We are making progress and Ann’s plaster has been removed allowing her more freedom of movement but absolutely no weight to be applied to the broken heel. She is now using arm crutches allowing her to get up and down stairs using them instead of crawling and sliding. We are still hoping to get to the National show near Sydney next month but it will be ‘touch and go’ as to whether she will be up to such a journey. I am working on the birds and I am well down in numbers making management a little easier. It has not been an easy time for her but somehow we have coped, in no small measure to the support of a good family.

**Dandenong show.**

One of my few shows for this season was at Dandenong where I entered a team, one bird in each of the sixteen classes. There are far too many classes at the Australian shows but they seem to like it that way. The show racers were judged by Eddie Kloprogge, a Norwich Cropper fancier – and that says a great deal about the shows down here. In the event I won best with a dark chequer hen, best young bird with a chequer cock and best opposite sex with a red hen.

While Eddie was judging, I had my own judging to do, namely the Australian Show Pen Homers, Exhibition Homers and Dragoons. The Show Pen Homers were a good bunch with an excellent entry. I eventually selected a young spread ash cock as my best and a black hen as reserve. These were well presented by Steve Walsh of Gippsland. In both the exhibition homers and Dragoons, I selected young blue hens as my best. The judging provided me with an enjoyable task which passed the time very well before I headed off home to Ann and her bad foot.

**Edinburgh show**

Stewart Lawrie from Edinburgh in Scotland dropped a few lines as an ex pigeon fancier / racer. ‘I sometimes receive old copies of
the homing world from a friend who still races which I enjoy reading as I still have an interest despite not having 'the doos' for about twenty years. I was surprised to see a photograph of the late Harry Taylor and his wife Audrey whom I knew well. Harry gave me some great pigeons over my years in the sport and when he left the sport...I got the job of disposing of 'the rubbish' but was given the pick of what was left which included one of the top rated eye-sign pigeons in Scotland at the time plus a son of Albert Witty’s The Sultan. Harry’s wife Audrey was related to Albert Witty but I cannot remember the connection. You are possibly aware of the Edinburgh Charity Show History which was originally started by The Edinburgh Premier pigeon club which I was a member of from the early 60's as was Harry. The people who made these early shows happen did some sterling work until it eventually got its home in the Waverly Market. I was on the original committee along with names you possibly may recall Cullen Bros (Alistair and Jack), John Fitzpatrick, John Colvin, Sandy Hogg, to name but a few of these stalwarts who worked only for the good of the show. Sadly all of these people are no longer with us as is the Edinburgh Show but the work they did resulted in some tremendous donations to Linburn Home for War Blinded.

We can’t we turn back the clock but it’s great to recall the past although sometimes it was not all great but things have changed in the pigeon sport not for the good at times I think with the sports numbers in decline its future seems bleak hopefully it will never cease as there is nothing to compare with timing a pigeons from a race especially if it is a winner. Good to hear from Stewart and to know that the photo was appreciated.

Victorian Homing Association show

My recent notes about my judging at the show did not include various information such as the fact that Lenny Miller who lives near the northern border of New South Wales with Queensland and who won best in show, travelled just about 3000km to the show and back. How’s that for being keen especially seeing that there is no prize money and little else to reward such a journey. I am pleased to be able to publish the photos of the winning two top show racers at the show.

Len Miller’s blue hen, winner of BIS

Fred Frendo’s red chequer hen, winner of reserve BIS.

Geelong show of the Southern YB Pageant.

Geoff Nelson and I travelled across the Bay for the show – or rather travelled around the bay! It is a long journey via the Melbourne city centre and consists of dual
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carriageway all the way. I took a token entry of ten pigeons for the judging of Mark Tung. Mark awarded best to a young chequer hen of mine and gave reserve best to a red hen. It was good not having to help out with the judging so I was able to spend time in the local market while the judging was on. All in all it proved to be a good pigeon day out despite the 5am start on a bitterly cold morning. Don’t we do some stupid things for pigeon showing? Apart from losing our way as we entered the city area of Geelong owing to chatting too much and not concentrating on our roads, it was an uneventful day. We were back home just in time to place the birds back into the loft in daylight. Today they have been provided with a good bath so will be well on the way to recovery. It was the shortest day of the year and while it was cold, we enjoyed sunshine. It was most heartening to hear a blackbird singing in the evening

Winning chequer.

Geoff has not missed a show for some weeks and I could not keep up with such a schedule as his. His last show was at Adelaide via Albury and he covered just over 3000km. having been to Sydney the week before and he is off to Sydney this coming weekend. I am now too old for such travel and can happily stay at home to enjoy my home and the birds in peace. Who knows? This may be my final season of showing. However, how Geoff is able to stand the pace is beyond me especially for a man who a few months ago had open-heart surgery. I worry about him and his schedule but here is a man who loves his pigeons and being with pigeon friends when he is at his happiest.

The Australian National show

I am told that there will be over 3000 pigeons entered for the show at Penrith near Sydney. The largest entry there will be the Australian Show Pen Homers but the British Show Racers have the second highest entry which isn’t bad for a breed which didn’t exist here until I came across in 2004. I am very pleased at this and hope that the progress can be maintained. I was told at the Geelong show by a judge that he had over 150 show racers to judge down in the island State of Tasmania recently so it would seem that they are very keen on the breed down there.

Time Moves on

I now have only one of my original imports with me – after eleven and a half years. The remaining pigeon is a mealy hen named Carol and Roland Thresher will recall her. He always had a soft spot for her as he tends to like pigeons with back skull. She is a very ordinary pigeon but what a breeder she has been when paired to the pastel red cock I named ‘Wild Card’ for his breeding potential. Despite being a pigeon bred in 2002 she is still full of vigour and has always been a top perch lady and always with a top nest box. This year as usual she will be given her own box, which will give her a lot of pleasure. My birds have provided me with a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure over these eleven years and Carol has been part of my life for all those years. I am producing a photo of her daughter – one of the best yellow hens I have seen.
Ernie Harbourne

It was with sadness that I read about Ernie’s death. What a lovely man he was, always smiling and always ready to provide advice and guidance. The success of the modern BHW must be down to Ernie because he turned it from a smaller publication into what it is today. They don’t make Ernie Harbourne’s in every nest that is for sure. May I, on behalf of show fanciers everywhere, wish Vera and family every support and best wishes at this sad time?

Good times

It is always good to look back at old times especially when because of age, there are more good times behind one that I am likely to have in the future. My photo is from the early 1990s at a social evening in Swansea at the home of Dave and Pat Williams prior to a show the next day. My photo shows Pat Williams, Les Dawson, Bert Lovell, Doug McClary wearing a Welsh medallion duly presented by my Welsh hosts, Ann McClary and Dave Williams. I recall not feeling too well the following morning thanks to shellfish and in my need to get to the toilet, managed to wake Roland Thresher and Ken Lewis. It was a good evening – as was every meeting with Dave Williams – a great character.

In Conclusion.

Just lately, the BHW has been erratic in delivery dates but the one which arrived this morning reminds me that I need to get my Focus article completed and sent off to Welshpool. One of our granddaughters, Rachel is in Europe for a few weeks having been selected to present a paper in Paris to a scientific conference. It is a considerable honour to be so asked. She and her boyfriend, Jonno are travelling about Europe with their bikes and carrying all their luggage with them. Those days are over for me as I enjoy my luxury nowadays. No more sleeping on a table in the poultry and pigeon tent at the Royal Welsh show!

I am still here at 3 Kunyung Road, Mount Eliza, Victoria 3930 and email on mcclary.douglas@gmail.com. I need news to keep the column going and when I saw down to write this edition, had absolutely nothing in hand.

June 2015