

# ▶ Van Gent

## WINTER ADVENTURES

During the winter period pigeon fanciers always have their own club gatherings, and sometimes Regional shows and of course the pigeon auctions. Nowadays the online auctions almost explode in numbers but I prefer always the auctions where you can see the birds. I am writing this just after the Blackpool weekend. I once visited the Blackpool weekend. I was overwhelmed by the number of auctions that took place in the hotels in Blackpool. I visited I think eight of them and I was surprised about the quality of the birds. Of course I went to see some Dutch sales of very well performing fanciers and their birds were of very high level. I also visited auctions of UK fanciers and there I found more difference in quality. I found pigeons that were popular with us in the 1970s & 1980s that were still popular in the UK and there were lofts with the newest pigeons around, like we have in the Netherlands as well.



getting shorter. 20 years ago we were happy when a 500-600km race was done in two hours time, nowadays we find it strange that a race takes an hour to be done.

How many pigeons did change owners this year in Blackpool? I presume the number is somewhere in the 10,000?

But when you browse well, you can have some bargains. There was a sale of Herman Calon on Pipa where the prices did not go to the sky. There is one coming as well where I think the middle distance fanciers can have a bargain. Due to his age Bert Braspenning is selling all old birds and a selection of youngsters (mostly late breeds) of 2012 on Pipa in February. The whole loft will be on sale, He only keeps his 2012 youngsters for racing and breeding. Check his site, there are all the pigeons with the description.

Recently I bought a late bred youngster online from a fancier that gave this one to support a club. It was sold in an online auction. The fancier was the best extreme long distance racer in North-Holland and he is not well known yet. I am in the same club and I knew what to look for. You always must try something new. You can look for it close to home or you may know that other successful fanciers got a strain in with which they boosted their performance. I always try to get something new every year or almost every year. Now I obtained some late breeds of the Limburg Brothers birds from Zuidveen. With these I hope to do some breeding in March, April. We will see if they bring something special.

I mated nine couples, breeders at

Christmas. Eight couples went fine right away and the 9th couples was a hen from the latebred Limburg pigeons. After 10 days I replaced that one with a hen that I had on the reserve bench for this purpose. So I have now out of 16 possible youngster 14 youngsters. One egg was not filled (hen from 2002) and one egg was thrown out of the nest when it was freezing. It is cold right now, snow on the ground and temps of -3° till 10 but the birds are doing fine. The 9th couple will get eggs within a few days now, so I am happy.

I have a new feeder in my breeding loft. The pigeons step on a shelf and then the mixture becomes available. There is about 10kg of mixture in the feeder and the vermin cannot get to the food. I have some pictures above. This is superb for people



who have vermin (like me) in the loft. The breeders have food all day and they get used to it very fast. They do not become fat and they can feed their offspring all day! This invention was shown on the Spring Fair last year and I ordered one in November. I presume you will see the feeder in the spring fair in 2013. Go and take a look! The pictures are taken in the garage.



Breeding lines like Germain, Imbrecht, Janssen, Van Den Bosche, Van Hee, Busschaert, Van Reet & Huyskens Van Riel can be useful but then crossbred with the modern racing pigeon. Standards are getting higher and higher and the races are faster and the result list in time is