

# NTU Newsletter

NATIONAL TIPPLER UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN FOUNDED 1912

SPRING NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 14 - MAY 2008



## RESULT COMPETITION 30th MARCH 2008 LIBERATION 6.15am 44 Entries Dark 8.53pm

Split Time

1st.....	I Elstob .....	Wearside .....	16-56	
2nd.....	D Black (5).....	Wearside .....	16-37	10.06pm
3rd .....	E Fenton & Son .....	Private Member.....	16-20	9.56pm
4th.....	T Veater .....	Lakeside.....	15-27	8.54pm
5th.....	J Crossley.....	Wearside .....	15-15	9.06pm

**TOP NOVICE**..... P Griffin..... Willenhall..... 13-10

### SECTIONS

North.....	G Lee .....	Lakeside.....	14-39	8.53pm
Central .....	M Camplin.....	Springfield .....	15-10	9.00pm
Irish & South.....	B Dunseith.....	Ulster .....	14-12	

<b>SHIELD WINNERS</b> ... Wearside.....	I Elstob .....	16-56
	D Black.....	16-37
	J Crossley .....	15-15
	TOTAL.....	48-48

### OLD BIRD CLUB KO

Wearside v Dudley; Bentley West v Springview; Loughview v Willenhall;  
Brindley Ford v Ulster; West Belfast v Silksworth; Springfield v Lakeside

### SECOND ROUND CLUB KO OLD BIRDS 27th APRIL

Wearside v Ulster; Bentley West v Silksworth; Willenhall v Lakeside

## RESULT COMPETITION 30th MARCH 2008 continued

Split Time

D Warrenner (5)	Silksworth	14-38	8.53pm
G&P Dove	Lakeside	14-23	8.53pm
A Jones & Son	Bentley West	13-15	
K Bennett	Springfield	12-50	
R Lavery	Springview	11-24	
R Singh & Son	Private Member	10-36	
P Bedworth (Novice)	Bentley West	9-59	
R Betts (Novice)	Willenhall	9-59	
T Bowatre (Novice)	Bentley West	9-59	
M Clarke	Springview	8-55	
J Jones	Bentley West	8-30	
J Coroe	West Belfast	5-40	
M McManus	West Belfast	0-11	

### DISQUALIFIED

S Price & Sons	Dudley	missed bird	14-37
A Walton	Bentley West	missed 2	14-23
J Boulton	Lakeside	missed bird	14-09
K Pitts	Willenhall	missed kit	13-45
M Forgione	Loughview	1 over hour	11-00
P Hughes (Novice)	Bentley West	1 over hour	9-59
D McCullough (5)	Private Member	1 over hour	7-55
J McManus	West Belfast	hawk put birds down	0-14
J Baranowski	Private Member	falcon attack	

### 13 SHEETS NOT RETURNED

### ALL RESULTS SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION

Brian Rose, NTU Secretary

**RESULT COMPETITION 27th APRIL 2008**  
**LIBERATION 5.30am 43 Entries Dark 9.44pm**

*Split Time*

1st.....	E Fenton & Son (8).....	Private Member.....	19-01.....	12.22am
2nd.....	D Black (5).....	Wearside.....	17-07.....	10.19pm
3rd.....	R Lavery.....	Springview.....	17-00.....	10.05pm
4th.....	J Crossley.....	Wearside.....	16-53	
5th.....	S Price & Sons.....	Dudley.....	16-50.....	9.46pm

**TOP NOVICE**..... P Griffin..... Willenhall..... 15-05

**SECTIONS**

North.....	T Veater (5).....	Lakeside.....	15-45	
Central.....	M Camplin.....	Springfield.....	16-30	
Irish & South.....	M Clarke.....	Springview.....	16-45.....	9.51pm

**SHIELD WINNERS**... Bentley West.....

M Tift.....	16-25
A Watton.....	16-05
A Jones & Sons.....	12-16
TOTAL.....	44-46

**THIRD ROUND OLD BIRD CLUB KO**

Wearside v Lakeside; Bentley West (bye)

# Dates To Note

**NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL by 22nd June**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 4th October SHOW: 7th December**  
**Both at Shepwell Green SC, Willenhall, West Midlands**

## RESULT COMPETITION 27th APRIL 2008 continued

Split Time

J Coroe	West Belfast	16-30	9.44pm
M Tift	Bentley West	16-35	9.52pm
P O'Brien	Springview	16-20	9.50pm
A Walton	Bentley West	16-05	
T Murphy	Loughview	15-33	
K Bennett	Springfield	15-04	
R Singh & Son	Private Member	14-36	
N Butt (Novice) (5)	Silksworth	14-30	
D Warrener (5)	Silksworth	12-35	
A Stone	Willenhall	12-24	
A Jones & Son	Bentley West	12-16	
T McTaggart	Ulster	12-00	
J Jones (Novice)	Bentley West	9-59	
L Paige (Novice)	Bentley West	9-59	
P Bedworth (Novice)	Bentley West	9-59	
J Baranowski	Private Member	8-49	
P Hughes (Novice) (5)	Bentley West	6-45	

### DISQUALIFIED

M McManus	West Belfast	over hour	16-31
I Elstob	Weirside	over hour	16-15
G Lee	Lakeside	missed 1 heavy rain	15-48
S Nixon	Lakeside	missed 1 heavy rain	13-15
J McManus	West Belfast	missed 1	10-15
S S Ames	Private Member	falcon attack	8-07
R Betts (Novice)	Willenhall	hawk attack	7-10
G&P Dove (5)	Lakeside	1 out of bounds	6-28
B Dunseith	Ulster	kit over hour, rule 7	

### 8 SHEETS NOT RETURNED

### ALL RESULTS SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION

Brian Rose, NTU Secretary



# Willenhall TC on Tour

## Destination: Belfast, Northern Ireland

Sixteen lads left Willenhall on 14th February 2008 for the ferry, and two left by plane. We had Scott and Jason with us from Bentley West Club. Arriving in Dublin, we made our way up to Lisburn (Harry Shannon country). Once we got to Harry's house, his wife Anne had 16 meals waiting for us. What a woman!

Our base was at Belfast and there the Irish lads took us to their lofts to see their birds. Ireland has some very established flyers: Harry, Bobby, Paul, Manuel, Joe and his brother Martin. We also visited other lads' lofts with good pigeons.

The joy of visiting these sorts of flyers is based on the standard of their birds and well established families. One of the lofts was Paul O'Brien's. There we saw a really nice well mottled cock. This was a Jack Boden bird. Paul Boden, who came with us, confirmed this saying, 'Jack did breed some of these birds'. That's the nice thing about these sorts of visits, you learn something new each time.

May I just say that we were made welcome at every loft we visited and the lads' wives made us refreshments every time. Thank you ladies for your time and effort.

On our way home, we stopped at Harry's for a cup of tea and a chat. For a while I stood in Harry's veranda looking at his diplomas displayed on the wall and gentlemen, you will never see so many '20 Hours' in your life in our sport. This is one of the true skills in Tippler Flying.

The Irish lads presented Willenhall with two beautiful cups to fly for, further strengthening the long established bond between Belfast and Willenhall Clubs.

We are very honoured to receive these cups. Thank you on behalf of Willenhall Club.

The cups will be engraved 'Harry Shannon Old Bird Cup' and 'Young Bird Irish Cup'.

Last but not least, we presented Bobby Dunseith with an engraved watch for his outstanding contribution to our sport.

We look forward to returning to Belfast in the future to see our great friends. Watch this space for our next destination.

Yours in sport,

**Ken Potts**

*Thanks for the kind words Ken. It's always a pleasure for us to welcome those with a genuine interest of the flying tippler in mind and the Willenhall club has always stood 'Four Square There'.*

**Harry Shannon**

## Thank You

I would like to make a vote of thanks to my good friend and fellow tippler man, Ashley Cresswell, for meeting me at Walsal train station and then to the NTU AGM meeting 2007.

It was good to see all the lads from near and afar and I must comment and say it was a good day out.

And a big thank you to Jimmy Johnson for giving me a lift back to Walsal train station and home to Wales. The very best of luck for one and all for the year 2008.

Yours in sport,

**Med Bell  
Barry**

# Bentley West AGM

On 6th January 2008 the Bentley West Tippler & Tumbler Club held it's AGM. As the club had only restarted back up as a flying club in the 2007 season it was interesting to see what happened. Once again the club had 16 of the members attend and with three new applications to join, two were not successful due to the distance they lived from the club. One new member was accepted.

The club is looking for fanciers who want to compete with their birds. I would just like to wish David all the best for the coming season and welcome him to the club on behalf of all the other members.

David is another novice to the sport, that means our club has 11 novices, I bet that's a record. The season will give them all something to go at as the club has a nice novice cup to go for and any help they need will be given.

Within two meeting all the fees and ring monies were paid up in full and the members are awaiting the flying season.

The members elected its officials for the 2008 season, they being myself M Tift (Secretary & Pro), A Watton (Ring Steward), J Jones (Chairman). Council are A Tipton, A Jones, S Halls, A Watton and P Bedworth.

On a good note all the members that attended the meeting are the ones that worked together to get the club back on its feet last year and if we can keep the interest going and have a good year again fundraising this season can only be better.

On Sunday 20th January 2008 11 of the clubs members decided it would be nice to all have a day out and we decided to visit the Blackpool Show. As a thank you for all the work done by members it was agreed that the cost of the minibus and diesel would come out of club funds. At 7.00am I was the last to be picked up as I live on junction 10. We

arrived around 9.30am. First stop café for a full breaky then onto the show. Sadly not one tippler was seen in the fancy show section. A look around and a chat to a few fanciers we knew it was time for some liquid lunch and a few games of pool. The members had a good day out.

I believe that if the NTU was to hold a recruiting day on behalf of the union it would do the sport good. A suggestion that an open show be held say in June or July. Tipplers, tumbler's say a class of badges cocks and hens same for muff leg, magpie, etc with rosettes and cards for classes, trophies for best in show and best opposite sex, even a small cash prize. A good raffle would cover the cost and with proper advertisements it would pay off. Also hold a auction of birds that fanciers have to dispose of, say charge a £1 per cage. I myself would do this no problem.

With clubs that surround the area I cannot see how it would not be very profitable for our union, with them all working together. I know our club members would help out and I myself would help out with organising it. I am only a phone call away. It will be interesting to see if anything happens.

Things like this don't have to be proposed and passed. The council is responsible for all finances and I strongly believe that unless more is done to promote the sport it will once again face money problems. Just by looking at our membership since the 2004 to 2006 season saw 35 members leave the sport. 2007 saw 11 more return. Take the AGM this year saw once again only around one third of the members attending. 50 I believe with nothing really being passed to bring monies into the union besides the sale cages. Once the cash in hand has gone. How is the union going to function?

It was nice to see the novice base had been found and back to where it belongs. What now is to become of the new one that was made and also to what cost to the NTU? It was nice to meet fanciers at the AGM but one good thing is that the AGM and show are

back on different days. I don't think fanciers get together enough.

I would like to wish all flying members the best for the 2008 season.

Yours in sport,

**Mike Tift**

## Bentley West Results

The above club competed in the 1st fly of the year on 30th March 2008. At liberation it was a dark morning, very chilly, but it soon turned into a nice day. The club saw ten of its members down to compete but sadly two of our keen novices were unable to fly due to there kits being ruined by peregrine falcons a week prior to competition.

First to go was novice Lee Price. Lee had been training his only kit well having them on six hours, very keen to go, but sadly all were finished in 5 mins. In training one lost 3/4 of its tail and another of the kit lost most its secondary flights in one wing. Lee is now going to let them regrow flights and try again hopefully next national in April.

Another one of the clubs up and coming novices, Scott Halls, had a trained kit ready to go only in last training fly. Before fly he suffered a hawk attack sadly losing one of his kit to hawk. With no time to get another bird with them he was out also. Gutted is not the word.

I myself have suffered peregrine hawk attacks over the last few weeks losing one from my hen kit and one from my kit of cocks. The problem will get worse as the years go by. The hawks are adapting to living and breeding in all kinds of buildings and places.

Unless we the NTU adapted to the problem fanciers will continue to give up. One thing that is working with a 80% success rate is firing a rocket at hawk on attack. Only the other day I was flying my white tumblers

and they were attacked by a peregrine hen. As they scattered all over the sky and the attack began I fired a rocket from a long metal tube in the hawk's direction. It went bang and the hawk shot off leaving my birds to re-group and fly on.

I would like to know what fellow flying fanciers thought of the idea of a proposal I am putting in later in year for AGM, that this could be accepted on national fly under the referees permission upon a hawk attack on the fanciers kit. I will give it a lot of thought and try to word it correct, it will be interesting to see the outcome.

The clubs fly results are as follows:

1st: A Jones & Sons, 13 hrs 15 mins.

Joint 2nd: P Bedworth & T Bowater (novices), 9 hrs 59 mins.

3rd: J Jones & Son (novice), 8 hrs 30 mins.

Disqualified: P Hughes, 9 hrs 59 mins, bird over hour. A Tipton, 15 hrs, missed one bird. A Watton, 14 hrs 42 mins, missed two birds. M Tift, 14 hrs 45 mins, failed to get birds in hour.

I would just like to congratulate Andy on winning the club fly. Due to working commitments Andy was unable to get his kit dark trained. Also to our novices on times done. Let's train the birds and see what happens next fly. Well done to all fanciers on their great times done.

Yours in sport,

**Mike Tift**

# Cross-Breeding or Breed-Crossing

## ISSUE 10: 7TH JULY 2006

In cross-breeding, two different breeds or varieties are mated and their offspring are marketed for commercial purposes but never used as breeders. There is no contamination of the original stocks whose separated breeding lines remain pure. Cross-breeding is resorted to in order to obtain young in some respects superior to either of the parent stocks. The cross-matings may excel in fertility, liveability of embryos, and hatchability; their hybrid young in general health, including resistance to disease, faster rate of growth, higher liveability, and larger size.

In general breed-crossing is considered favourably today and is attaining wide popularity. It must not be confused with species-crossing. The classic illustration of crossing species is the mule, produced from a mating of jack X mare. This hybrid is an outstanding example of vigour and strength though considered practically sterile. Sterility frequently occurs when two distinct species are crossed. A cross of guinea X chicken or pheasant X chicken is sterile. Similarly, hybrids of domestic pigeons with wild species such as the stock dove and others have been found to show varying degrees of sterility. Crosses of pigeons with ringneck doves are usually males and are completely sterile with pigeon mates (Cole and Hollander, 1950).

The poultry breeders has crossed breeds most successfully. In England, matings of *Indian Game* or *old English Game* on *Dorking*, *Houdan* and other breeds are made to increase meat quality and quantity (Cole, 1935). In raising battery-bred chickens (1932), I used a cross of *Cornish cock* X *White Leghorn* hen. The hybrids were almost pure white in plumage, possessed good liveability, grew rapidly, had fine breast meat development, and proved to be good table fowl. Crosses of

*Barred Rock cock* X *Rhode Island Red* hen are widely used in this country and have proved excellent producers of baby chicks for rearing in batteries. The hybrids are all barred, a desirable market condition, show exceedingly good liveability, with smooth and quick feathering propensity. They grow faster than pure-breeds. Hundreds of thousands of such crosses are being produced in this country each year (Alleman, 1938).

Crossing of pigeons for commercial purposes has not been scientifically reported upon, but it is an apparent fact that crossing different breeds and varieties of pigeons produces offspring of better vigour than those from pure lines. Every cross that I have made, both with fancy and utility breeds, probably 25 different crosses in all, has produced young of outstanding vigour.

Boitard and Corbie (1824), speaking of crossing pigeons, say: 'The amateurs who desire to create new and interesting varieties of pigeons will always be compensated for their efforts, whether in obtaining the object of their desire, or even if they do not succeed, in the increase of the production of squabs in their loft; because it is proved that the cross breeds are more fecund than purebreds, and all the more so if the varieties from which they were obtained were more distinct and less similar to one another'.

In crossing for commercial purposes, much depends upon the breeds used. The purer the parents genetically the more uniform will be the crosses produced. Most crosses exceed in vigour, but some produce squabs with dark skin, and experimental mating are necessary to see the quality of the offspring produced. It cannot always be foretold. A cross of *White Carneau cock* X *Homer* hen is usually a good one. The *Homer* hen lay quickly, the squabs are well fed, considerably

larger in size than Homers, and as a rule, have white skins. A cross of White King cock X Hungarian hen is being used by one commercial plant of this country with good results. A cross of White King X Red Carneau, of Silver King X Red Carneau, of Silver King X White Mondain, or of Red Carneau X Homer is liable to throw a good proportion of dark-skinned squabs. One breeder is using a cross of Indian Mondain cock X Silver King hen with good results. From the few cross-mating listed above, it is obvious that the breeder must make experimental matings with his own strains to see how they plan out, especially in regards to white or dark skins. A cross which produces dark-skinned squabs is inadvisable under present market conditions in this country. As a rule, when there is a difference in breed size, it is better for higher production to use hens from the smaller breed.

A number of breeders throughout the country have allowed two or more breeds to cross promiscuously, and the hybrids to mate promiscuously, and report good success. The entire problem of cross-breeding in pigeons is in its infancy, although around 1912 it was quite popular. F H Wright (1906) ably discussed the problems of pure-breeding versus crossing, and concluded that the use of pure breeds for producing hybrid squabs for market offered the most advantages. Hollander (1937) advocated the same procedure. This programme has been used extensively with chickens. Its potentialities, especially in reducing mortalities resulting from low vigour, are large. Half-breed hens are generally fecund and may serve to produce more squabs for market, but their progeny should not be saved for breeding stock.

This is essentially the same idea as that developed by East and Jones (1919) for field corn. They pointed out that strictly inbred lines are low in vigour but uniform. Crossing such strains produce first generation hybrids of remarkable vigour, but still very uniform.

Thus was created the 'hybrid corn' which has attained great popularity. This programme can probably never be duplicated with pigeons, but a somewhat similar programme

is the crossing of pure breeds, the pure breeds being maintained primarily as source material for hybrid vigour.

Quotation: 'The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed'.

Yours in sport,

**Raysal Hussain**  
Private Member

# Matings

## ISSUE 11: 22ND JULY 2006

Mating are of two kinds: forced matings and natural matings. For a forced mating, the breeder selects a cock and hen that, in his opinion, are best suited to each other. They are placed in a pen to themselves, or in a mating coop until they mate. A bird may be mated to a number of the opposite sex consecutively by this method, and will remain true to its last mate, providing that the former mate is not left in the breeding pen in which the newly mated pair is placed. If a pair, separated and re-mated, are within a short time, placed in the same pen with their former mates, the chance are that they will return to them.

Natural mating are used principally in commercial plants. Youngsters are left in the rearing pen and allowed to mate at will. As they mate, they are pair-banded. After they have laid and raised a clutch, their squabs are checked. If they have produced two good, normal youngsters, they will most likely continue to produce progeny, which are just as good or better. Such birds, after they have been checked and approved, are eligible to be removed and placed in a permanent breeding pen.

Proverb: 'Better one good thing that is than two good thing that were'.

Yours in sport,

**Raysal Hussain**  
Private Member

# Tipplers Sunderland Style

As a young boy growing up in Sunderland's east end there was no shortage of pigeon men, as we called them. Almost all of them keeping homers so it's not surprising that most young boys had an interest in pigeons from a very early age.

I had two uncles keeping them on the allotments and my grandfather, who had them in his back garden on the Hylton Castle estate, so I was around pigeons from the word go.

As for my own birds well this started when I was around 8 years old. Along with a couple of friends we began collecting pigeons of every description, anything with a ring on or unusual markings, colours or adornments, these birds were caught in the street and parks, or begged from the homing men. Some were given as a reward for cleaning out lofts or carrying the clocks, regardless of where they came from, they were all welcome.

These birds were made up of mostly homers with a few fantails, tumblers crosses, even a few wild pigeons, and my favourites, the tipplers, known to us by the local name farmers.

Having no gardens these birds were all kept together in various brick built coal sheds. They were never settled and no thought was given to breeding. They were just left to get on with it, being fed on anything we could get our hands on, mainly wheat, peanuts or bread taken from the bins of the local Prides bakery in Coronation Street. And the big joy in keeping them back then was swapping birds among each other which was done without fail every Saturday morning.

The only difference between me and the other lads was that I had picked out a few of the tipplers and was allowed to keep them in my grandfather's homer loft in return for

cleaning out his loft every Sunday, something which I did not mind doing because it let me inspect the eggs and youngsters and learn about pairing, breeding, feeding and everything else that went along with becoming a pigeon man in the real sense of the word.

When I was around 11 or 12 years old we were rehoused by the council onto a housing estate a few miles outside of the town centre and, low and behold, we had a nice big garden. I was ecstatic until I found out my father intended to use it for growing vegetables and breeding rabbits for the table. We were a very large family with little in the way of money so this was a bit of a Godsend for my father but it was not all doom and gloom. When, after a week or so, I noticed a kit of tipplers circling the house day after day and dropping in just a few houses away from us. Now these birds were a real eye opener for me flying up to 10 hours at a time. I had never seen anything like it before.

After another couple of weeks I got friendly with this man's two sons and, before long, was invited to have a look at the birds. What a sight, he must have had 30 tipplers, all black prints and looking in pristine condition. Every bird had the same look and I found it difficult to tell them apart. He kept them in a large brick outhouse. The place had white painted walls and was spotless.

As it turned out his sons had no interest in the birds and he was quite happy to let me go in whenever he was at home and help out. This was when I first became acquainted with kit boxes and keeping flyers and breeders separated. The use of droppers was another eye opener. The one thing he did not do was to feed up.

The birds were all fed the same mix, both

breeders and flyers. He was flying his two kits every other day he would put them out before he went to work and dropped them shortly after he came back. After a while I managed to get a few birds from him so these joined the others I had at my grandfather's loft.

A year later my father let my older brother and myself build a pigeon loft in the back garden at home. This turned out to be a bit of a disaster for me because my brother decided to keep homers. Having only one loft between us, and it not being big enough to partition all the birds, they had to be housed together. My brother would let out his homers every day and let them sit around the place. I had no chance to fly the tippers there so I moved some of them out to a friend's grandfather's allotment and managed to get a couple of years flying in, only due to the fact his grandfather was keeping chickens, not homers.

When I was 14 years old my brother decided to give up the birds in favour of birds of the unfeathered variety which gave me the loft at home to myself so another few years of uninterrupted flying followed. I flew the birds from this small loft until I left home. I got a small upstairs flat in the Millfield area of Sunderland. I had the use of a large backyard and, with the owners permission, began to build myself a new loft, knowing I would need droppers settled as quickly as possible. I took down a couple of pairs of fantails and settled them to an old gas stove which had been left in the yard. The fantails lived in the stove quite happily for the couple of weeks. It took me to build the loft and would try to get back in there every time. I let them out until I got rid of it.

Two years after moving into my flat, part of the floor gave way. It turned out the whole of the floor was rotten so the council rehoused me in a flat over the other side of town without a garden so it was back to the allotments for

the next couple of years. I decided it was time to get myself sorted so I bought a small terraced cottage back over in Millfield with a decent sized yard. I built myself a 16 foot loft and, knowing a little better by this time, had it divided into three sections with individual flying boxes, young bird weaning cages, and a breeding section.

I flew from there for the next six years getting times of over 18 hours with old birds and over 17 hours with the young birds. Not great times but good times for birds which were not dark trained. During my time there I met a flyer named George Lazzari. George was the secretary of the Tyneside Tippler Club and a member of the NTU. He turned out to be a good friend of lots of the old time flyers and gave me a lot of introductions and sound advice. It was through George I first started to fly the tippers in serious competition. I joined the club and, a year later, became secretary/treasurer over the next few years. We took the club from a membership of just five to over 20.

After those six years I moved to my present home in Silksworth and have been flying my tippers from here for over 20 years. I had a spell out of competition due to a change in the shifts where I worked but still managed to train and fly my birds on the days I had off from work.

Now I work part-time so have the time to start dark training my birds. Something I am looking forward to this coming season. Due to this sport I have made a great number of friends and met some of the best tippler flyers ever to put birds in the air. I wish my young son would take up the sport but, like most young boys today, the interest just isn't there but I am lucky enough to have a very understanding wife who knows exactly what my birds mean to me and is very supporting and helpful.

**Davey**

# Silksworth TC 2007

Well I had quite a good year in 2007 only losing one young bird in settling from 50. I bred only a small hawk problem with one bird taken all year. The flying season went well with the birds, non of which were dark trained, doing most of the daylight. I had 3 disqualifications, long day when one of a kit of 3 cocks lifted a little too high into a very heavy mist and was not seen for over 2 hrs. First young bird, one of a kit of 10, was taken by a hawk in the first 10 mins and last young bird when the whole kit of 3, a sister and 2 brothers, lifted at dusk and overflowed into the dark. I had no lights up so no chance of getting them. Needless to say I now have lights and have started to dark train my kits.

I had a few visits during the year one from some of the lads from the Bentley West Club and also the Willenhall Club. Harry Shannon visited with the Canadian old bird record holder, Oskar Zovich, and later, some of the Belfast lads came over. It's always nice to meet up with friends you don't see too often and catch up a little on what's going on in other parts of the country and, indeed, the world.

Some of the other lads from Sunderland and myself also did a bit visiting and were made welcome everywhere we went, both in the Midlands and Ireland. During the summer I met up with Danny McCarthy from Australia and Paul Green and Jim Jonson took me to pick him up from Wolverhampton railway station. We went on to visit Mick Tiff, Tex Brookes, Andy Tipton, Alan Watton, Paul Hickenbottom and a few others. In fact by the end of the afternoon we had quite a convoy

going around the lofts and Danny was elated to be meeting the lads after having to travel home early in 2006 and missing the chance to visit the Midlands.

Later we visited the fantastic lofts of John Bicknell. John has a lot of birds all of which were in great condition and his many lofts are kept spotless. He must spend a lot of time with these birds. A few of us visited Belfast and had a great time. We were picked up at the airport where we had met Ken Pitts by Michael Forgione and taken to Bobby Dunseith's for breakfast and a look at his loft and birds. We then went to Manny Fenton's, Paul O'Brien's and a few others. Later we went back to watch Manny's birds flying into dark and were treated to a fantastic meal cooked by Manny's son. Some of the other Belfast lads turned up and we stayed until very late making a night of it. I enjoyed watching Manny drop his kit well into dark with almost no effort. Very well trained birds.

The next morning a couple of us went around to look at Michael Forgione's lofts and birds and I have to say anyone flying tipplers from such a bad location must be truly dedicated to the sport. Michael's yard area for breeding and flying is smaller than a lot of lofts. I have seen he uses a double-decker arrangement which leaves him standing about 15 feet above the ground on a small platform to settle and drop his birds, amazing.

We then went on to visit Harry Shannon where we were treated to a look at his birds and some delicious pancakes made by his live-in cook Mrs Zovich, while her husband, Oskar, gave Harry a bit of breeding advice.

We then went down the pub for a couple of drinks before travelling back to the airport while there we were joined by Mick Clarke and a couple of the other lads all in all it was a great weekend.

The next time I saw most of these lads was at the NTU AGM in December some of us travelled down from Sunderland the day before and spent the night we met up with a

lot of the Belfast lads who were staying in the same hotel and a lot of the Midlands flyers came for a night out the following morning we visited a few lofts before we went to the AGM I had another chance to see some of Manny's birds owned by Ken Pitts and a look at Paul Hickenbottom's badges now looking forward to 2008.

**Davey**

# Willenhall Invitation Flying Tippler Society

Another flying season to look forward to, many of our members being hit hard again by the hawks. A very good friend and fellow club member, Barry Price, has been really hit hard. He had 18 birds in training and, before our first only club fly, he had only five birds left and he put three of them in our first club only fly.

You will see by the following results that his birds were attacked after 6 mins and one taken by the hawk, leaving him with just four birds left in training for the first national fly. My heart goes out to you Baz. Anyway, here's the results:

## **1st Club Only Fly, 9th March 2008**

### **Liberation 7.00pm**

### **Official Dark 7.09pm, 4 Entries**

1st: Robert Betts (novice) flying three birds, a silver badge, a red grizzle and a red spangled, with a winning time of 9 hrs 57 mins. Well done Rob. Three members disqualified.

Andrew Stone flying three birds, a blue, a

silver and a grizzle. Missed one in the dark, on a time of 12 hrs 2 mins.

Barry Price flying three birds, a blue, a black self and a silver grizzle, bird taken by hawk 6 mins into fly.

Fred Eaton-Lees flying three birds, two blues and a silver, hawk attack, no time entered.

I would like to say a few words of thanks, on behalf of our members and myself after our recent visit to see the lads in Belfast. We spent five very interesting days visiting the lads lofts to see their birds which I must say were all in perfect condition. This was my first visit over there and I was really overwhelmed by the hospitality from the lads and their wives who welcomed us with meals and refreshments, thank you ladies. I was really honoured to visit such wonderful people.

Yours in sport,

**Alan Wright, PRO**

PS: By the way Bobby, what time is it again? Thanks lads.

**Our thanks to Davy Warrener for the following pages with the second part to follow in the next newsletter**

# **Selected Pigeon Diseases**

**by Gordon A Chalmers, DVM, Lethbridge, Alberta, CN**

## **1. CANKER**

*Cause:* a small, one-celled, microscopic parasite called *Trichomonas gallinae*. The same organism causes a disease called *frounce* in birds of prey. In pigeons, there are strains of this organism that range from very mild, relatively innocent types through to those that are very deadly.

*Occurrence and Signs:* Canker is probably most important in young birds, but it can also be a serious threat to old birds as well. The commonest form of the disease in youngsters is a yellowish lump in the mouth or throat area. It may also affect lower areas such as the crop or liver where it would not be visible to naked eye inspection. 'Going light' is one of the first signs of illness if there is no visible change in the mouth or throat, although canker is not the only cause of 'going light'.

The disease may affect the liver severely, especially when one of the more deadly strains is involved. Here, 'going light' may be the first sign of illness. Another important sign when the liver is severely involved is a puffiness in the abdomen, which can be detected by examination of the area between the keel and the vent bones. The mouth and the whites of the eyes may also have a yellow discoloration in this situation. It is common for involvement of the liver to occur in youngsters in the period soon after weaning when stresses are very high. At that time, depending on the strain of organism involved,

one or more youngsters in a group of recently weaned birds may be affected. They go off feed, are listless and sit in a hunched posture with feathers ruffled. Droppings may have a yellow discoloration that is most commonly visible in the white portion.

## **TREATMENT**

A commonly used drug in Canada is Emtryl. This product is purchased as a 40% water-soluble powder that is added to the drinking water at the rate of 1 level teaspoon per Imperial gallon (4.55 litres). Birds should be treated for a minimum of 5 days, and not longer than 7 days. Don't buy the feed-grade formulation of Emtryl.

One problem is that Emtryl can be poisonous. Commonly, birds are overdosed during hot weather or when they are raising youngsters, or both, because of their greater need for more water. In my experience, this tends to happen when fanciers leave Emtryl-treated water before the birds 24 hours a day in hot weather. One of the dramatic side effects is to see Emtryl-poisoned pigeons flopping upside down on the floor of the loft, with the remainder of the birds in the loft terrified by this aberrant behaviour. Other, more subtle nervous signs of poisoning can be detected by the observant fancier. If these signs occur, simply remove the treated water and replace it with fresh, clean water, and affected birds will often recover in a day or so.

Fanciers may attempt to compensate during hot weather by cutting the dosage. However, such an approach (as well as putting Emtryl on the end of a toothpick and dropping it into the mouth of a bird – avoid this procedure) opens the door widely to the development of resistance by the canker organism, and since there seem to be fewer and fewer effective anti-canker products on the market, it is important not to squander perhaps one of the few remaining arrows in our quiver, so to speak.

Luckily, there is a practical solution that should avoid both lower dosages and the possibility of resistance. The practical answer is one that was proposed by an Australian fancier. Having tried it many times, I am convinced that it works, and works well. Here is what the Aussie report recommended.

At the evening feeding, make up the correct dosage of Emtryl in the drinking water, that is, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon of Emtryl per US gallon of water. (Fanciers in Canada should use one level teaspoon of Emtryl per imperial gallon). The Aussie who proposed this method recommended that treated water be placed in the loft and left for a couple of hours or so, after which, this water is thrown out and replaced with fresh untreated water for the next 24 hrs. At this time, on the next evening, water containing the same correct dosage is placed in the loft and left for two hours or so, then replaced with fresh water until the next evening. This process is repeated each evening for 5-7 days. This practical answer has two major advantages. Firstly, the birds receive the correct therapeutic dosage of Emtryl for the required number of days. Secondly, the problem with poisoning seems to be largely avoided.

I have often modified this procedure in my

own loft by leaving the treated water in the loft over night, and haven't had any problem even with small youngsters in the nest. Note that the company recommends avoiding treatment if the adults are feeding small youngsters. Caution: if the weather is extremely hot and humid, as it can be in southern Ontario, I would suggest that, to be more certain of avoiding a poisoning situation, I would follow the Aussie recommendations and remove the treated water each evening after two hours or so, and replace it with fresh clean water until the next evening. Note that the dosage mentioned here is the one recommended for pigeons by the producer of Emtryl. The information presented here simply follows company recommendations for the use of Emtryl to treat or prevent canker in pigeons.

Sometimes during the racing season, performances will fall off and birds are no longer at the top of the sheet, even though they continue to look good. One possibility is that during the stresses of racing, the immune system of the birds is weakened, and canker organisms have begun to multiply. If you examine the mouths of these birds, you may see marked reddening of the tissues and excess stringy, even dirty, mucus in the back of the throat. It is possible that canker organisms have begun to multiply into the many hundreds of thousands to cause irritation of the throat. To protect the throat from the irritation and to soothe the surface, glands in the area pour out a thick mat of protective mucus. When swabs of this mucus are examined under a microscope, the material is seen to be teeming with many tumbling, wriggling canker organisms.

For those who like to medicate against these canker organisms for one or two days at the beginning of the week, every 2-3 weeks

during the racing season, it would seem advisable to use the correct dosage, that is, at the rate of 1 level teaspoon per gallon of water. Like others, I have some concerns about these short one or 2-day treatments, because of the strong possibility of resistance developing in the organism as a result of the short treatment period. However, to treat for a full five days could throw the birds completely off form, so the short term treatment period may well be the lesser of two evils. The company producing Emtryl also recommends that you do not inhale the dust, and if you get any of the powder on your hands, wash it off immediately.

Ridzol is another product that can be used in pigeons in the treatment or prevention of canker. According to Dr Kevin Zollars, the correct dosage is 1-2 teaspoons per gallon for 5-7 days. Ridzol is reported to be far superior to any other drug in the US. It seems to be less toxic and more effective than other comparable drugs in the treatment or prevention of canker. However, it seems that at this time, it is approved for pigeons only in Europe. Spartrix and Flagyl are two other drugs that seem to be useful treatments.

It is likely a good idea to change drugs each time you feel birds need to be treated, say, Emtryl for one 5-7 day treatment period, and Ridzol, for the next one, etc, all at the correct dosage. This procedure may help to avoid the development of resistance to these drugs by the canker organism – and all drugs have to be used at the correct dosage.

### **RESISTANCE TO CANKER**

One of the great problems faced by fanciers everywhere is resistance of the canker organism to a variety of treatments available to us. This problem has developed because

fanciers routinely underdose their birds (witness the use of Emtryl on the end of a toothpick, or rubbing a canker lesion with a solution of Emtryl). The answer lies in treating with the correct dosage of drug for the required number of days.

Another important issue is the matter of the resistance of pigeons to the canker organism. To begin this subject, it is a well-established fact that mild strains of the canker organism will protect birds against a deadly strain, an important point that we can use to advantage in the loft. This fact was established about 50 years ago by Dr Robert Stabler who worked with the canker organism in Colorado. He worked with several strains of the organism, including a very deadly strain that he called his 'Jones' barn strain', obtained from a wild youngster. He passed this organism by eye dropper to 119 successive, clean pigeons; so potent was this strain that 114 of the 119 birds infected with it, died of canker. Dr Stabler found that the transfer of even one organism of the Jones' barn strain to clean pigeons was capable of causing death. Obviously, the single organism multiplied rapidly to very large numbers (hundreds of thousands) in the mouth and crop of infected pigeons. Even so, mild strains of the organism were able to protect birds against this deadly strain. In general, if you haven't had a canker problem in old birds or their youngsters, especially for a few years, it is possible that there is sufficient resistance in your birds to protect them against more deadly strains. If it's not broken, don't fix it!

*The second part of 'Selected Pigeon Diseases' will follow in the next newsletter*