nd August 2015.
Judged by Mr A Myres,

Adult Cock
1st Dixon & Dodgson
2nd Dixon & Dodgson
3rd Mr K Watt

Adult Hen
1st Dixon & Dodgson
2nd C & I C Farndale
3rd Mr M Shaw

Cock Bred 2015
1st Dixon & Dodgson
2nd C & I C Farndale
3rd Mr K Watt

Hen Bred 2015
1st C & I C Farndale
2nd Dixon & Dodgson
3rd Dixon & Dodgson

Coloured Cock Any Age
1st C & I C Farndale, this bird is a Grizzle & won Best In Show
2nd Dixon & Dodgson
3rd Mr M Shaw

Coloured Hen Any Age
1st C & I C Farndale This bird is a Silver Bar Hen & won best Opposite Sex
2nd Dixon & Dodgson
3rd Mr M Shaw

Adult Cock Through Wires
1st Dixon & Dodgson
2nd Dixon & Dodgson
3rd Mr M Shaw

Adult Hen Through Wires
1st C & I C Farndale
2nd Dixon & Dodgson
3rd Mr M Shaw

Cock 2015 Through Wires
1st Dixon & Dodgson
2nd C & I C Farndale
3rd Mr M Shaw

Hen 2015 Through Wires
1st Dixon & Dodgson
2nd Dixon & Dodgson
3rd C & I C Farndale
NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER

It was good to note that a grizzle won the top award. This colour has developed considerably in the last few years and even here in Australia, there are some good ones to be seen at the shows.

Barley as a feed for pigeons

If there is one time in the loft that I do not enjoy it is in the process of putting the birds together. However careful the preparations are, there are always glitches, often involving a belligerent cock or in some cases a hen. Many loft visits are necessary to allow a pair in each compartment out for a short time and to allow them to establish their box. This year a two year old hen has well and truly battered a young cock so I need to adjust the pairings accordingly.

What struck me more than anything was that having worked out the pairings on paper, I then handled each bird and was struck at how well they handled. For some weeks they have been on a reduced diet with a high percentage of clipped barley. There is no loss of weight but the bodyweight is of good quality and just how I want them to handle for a big show or when racing to have them for the important races. Over the years I have seen that many advise the use of barley to reduce weight but in my experience, it does not do this but it does seem to alter the type of body the birds produce. I used this feeding regime prior to the National show and was very pleased with the results. The birds came to hand very well with a ‘corky’ feel rather than a heavy or leaden one. I have always kept barley as part of my feeding and I also like the use of clipped oats as a supplement to the normal pigeon grub. Of course down here in Australia I cannot obtain beans so the stock ingredient is the pea. Gone are the days of a wonderful selection of top quality mixtures and it is a case of buying what is on offer, then adjusting the content.

Less of a need

The need to return to England for certain treats is no longer as strong as it used to be as I can now obtain chocolate Hob Nobs in the local supermarket, also McVitaes dark chocolate digestives as well as Bramley pies from Mr Kipling. If we could establish a few good English-style pubs and some decent beer it would be even better. It is often the smaller matters which give rise to longing for the old life.

I am now wondering whether I will ever return to England for a holiday even. The thought of those long journeys is not at all appealing especially when there is so much on this vast island to see. I have no desire whatsoever to go to another airport, views I recall coming from John Staddon after his latest holiday which involved several long flights. There are times when I yearn for another visit back home but then I remember all the preparations and all the arrangements to be made. Then on return home, there is so much work to catch up on, events and the fear of being ill with a virus or bug caught on the flights. When younger it was all most attractive, seeing and enjoying new experiences but now there is more realisation on what might be?

In Conclusion

I have managed to get another article together and for some reason this has been a difficult one. Perhaps I am losing my touch with age, yet am then reminded of Jack Bolitho, in his nineties and still writing wonderful articles for the fancy in Cornwall. Good on you Jack! I am still here at 3 Kunyung Road, Mount Eliza, Victoria 3930 and on email at mcclary.douglas@gmail.com