



# NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER

August 2015

By Doug McClary

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## Show of the Year 43 not 49

David Trippett corrected me for asserting that the Show of the Year had been going for 49 years when in fact it is 43 years in 2016. How I managed to get this wrong is beyond me so fanciers will have to wait a few more years for the half century celebrations! What this show has added to the enjoyment within the sport of pigeon racing in its history is incalculable and we must always be mindful of the work of Major Len Lewis and the RNHU - as it was then. I have the original advertisement for the show held at Doncaster on the 12/13th January 1973 with 24 classes scheduled. My memory was not good as I had mentioned that Len Wiles had won best in show when in fact it was a blue cock owned by J & R Scott of Dumfries under the judging of Cyril Milnes. My scrapbook comes in handy when writing my notes so all the work involved over so many years has its compensating features.

## Snow bound in Oz

I am back from the National show at Penrith near Sydney having been quite anxious at how the journeys would go as I had never driven such a distance before. In the event, Ann's foot stood the test very well and we

drove right through, a distance each way of 910km or 565miles. For the return we had thoughts of staying the night en route but the journey went so well in sunshine and dry roads that we made it home at 9.30pm, having left Penrith at 11am. Our overnight stop would have been at Albury but as we were there by 5.30pm and the weather was fine and dry, we decided to press on. I am always anxious about driving in the dark on Australian roads because of the kangaroos – something not known in Britain! To think that all those years of driving on British motorways I didn't see one kangaroo although we always looked out for a camel in Somerset! Conditions at Penrith were cold and some exhibitors found themselves snowed in and unable to get to the show. Yes, snow in Australia takes some believing and it snowed even in Queensland, the Sunshine State! We drove through snow on our return journey over the mountains near Goulburn.

## The National Show

I was extremely gratified at the show racer entry of 295 birds by 20 exhibitors which amounted to just about ten per cent of the total entry and reveals just how well the show racers are being accepted in this huge

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country. We were second in entry only to the Australian Show Pen Homers (American Show Racers). I recall that when I attended my first National in Perth in 2004, I could not show birds but attended the AGM of the Australian National Pigeon Association and requested recognition and acceptance of the breed. The response was warm and positive and eventually with Michael Spadoni, we agreed on the title of British Show Racers. I can remember telling him that if the breed took off as I hoped it would, that we would be supporting ANPA shows with large entries in due course.



Doug McClary presented with a Master Breeder Award by president, Frank Hayes

As confirmation of this acceptance, I was presented with a Master Breeder Award in respect of all my wins while in Australia and I regard this award, not for me but for the British Show Racer. It is only the 21st such award in all breeds in Australia and it was managed for the show racer in just about the shortest possible time. The show racers have arrived and made themselves one of the most popular pigeons in Australia. I will continue my work to enable the breed to grow and become even better known.

### The Show

I had worked hard on my birds prior to the show as I knew that the competition would be keen and wins hard to come by. It was just like the old days in England with the

work and preparation including checking them over at basketing and prior to setting out at 5.30am. We had arrived at the show hall in good time allowing us to pen the birds without panic and to allow them to settle. That allowed a good social and convivial evening in the bar in the company of Fred Frendo and Lenny Miller, also Glyn (Previously from Swansea) and Jodie Williams. The judge was Dr Colin Walker of Melbourne with his wife Meredith acting as his steward. I keep well away from the judging so as not to be accused of trying to influence decisions but over the morning I heard some of the class results so knew that my birds were performing well. Fred Frendo and I were in spirited competition as were Barry Shoobridge and Tim Fairfax who had taken the awards for best AOC and best mealy. I had won the best red and best chequer awards and that left the blue classes last. My hopes were high and so it proved to be good for me, winning adult cocks and second also, 1st in the Adult hens, 1st in the young cocks and 2nd in the young hens. My class wins therefore totalled seven with seven seconds and two thirds. Fred Frendo had designed and printed special cards and the show racer section seemed to be the only one with cards for the first three positions.



Blue WF cock best at the Australian National show for Doug McClary

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Colin and Meredith took their time with the specials and I believe had every winner brought to them and penned in a portable set of pens. In the event my adult blue cock winner was adjudged best in show, much to my joy and relief. This powder blue WF cock was also first under Roland Thresher at the 2013 National at Adelaide in the young cocks' class.



Opal mosaic cock best YB at the Australian National for Fred Frendo

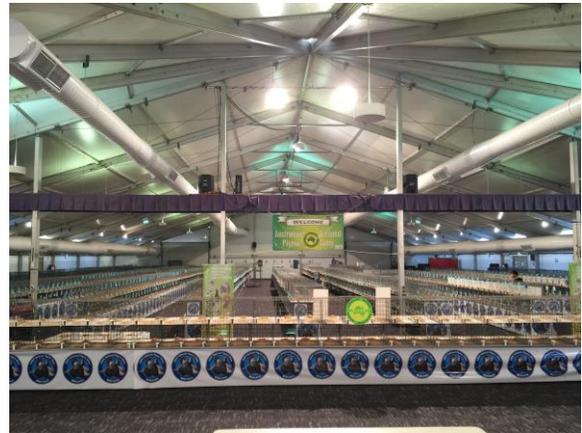
My blue pied hen winner was given the awards for best opposite sex and reserve best in show, while Fred Frendo's immaculate opal mosaic cock was awarded the BYB rosette.



Blue WF hen Reserve best and Best opposite sex at the Australian National for Doug McClary

I still love to win with powder blues and the BWF is just about typical of the family which has been going since 1963 when I obtained the first of my birds from A. R. Brown of St

Day. This year I need to supplement my blues and would like to start breeding really good powder blue hens.



The National show ready for the pigeons.

After all these years, the winning of a best in show award is still something to be treasured and this win has particular relevance for me in that having done so well in 2013 under Roland Thresher, with 11 firsts out of thirteen classes entered, there were mutterings that there was a fix going on. I suppose that this is human nature but it had been planned so that Roland and Julie had no chance of seeing any birds prior to their judging so would have known none of the birds before them. I was therefore pleased and relieved to repeat the win with another good National result so hopefully it will shut up the ones with the suspicious mutterings.

### National Show Location

The show was held in a very large and permanent marquee within the extensive grounds of the Penrith Panthers rugby club. The marquee was most comfortable and airy and we were able to walk to the Panthers Club complete with restaurants and bars and lots of other attractions. It was as good a show venue as I have seen in Australia so the New South Wales organisers, under President Frank Hayes and secretary Steve Cummins are to be

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congratulated. Every pen had food and water to provide birds with every comfort. Even the hotel was within walking distance in the same complex. It was a quiet place except for hundreds of cockatoos flying about and creating a great din. It all made for an interesting and comfortable weekend which culminated in a grand presentation dinner at the Penrith Panthers' stadium. The Panthers' complex seems to be a focal point of life in Penrith as a large town West of Sydney.

### **Some British shows**

Mike Horner of Alton goes to considerable trouble to keep me informed on some of the English shows. I have known Mike and his wife Theresa for a good many years since they travelled down to the West Country shows with their boys. Tom, the eldest is at Present working and touring in New Zealand, while Chris the middle son is living and working nearby in Alton, leaving youngest son George working in America at one of their famous summer camps for children. This leaves Mike and Theresa in the unusual 'Derby and Joan' position of being alone. Mike has enjoyed a good breeding season from his eighteen pairs with the chequers being predominant in numbers.

His first show of the season was at Bradfield held by the reading fanciers Society in the village hall, a venue I knew well from my Dagoon showing days. Mike's opal mosaic hen was the choice of Kevin Pratt and John and Bobby Glew went home with the award for best racer with their blue bar cock

They then travelled down to the Devon County show where the judge was Kevin Hicks who awarded Jill and David Fisher with three firsts including best with a yearling grizzle cock. John Robilliard won

two classes, leaving one each for Mervyn Patt and to Mike Horner. Mike was kept busy judging the fancy section and awarded best to a grizzle muffed tumbler owned by C & A Down.

The Bath and West pigeon section at Shepton Mallet was run by Graham Giddings who acquired the judging services of Evan Murray from Nottingham. Mike Horner won best show racer and best flying breed with an adult blue bar cock. Best fancy pigeon was owned by Kevin and Robin Pratt.

The Southern Counties SRS held their squeaker show on the 7th June and is apparently a most friendly club with plenty of enjoyment at each and every event. Three new members have joined for the coming season providing plenty of hope for the season's approach. Dave and Jean Macintosh from Dover enjoyed a successful show owing to a pair of stunning red chequers to win both red/mealy classes and best in show. The other class winners were Dave Savage, the show secretary, Colin Reynolds and Mike Horner.

### **Royal Cornwall show**

Well done Liz Watts on another top quality show report on the two shows at the Wadebridge showgrounds. Last year Ann and I had the pleasure of being there in lovely weather among lovely people. Mike Spear judged the show racers in the two day show where best was won by John Robilliard with a yearling red cock which was bred by Nigel Rescorla. John also won best opposite sex while Bude's Bill Hocken won the BYB award and BOS BYB. Bill Carney and Tony Baugh judged the show racers at the Saturday show where Jill and David Fisher won best with a red hen containing Roland and Julie Thresher

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bloodlines and also took the BOSex award with an adult cock. The Welsh visitors seem to have enjoyed success with Paul Cammock, Dave Roach and Mervyn Hosking. Other classes were won by Brian and Caroline Seward and by John Robilliard. The Royal Cornwall will be next held in 2016 on the 9th to 11th June. Be sure to attend as the occasion is good and the rewards of social enjoyment plentiful.

### Concluding thoughts

That seems to be my lot for another Focus. It has been good to be able to have news to impart as it makes it all so much easier. I am here at 3 Kunyung Road, Mount Eliza, Victoria, 3930, Australia and my email is an always [mcclary.douglas@gmail.com](mailto:mcclary.douglas@gmail.com)



