



# THE PIGEON FANCIERS SOCIETY OF NSW SOUTH WALES INC.

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<b><u>MEMBERSHIP PARTICULARS:</u></b>	NEW MEMBERS - \$20.00 JUNIOR'S (UNDER 16'S) - \$5.00 RENEWAL – PENSIONER - \$8.00 RENEWAL – SENIOR & COMBINED FAMILY RATE - \$15.00

**Please note that the renewal of membership falls due on the 1<sup>st</sup> July each year. Cheques and money orders must be made payable to the PFS of NSW Inc. and can be mailed to the Membership Co-Coordinator, TONY DESSMANN, address as indicated above, New Membership enquires and membership forms can be obtained from the secretary, either show secretaries or from the PFS website – [www.pfsnsw.com](http://www.pfsnsw.com)**

**CLUB MEETINGS:** ARE CONDUCTED ON THE THIRD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM, VENUE BEING THE PIGEON & POULTRY PAVILION, FAIRFIELD SHOWGROUNDS, SMITHFIELD RD, FAIRFIELD. VISITORS ARE WELCOME.

**CLUBS NEWSLETTER:** THE EDITOR INVITES SUBMISSIONS AND ARTICLES FROM MEMBERS, INCLUDING REPORTS, ESPECIALLY FROM COUNTRY AREAS.

**RINGS:** PIGEON RINGS CAN BE PURCHASED FROM OUR RING SECRETARY FOR \$0.45 EACH, ONLY AVAILABLE IN LOTS OF TEN. (COST \$4.50 FOR TEN RINGS) PLUS \$2.50 POSTAGE.

**THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS HEREIN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE PFS OF NSW INC., IT'S NEITHER COMMITTEE NOR THE EDITOR.**

## NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Welcome to the first newsletter of 2014. I hope you have all had a successful breeding season and perhaps bred some champions. We look forward to seeing your birds in our shows this year. In order to exhibit your birds, it is important that you begin to plan your vaccination program now.

### Protocols for vaccination.

1. Birds vaccinated last year will require one vaccination this year.
2. Young birds will need to be vaccinated twice before exhibiting in any of our shows with vaccines to be administered 1 month apart.
3. Importantly, if you value your birds, please vaccinate ALL your birds, not just the ones you take to the shows. Your returning birds may bring the virus and so you may lose all the stock birds left at home.

ANPA State elections are coming up and I would encourage all ANPA members to make your votes count. This year, we have two very good candidates standing for positions. In the past, only John Hansen has given us any feedback on what is happening in ANPA. Since I have been President of PFS, I have heard nothing from the State Representatives that were elected. Not a phone call, text or email in this age of communication. It is as if they think PFS members are mushrooms - keep us in the dark and feed us compost.

This situation can be changed by giving your two top votes to John Hansen and Walter Hitchell.

I have noticed the poor quality of the ANPA rings in 2012 and 2013. Unfortunately, we will be receiving something similar again for the 2014 rings. I have had great difficulty reading the numbers and the feedback I have had from our breeders is that they are dissatisfied with them as well. When we do not receive good quality goods we need to change the manufacturer. I believe that 3 States were hoping to change the rings, but ANPA will persevere with the poor quality ones we have had for the last two years. We will also get a grey ring, which is a repeat of the 2008 colour. I certainly would change my car or phone provider etc if the appliance was sub standard.

I believe that this is just not good enough from an organisation that is supposed to represent our interests and hobby.

In conclusion, one way you can make a contribution, is to help out fellow breeders with the vaccination of their pigeons and help to ensure that we all have a rewarding and enjoyable 2014 Show season.



**Above:** *Champion Takla Turkish Tumbler, Tony Dessmann, show at the 2013 ANPA – for more pictures of the 2013 show please visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/anpa-pigeons/sets>*



# PIGEON MAKING MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM LION'S GRIP AT ADELAIDE ZOO

All Pictures: David Gartland, Source:  
Supplied



**EYEING TUCKER:** *The pigeon flies into the lion's enclosure at Adelaide Zoo.*

This pigeon "tawt he saw a pudgy tat" and he was right, ending up in the jaws of a hungry Adelaide Zoo lion recently. One minute, this pigeon looked done for.



**IN MORTAL DANGER:** *The lion's about to pounce on the pigeon.*

The next minute, the bird managed to escape being chomped for dinner, like a scene straight from Sylvester and Tweety Bird playing out right here in Adelaide.

Keen photographer David Gartland, of Aldinga, was at the zoo with his family when he managed to snap the amazing shots.



**GAME OVER:** *The little bird seemigly tight in the big cat's grip.*

"It's always about being at the right place at the right time," he said. Mr. Gartland said the scene unfolded in just 20 seconds. "I didn't have a chance to do any fancy settings which was good because that blurred the bird," he said.



**LUCKY CHANCE:** *The pigeon's about to break free as the lion tries to adjust its grip to bring bird inside the enclosure.*

As two lionesses snoozed in the sun, a male lion caught a glimpse of the adventurous bird and instantly pounced on his prey. The odds were stacked against the pigeon and it looked like he was long gone as the lion had the bird by its tail.



exactly what a paté maker in Amsterdam has decided to do.

According to the Dutch daily Het Parool in a story picked up by other Dutch media, Amsterdam pigeons are now for sale as paté in butcher shops around the city. The story reports that as many as 1,000 pigeons trapped or killed every year by a pest-control firm end up on many Amsterdam diners' plates.

The vermin exterminating firm, working for private companies and homeowners, found the new revenue stream by selling the birds to a local

poultry company that then turns them into paté subsequently offered to the city's butchers as "wild paté, a delicacy associated with wood pigeons from the countryside," reports utch News.

"Pigeons are not protected, so you can catch them," a pest company employee, Arie den Hertog van Duke, told Het Parool. "We have a nationwide waiver."

Does he worry about health implications? "We carry out very tight screening on everything that comes in," he said, apparently declining to discuss those methods.

Amsterdam residents seem to be divided about the issue. Some think that city pigeons probably eat better than their forest-dwelling cousins, fed by city residents with bread and seeds in parks and plazas. One blogger argued that they should be considered waste-to-food converters, comparable to ocean bottom feeders like shrimp, lobster and catfish.

Amsterdam's health authorities, on the other hand, have warned of a number of bacterial diseases, viruses, fungus and parasites associated with pigeons. So you might want to think twice before straying from traditional Dutch delicacies. Gouda is usually a safe bet.

**SHUCKS:** *The lion wears an embarrassed look as the bird flees, leaving just a few ruffled feathers behind.*

But as the feline opened his mouth to get a better grip, the bird escaped on a wing and a prayer. "He (the lion) was left just covered with feathers on his face," Mr Gartland said.

## AMSTERDAM'S PIGEONS TURNED INTO PATÉ

Pigeon paté has long been considered a delicacy, generally confined to high-end restaurants, bird hunters and their friends. Historically, though, pigeon on the plate was relatively common. Then pigeons multiplied in the great cities and smaller towns of the world. Soon they became known to many as rats of the sky. The low cost of food after the two world wars and the accumulating excess of urban waste provoked an explosion in urban pigeon populations until they became vermin. As a result, many cities drafted regulations allowing permit-free extermination of their nests, eggs, young and adults.

Precisely because of their massive numbers, and history in cuisine, some people wonder why city pigeons can't be eaten. And that's

### PPMV1 UPDATE

*Tuesday, March 04, 2014 1:13 PM*

PPMV1 has been confirmed in two fancy pigeons in the Blacktown area. Birds were apparently vaccinated with killed Newcastle disease vaccine 3-4 months ago.

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## PIGEONS STAKE OUT SPECIFIC SPOT ON NEW HASTINGS BRIDGE

HASTINGS, Minn. – This one won't end up going down on a list of life's greatest mysteries.

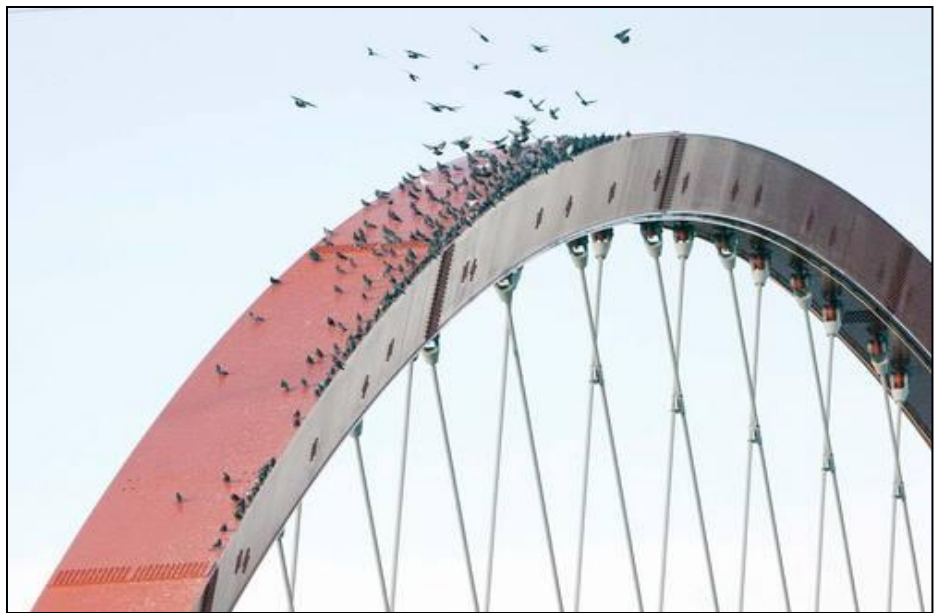
Pigeon Perch

By: **Chad Richardson, Forum News Service**, INFORUM

HASTINGS, Minn. – This one won't end up going down on a list of life's greatest mysteries. It is, though, a rather peculiar sight day after day. For some reason, pigeons have marked off a very clear patch of the new Hastings bridge as their own. They apparently have no interest in spending time on any other part of the bridge. Rather, they congregate on the northbound side of the bridge on the arch about halfway up.

"I have seen them there," said Minnesota Department of Transportation bridge project manager Steve Kordosky. "I don't know why they have selected that particular spot." Jennifer Vieth, executive director of the Carpenter Nature Center in Hastings, sees the pigeons parked in the same spot when she heads to work across the bridge every day. She said that she and a downtown business owner had speculated about where the flock of pigeons would congregate once the old blue bridge was demolished. She said she had guessed they'd stake out a spot at City Hall.

"I never would have guessed the smooth new bridge," she said. "I'll be curious to see what happens when our resident peregrine falcons get back from their winter vacation down South.



**Above:** *Pigeons have a very specific spot on the new bridge in Hastings, where they congregate. It's unclear why they've chosen that spot.*

Perhaps (the pigeons will) locate to the railroad bridge, where there is more area to perch that is protected from falcons." Kordosky said there's nothing in the structure itself that would lead to that spot being any warmer than the rest of the bridge. Both Kordosky and Vieth speculated that since that part of the bridge faces south, it warms up faster than the rest of the bridge. "(That spot) catches the early morning sun and warms them up quickest in the morning after our chilly winter nights," Vieth said. "It's also probably the most sheltered part of the bridge when our bitter northwest winds whip through the river valley."

### Oklahoma City Grand National news!

The AKC 2013 National Show was held at the NPA Grand National in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Jan. 16-18, 2014 with over 400 outstanding Show Kings exhibited by AKC members from all over the U.S. Jim Murphy of London Mills, Ill., was our distinguished judge. He selected an outstanding yearling white hen as champion, owned and exhibited by Vince Mazzarisi. This is Vince's third grand champion in a row! It was a competitive show, with the top four Kings owned by four different exhibitors Pictured: White Hen - 2013 National Champion



# A MUSEUM FOR EVERYTHING: PIGEONS

By Kristi Eaton Associated Press



Bird lovers from across the country flocked to Oklahoma City to celebrate a competition and revamped museum dedicated to the unlikeliest of feathered creatures: the pigeon. These bird lovers were not celebrating the feral pigeon, viewed by many as a disease-ridden, excrement-prone nuisance that seems to multiply in droves. Rather, they celebrate pigeons for their athleticism and beauty, and hundreds competed to find out whose were the best. "You just want to win," said Paul Tapia, 50, as he firmly but gently separated the tail feathers of one of his pigeons, an Indian Fantail, during the National Pigeon Association's Grand National competition that ended Saturday in Oklahoma City. Tapia, in law enforcement in Albuquerque, N.M., has been breeding and taking care of pigeons off and on for most of his life and is accustomed to the raised eyebrows he gets when people hear about his unusual hobby. He's come up with a solution, too: he whips out his cellphone and shows off photos

of his beloved pigeons, just as a proud father does with his child. Tapia's more than 20 birds were among the 4,600 pigeons housed in individual cages at a convention center in downtown Oklahoma City for the competition. There were white ones, brown ones, black ones and some with a combination of colors. Some had long beaks, others short beaks. Some were plump, while others were leaner with sinewy necks. Bill

Cunningham, a retired firefighter from Madisonville, Ky., brought 13 pigeons for the competition. He said the birds are very gentle and soothing. "If you ever get started on them, you won't want to get out. It's a very good thing for nerves," said the 68-year-old. The grand national, considered the ultimate pigeon competition for fancy breeders, is held in a different city each year. And this year's show was held just miles from the American Pigeon Museum and Library, which reopened just in time to lure the hundreds of pigeon lovers already in town. Call it killing two birds with one stone. The American Pigeon Museum is now housed in a new 5,800-square-foot red-brick building and features photographs, displays,

memorabilia and artwork telling the history of the bird, and the hobbies of breeding and racing pigeons. Lorrie Monteiro, curator of the museum, said she hopes people who visit develop a new appreciation for the pigeon. "My hope is the story we're telling here will show them that this pigeon, this little bird, has had a relationship with man for thousands of years, and it's been a very symbiotic relationship and it's just an amazing little creature," she said. Monteiro, who had no previous experience with pigeons before starting the job a year and a half ago, said she has developed a fondness for the feathered creature, listing off a variety of facts: Hannibal crossing the Alps had pigeons and the first Olympics used pigeons to get messages back to athlete's villages. "I'm hooked on this little bird because I think it's been very misunderstood," she added. The idea for the museum first formed in 1973, but it wasn't until 20 years later that a museum where people could flock to actually became a reality. The new museum building is located just steps away from the old museum building, located in Oklahoma City's Adventure District and right off historic Route 66. It's a location that Monteiro hopes will position the museum to become a major tourist destination in the city. In addition to featuring live pigeons in the future, Monteiro hopes to also add special exhibits, guest speakers and outdoor activities. But why the Sooner State for a pigeon museum? Simply put, it's the center of the country. Museum directors decided on Oklahoma City early on because of its location, said Jerry Black, one of the executive board members of the museum. Patsy Blaine-Wright, whose husband, Johnnie Blaine, was the manager of the original museum in the late 1990s before he died, said he would be blown away by the makeover. The two had quit their jobs in Kansas to move to Oklahoma City to run the museum. "It's just wonderful to see what we got started," she said.





## ROVING REPORTER

Gary Edwards

My trip to Philippines'. World Pigeon Expo January 17 - 19 2014.

They tell us Facebook is not worth getting involved with. Well I have met a lot of wonderful people in this media circus.

Well it was great to be invited to Mania to judge at the world expo of fancy pigeons .which was held at the world trade centre. One pavilions the poultry. Plenty of roasters. The stands used young models to promote their booths. As shown in one of photos.

Both pavilions had a stage. Pigeon's area well catered for great music bays full of pigeons for sale, medication stands. Pigeon breeding boxes books. About 20 stands. I was the only judge to judge a lot fancy breeds

Example German Beauty homers big class this one, Lahore's, American type as well as the European type. L.F.Tumblers clean legged as well as muffed. Budapest tumblers oriental frills big classes. Chinese owls, Jacobins, old Dutch Capuchines' and Homers at webs, blowers all types.



Above: The single tiered layout.

Judging I would have a lot of actuated fanciers watching. Compares asking about the finer points to the breed I was judging. They would have me the mike and I was in my element. Oh I forgot the TV cameras.



**Above:** TV camera's everywhere and *Some of the awards.*





I had to rush towards the end. As after each breed trophies were handed out. 1st 2nd and 3rd. the carriers were outstanding. Just two that I consider should be in the stock shed. Yellow carriers, white, pied red, blue and Blk. Champion black. Frills - lots and lots. Blondinette, satinettes, turbit, old German owls. Champion Satinette, Budapest tumblers a big-big line up. Great to see very impressed with a few. I think saddle got the nod. Indian Fantail well there were a couple of Barless blues very nice. Lahore received champion over unity breeds. Nice bird. They had American type as well as the European type. The euro type won.

The wining champions moved up to front of pavilion. To choose-champion. The champion went to the carrier. Never let me down. Stood alert all the time.

Congratulations to the winners. Everyone wanted their photo taken with their winning bird. Well guys a great show. Lucky the weather was kind to me 23 December humidity down. The next day there was a showing of more birds.

After the show we went to karaoke. With a few good friends. Must thank a few people that made it all happen. Edward De Cruze. Philippine fancy pigeon federation PFPF. My two brothers Aries and Archie hababag.

For taking care of me keeping me entertained. Twinkle toes – Garry Edwards.



## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BLUE/BLUE CHECK?

**BLUE BAR - Desirable:** The Blue Bar should be within the light to medium range of pearl gray, sometimes referred to as powder blue. This shade should remain uniform throughout the wing shields, back, chest, rump, hocks and vent. The head and neck are most often a



darker shade. The neck should show the iridescent green and purple, with green predominating. The flight feathers are dark gray becoming almost black on the outer edges and tips. The tail should have a dark almost black band approximately 3/4" in width appearing about 1/2" from the end of each feather. The bars, two in number, should be black clearly defined bars on each wing shield and come together where the wings fit over the rump. The bars should carry down and reach as close as possible to the leading edge of the

wing. Beak and toe nails very dark, almost black.

**Undesirable:** Smoky or dirty blue color as well as very light hocks, rump, vent and back. Thin or weakly defined bars. (Some penalty should be imposed by the judge for the above).

**Unacceptable:** Occurrence of white feathers anywhere or white toe nails. Showing sootiness or pencil markings will put the Blue Bar in the Mismark class. When there is any showing of bronze, the bird shall be placed in the Mismark class.

**BLUE CHECK - Desirable:** The light to medium Blue Check exhibits same base ground color as the Blue Bar, with an overlay of black checking on the wing shields. The term "Blue Check" actually refers to the density of the checker pattern. In the Blue Check, there will be an abundant amount of light gray under color. Approximately 50% under color and 50% checker pattern is the limit of checking that a bird can have to be shown in the Blue Check class. Once the checking exceeds 50%, they must be shown in the Dark Check class. In both light and medium checks, it is desirable to have the rump color of the same base—light gray with some checking. However, in lights you rarely find this checking to exist. The neck, flight feathers, and tail are the same color and shade as the Blue Bar. Beak and toe nails should be very dark—almost black. There is a tail bar like the Blue Bar. **Undesirable:** Smoky or dirty under color as well as light hocks, rump, vent, and back. Uneven checking in pattern should be penalized.

**Unacceptable:** Occurrence of white feathers anywhere or white toe nails shall place the Blue Check in the Mismark class. Any bronze coloring showing on the bird's wing shield shall place the bird in the Mismark class.





# 4<sup>th</sup> Champion Show



**Home Boxx Exhibition Center, Nieuwegein - Netherlands**



# Pigeons at Cheshire



► Best In Show – Mealy Show Racer of Edson & Wheatcroft



► Reserve Best in Show - Mike Knaggs' American Show Racer



► Best Fancy Flyer - Keith Mackintosh



► Best Nun - Richard Henderson

With my birds taken care of and dog walked Julie and I set off for the 170 mile trip to the Cheshire show on what was probably the warmest day of the year and a far cry from the weather we have endured of late. In fact visitors to the show over both the Tuesday and Wednesday were treated to two glorious days of sunshine and reports have it that this years gate will break that of previous years. It wasn't just the visitor attendance that was up either as the pigeon entry was too, by over a hundred birds with a total of 228 being entered.

Running the pigeon section was husband and wife team Keith and Olweyn Mackintosh from Abergele in North Wales. Keith has been a fancier since 1923 and currently keeps Wests, Tipplers and Nuns. Stewarding with them was Helen Seed. I had previously met Helen at the Spring Pigeon fair at the Dome in Doncaster back in March when she attended the meeting for the coming show in November. Helen was also on duty in the aviaries where she had some hand reared Owls and a Dutch Capuchine that proved a big hit with the younger generation. Judging this year's entry was Richard Henderson and Paul Littlewood, I am sure that these two guys require no introduction from myself, however it is Paul who that is running the poultry show at the BPSS event at Pickering in December.

Richard and Paul were just finishing off their notes when we arrived at the pigeon tent and the champion's row was just about complete. Best in Show fell to Edson and Wheatcroft with a two year old mealy cock that won the Derby County show in 2011 for John Smith prior to being purchased



► Helen Seeds' Owls proving a big hit with the younger generation



► L-R Paul Littlewood, Clive Edson and Richard Henderson



► Malcom Backley - Best Exhibition Roller

from John on him leaving the sport. Well credit due to the lads for keeping this cock up their on the winners podium. A young American Show Racer put up by Mike Knaggs from Malton was Reserve Champion and both Paul and Richard commented 'that this young pigeon could be destined for plenty more wins in the future'. Keith Mackintosh with his West of England awarded Best Fancy Flyer. Keith went on to tell me that this bird was also awarded an NPA Cert' at the Northern Counties Tippler and Tumbler Show. Some of the other winners who were around that we chatted to were Richard Henderson Best Nun, Malcolm Backley Best Exhibition Roller.



**Tommy  
Elton**

# Mad on Modenas

**M**ad on Modenas. That's what Tommy Elton is, the 49-year-old carpenter from St Germans in Norfolk. Tommy is married to wife Mandy. The couple have two grown up children, Anthony 26 and Amy 23 who in the past have all helped and enjoyed the pigeons with Tommy. But like so many children, as they grow up other interests in life take preference.

Tommy has had pigeons as long as he can remember. Prior to Modenas, as a school boy he kept a few racers. But on seeing a picture of a Modena in a book while still at school he knew they were the breed for him. Tommy's first Modenas were obtained when visiting an agricultural show back in 1986. Once he'd got them, he promptly joined the East Anglia Fancy Pigeon Club and entered his first show at Elsham in 1987. His judging appointments have taken him to France and twice to Denmark, in the process endorsing his knowledge of his chosen breed.

## **Thirteen Champion Modenas**

To obtain championship status for a Modena, the criteria is that your bird must win five certificates under three different judges and one of those has to be awarded at the Modena Club Show. And yes, Tommy has 13 champion Modenas on his CV, five times with hens and eight times with cocks. And it doesn't stop there as three of the hens were best in show at the Modena Club Show.

There are many other honours too, but the ultimate honour for Tommy was when his mealy hen was crowned Best In Show at the Modena Club's centenary show. The whole family are proud of this and testimony to it can be seen thanks to Mandy and the kids having it all mounted



► *Tommy Elton*

for Tommy's Christmas present to hang proudly on display in the family's home.

Tommy keeps both Schitti and Gazzis, with his chosen colours being Red Chequers, Mealys and plain bronze. And in the Schittis he has Blue Bronze Ti and is also playing around with some grizzles.

## **Loft**

Access to the loft is via the penning room that is a 12ft x 12ft area complete with electricity and running water and a sink for washing any drinkers and that all-important show preparation. Sixteen pens

are permanently erected, underneath which Tommy has his corn neatly stored in dustbins. The entire set-up is a timber construction with a felt roof. The area in which the birds are housed comprises four 8ft x 6ft sections, two with nest boxes and two with box perches. All the drinkers are on shelves that are approximately 18 inches off the floor to prevent any fouling. To the front of the loft is a wire bay where the birds are allowed out to take in the sunshine and enjoy a bath. Cleaning of the loft is done twice a week with a sparse covering of Easibed used on the floors and

## Feature: Tommy Elton



► The Elton loft



► Bronze



► Wire bays run the whole length of the loft

in the nest boxes to help keep things dry. During the breeding, though, when the adult birds have their youngster, the nest boxes are tidied round every other day.

### The New Year

The year starts in this loft at Christmas when Tommy has a few days holiday from work. I asked him to take us through his year. He said: "All of the birds are given a treatment against salmonella as I feel that this is the biggest problem with pigeons and will definitely reduce the fertility in the birds. This year I have used Trimethrorim and next year I will use a different one, this being whichever I am advised to use at the time. When we return from the Blackpool show, the birds are coupled and this is where I like to take my time. Throughout the show season I have been selecting couples in my head and if a bird has done well, the cogs start whirling. Has a brother or sister done well? And so on. The Modenas are quite an aggressive breed and while one day the

loft will be calm, the next day there can be a war going on between some of the inmates. For this reason, my cocks are always housed in the sections with the nest boxes."

"As the cocks already have their box, I put a front on the box and then introduce the hen keeping an eye on them just in case he get a little over-zealous. If all is okay I will keep them shut up in the box first three to five days where they will be fed and watered together. After 10 days I will remove the front and the birds will be allowed their freedom in the loft. By now some of the hens will be close to laying and the loft is of a calmer atmosphere. When all the birds are sitting I begin to relax a little as I am sure — just as other fanciers have



► Nest box arrangement

found out — that those first few days are crucial. One minute they are sitting, the next they've crushed the eggs or a cock takes a fancy to the hen in the next box. If all is going well and as the youngsters start to grow, I place two extra nest bowls in the box. One is placed upside down while the other one is placed on top of it in the usual position for the couple to lay their next round of eggs. This prevents the growing youngster from jumping in the bowl while the parents are sitting the eggs."





► *The Centenary Winner Mealy*



► *Grizzle*



► *Tommy's Modena mix*

He added that while the breeding is going on he keep the boxes clean and has a litter of Easibed in the bottom of them to keep things nice and dry. In all of his nest boxes he places a pot for

food and a water pot and when the youngsters are about 18 days old, Tommy will go around the boxes and dip each young bird's head in the water pot as he finds that Modenas drink quite a lot.

All this sounds fairly straightforward, but Tommy does use some feeders as just like every one else. He said: "There are things that can catch you out." The advantage of using the feeders for Tommy is that if anything untoward should happen, then he can quickly switch the eggs or youngsters plus he has the added advantage of getting the maximum number of youngsters from his best couples.

### **Feeding and Health**

He added: "My food is a mixture of Bucktons Young Bird without maize. To this I will add a few peanuts along with some TK Conditioner Seed from the Bamfords' Top Flight range of corn and a few peanuts. This is my base mixture that I will feed the whole year round, all 362 days of it. From time to time I will add other grains, these are tic beans and wheat. However I don't introduce the youngsters to tic beans until they are three months old. Fresh grit and minerals are given every other day and as a special treat the grit Matrix from Gem Supplements is also used. I give cider vinegar in the water twice a week. Apart from regular baths and apart from the annual treatment for salmonella prior to coupling that's it. It is all pretty basic stuff really. Oh, and not that it is probably hugely important, the only other thing I do is during the winter is that I will give them sugar in the water at the rate of a small cup to eight litres of water."



## Feature: Tommy Elton

### Sixty Youngsters

"I breed about 60 youngsters for myself and at about 22 days old they are moved to the sections with the box perches. Ten days later they will be introduced to the show pen, where over the next two weeks I will move them about with his judging stick. This is very important as they must learn from an early age to stand for the judge and not back when being judged. This is when my selections will now start to get serious and their development will be observed with a very critical eye. Any that I feel are not of the required standard are removed from the team. I am looking for that perfect shape Type is foremost Brandy Glass, same amount of curve from under the beak then from legs to the end of tail with good depth of body.

"Pen training at home is one thing," said Tommy. "But I like to get my youngsters in at least two agricultural shows and my old birds in at least one. It isn't about the



► Two bowls to prevent the youngster from

birds being comfortable in the pen, but they have to get used to people walking by them and there's no better place than agricultural show for this type of training."

### Showing

Tommy continued: "About four days before a show I will start to trim out any mis-

coloured feathers on the Gazzis, leaving them a day or so between each trim. On the day of the show I like to get there nice and early find out where my pens are and have my birds penned half an hour or so before judging. This way they are well settled. It will also give me time to make sure that if they mess, I can clean the pen. That's because as sure as eggs are eggs, as soon as you pen the bird it will empty itself. And if you don't give yourself time, you won't leave the bird at its best for the judge and this will be a problem. It's not something I like to rush. Another point is the dreaded "end pen" issue. Not many people like them. If I happen to draw one, I will have a look around for a piece of cardboard to cover the end. Also an important thing for me is that I take my own food and water pots and food as I want to minimise the drop in condition that a show might bring to a bird. Other than these matters, that is really it. It's all pretty straight forward!"

Well "pretty straight forward" it might be. However what Tommy Elton does not go short on is his attention to detail. And having been fortunate enough to visit many successful racing lofts not only in this country but on the continent, I can confirm that "attention to detail" is something that all champions apply!

Ray Knight



► Modena Centenary Show awards, pride of place



## Recent Big Wins

### 2010

- The Modena Club Centenary Show

### 2011

- Peterborough: **Best Modena, Best in Show, Best Young Bird**
- Pickering: **Best Young Modena**
- Lancashire Show: **Best Modena**

### 2012

- Blackpool: **Best Gazzi with Red Chequer**