

# ▶ Van Gent

## BITS AND PIECES...

A lot of topics crossed my mind for this article. That's why I came up with the title 'bits and pieces'. I like to jump around the Pigeonland and I hope you will enjoy it.

### The roofvogelstop (Bird of Prey stop)

This is the "device" I wrote about last February. I have some updates about it. The well-known pigeon vet Hans van der Sluis is also a fancier. At his practice he has pigeon lofts and he was also suffering from attacks. A hawk pair frequently visited his lofts like it was the hamburger giant with the golden arches. They installed three Bird of Prey Stops and three weeks later his pigeons can just walk on the roof without being disturbed any more. No more attacks and the hawk pair have now chosen another hunting grounds.

The inventor, Dirk Veldhuis, has had a superb racing season until now. He won the race from Pau in North Holland and also the Agen international, where his birds came very good at home. Again early birds and high percentages. He is totally in a very good mood and his pigeons as well!

### Our changing climate

It looks like our climate is changing. This year the spring was almost three weeks behind schedule. You could see it in nature with the trees and animals living in the wild. The nights were cold and the mornings as well. Our pigeons had a hard time especially in view of recuperation and battling with the cold temperatures. A lot of ornithosis and other head related stuff. You could also see that the pigeons ate a lot more and a lot differently. Also the losses and the injuries were higher. A lot of fanciers think that because the air is colder, the pigeons fly lower and that's why the losses are higher and also the injuries.

Another reason for these losses are that the pigeons are not recuperating as quick as with normal weather and the other issues I already discussed. At this moment it is very hot and here in the Netherlands they cancelled all races a couple of weeks ago except the extreme long distance from Bergerac and International Barcelona. Back in the days it was normal to race under these circumstances, but environmentalists, animal rights movements have their influences nowadays. We have to deal with this and we as a fancier must not stick to routines and how we used to do. We have to keep our eyes open in and outside the loft and we must act to our findings.

### Racing season up to now

We faced a lot of western winds, north and south western. The extreme long distance races were fast like St Vincent. For us almost 1,085 kilometers and within 90 minutes the race

was done. Other extreme long distance races were slow, Cahors, the winner making 980 meters per minute and it took over six hours before all prizes (1 in 4) were gone. Yearlings have a hard time in this year and a lot of losses. In the Limburg area the fanciers lost in the first six weeks of the season almost 30-40% of their racing team. That is massive. In East-Brabant recently they lost about 40% of the youngsters in the first race in 100 kilometers. The prize list ran for more than eight hours and then 25% of the liberated pigeons were home.

training their birds at 50-60 kilometer three or four times a week when they noticed their massive losses.

### Barcelona, the race of titans

The morning I was writing this, the Barcelona birds were released. With very high temperatures and South Eastern winds I am expecting a hard but fair race. The distance here is 1,250 plus kilometers and known fanciers here like Nico Volkens, the Brugemann brothers and other less known fanciers have selected the



What is the cause? We have no clue, some blame the liberation of Polish and other East European pigeons which take our pigeons to the east and they never can return. Others blame the wireless communication nowadays. What we also see is massive stray pigeons from France, the UK, Poland, Denmark, Slovakia and Germany. I already had three UK birds, two Polish and one French youngster. The UK have gone again and the Polish as well. The French pigeon is still here. We just have to wait for open weather and a good favorable wind and then they will pass the Channel to the UK.

And the fanciers who push their pigeons to the limit and beyond suffer the most from the losses. A lot of them stopped drastically with

most experienced pigeons to compete. The best of last year, Cor Schermer from Castricum has 10 in the race. Last year he had eight and his results were: National against 5,423 pigeons Cor wins: 96th, 122nd, 128th, 174th, 203rd, 219th, 261st, 555th. International: 218th, 312th, 326th, 478th, 550th, 593rd, 720th and 1,488th against 21,169 pigeons. His oldest in the race in 2015 is from 2005 with six prizes under his belt. Sixth best Barcelona pigeon over 5 year internationally on 1,258 kilometers. I was at Cor's on the Monday after the basketing and he was hoping for a very good race and a safe return of his pigeons.

The Brugemann brothers choose the eldest for this 2015 edition. They left their youngest planned pigeons at home and these will be

raced on another race. This in view of the conditions of course. They have 20 birds in the race. I am excited, hope to be in this race in a few years time, but watching the reports come in on Pipa and other sites. I am hoping to see some birds arrive home from Barcelona when I have the time tomorrow.

#### At my own loft

After all my problems with the climate in the loft and the pigeons returning to it I think I can say that it is solved. At least for 90% or so. Now it is time to build a racing team for the extreme long distance races that is able to compete. The 2 year olds have had their first touch race from Cahors. All the leftovers were in it and the five

best are home. I had 10 in the race and of the five that I had my doubts off all did not make it. I gave them a chance and they failed. The yearlings have now almost 3,000 kilometers done. They came home from Vierzon, for me 620 kilometers. Their next assignment is Chateauroux, 670 kilometers and a nation wide liberation. After this learning experience I like to basket a few for the last overnight extreme long distance of Montauban, 980 kilometers. Then next year I have experienced 3 year olds, 2 year olds and then we can build further. I hope the youngsters will complete their training in large numbers as well. They are already tossed at 1km, 12km and 25km. They will be tossed at 35km and then with the club to 113, 160, 180 and 200 kilometers.

#### Latest news

Early Sunday morning and the dust is cleared. North-Holland crushed National and International Barcelona. 1st National Kees Droog from Andijk, 3rd Cees van der Laan from Castricum, 4th Fam Hendriks from Zuiderwoude, 7th Cees van der Laan from Castricum and 10th National Verweij-de Haan from Mijdrecht. International it will be 3, 5, 6, 16 and 19... With extremely hot weather this is incredible.

I also would like to mention the pigeon from Simon Jnsen from Hollum Ameland, 1,362 kilometers from Barcelona and the bird arrived at 20.51... prize winning in the Netherlands and International !!!!

## SILVER HEN NEWS

### by Janina Jenkins

Due to power cuts and feeling bit 'under the weather' – hence a belated SHN instalment only just went off to our favourite magazine. At **CROXLEY GREEN SR CLUB**, 117 birds joined the Inter Counties Fed convoy for another HONITON on Saturday 6th June. With the early 07.30 liberation in a strong West wind the race was won again by our prior winner John Adams on 2031. It was John's blue yearling cock of Mark Gilbert that won its first card – and a probable high position, well done John. Next in line is the on form loft of our senior member Paul Latchford timing two hens at 2015 and 2007, first one in a 2yo blue chequer Janssen comes from the late Roy Longhurst stock, she was the runner up in last year's Honiton race. Paul's 3rd placed yearling blue, her breeding comes through the fine lofts of club mate Wally Chesworth. The past Combine winning loft of Keith Rowe had a Vandenbeelee blue yearling cock closing the 4th gap on 1997, this gutsy young cock has shown capability ever since his outright win from Salisbury in 2014. Well done lads.

Over to our next outing which happened to be the UBI Combine LE MANS 250 miles race, around 1,800 birds were liberated at 9.45am into broken cloud sky and good visibility. With a North West wind under their wings and lots of stamina, three gallant birds stormed their way into the victorious loft of Paul Latchford with two blues, a cock and a hen on 1160 & 1159. First home a 3yo home bred out of Janssen stock taking his first card. He was followed by one bred by Wally Chesworth who was 3rd in the previous Honiton race. In 3rd John Adams with a 2yo 'Euro Diamond' blue hen, winner

of prior Salisbury on 1117. Paul back in again for 4th on 1103 with a yearling blue cock that scored the same position last year from Bedhampton. PO Dick tells us that this pigeon's sire was 1st Club today. Our thanks to PO Dick Paddock.

I see some of our lads performed well in some of the Nationals. Les Kidd won the Perth Yearling One Loft race. Dunstable



Memories – yours truly and my dear Alan in our 'paradise' – our little bungalow in Dunstable/Luton, Christmas 1994.

based top flyer Peter Wells did well, and our old pal Les Papp, who early this year upstaged house to Newton Cambridgeshire, did well not only in a new club but in one of the Nationals – well done to all our friends.

Local news fresh from the press – 5th July, our Isle pier staged an altar in celebration of Fisherman's Mass and Blessing of Boats. A lavish display of various holy memorabilia adorned the altar as great number of visitors and locals gathered,

praying for the safety and success of the fisherman and seafarers of Barra and all the surrounding islets. You see, Barra is not only known as a visitors paradise, there are times the wide ocean, roaring waves, storm and shores claim fishermen's lives – hence it is highly significant this heart warming ceremony is carried out every year.

While waiting for more Croxley news, guess who popped into my email section? None other than our fab little writer, my dear pen friend Jo, and to beat all, the golden girl needed to share her joy as she not only won six races (as I wrote before) but NINE! What a corker! And to make it stick, our golden girl topped the Fed with 1st, 2nd & 3rd twice! (If my memory serves me right). Let's give credit to our charming girl Jo. After caring and helping her club as a dutiful secretary, this young lady deserves all the accolades. Fantastic performances, very well done Jo.

Right, more news from **CROXLEY SR**, thanks to PO Dick. BLANDFORD on 20th June, birds liberated at 13.30 in a West wind for this 90 mile race, and we see another smash hit entry for John Adams. Repeating this brilliant performance, John had four yearling cocks delivering another top class result with three of them originating from that ace Mark Gilbert. The winner in at 1599 was a blue chequer that has won two YB races from Blandford plus a 2nd Honiton. Second to the loft a blue on 1556, this one stems from MG's 'Euro Diamond' strain. Third another blue named 'Trapper' in at 1525. John's marvellous afternoon of trapping ended around 45 seconds, that's when his 4th placed pigeon, a blue pied cock came in at 1516, this one bred by the renowned Jeff Greenaway of Dromore, N Ireland. Congratulations John, I'm sure there's more to come from your 'on form' loft.

That's all for now from me, be good, take care, and may our Lord bless you all.

Janina