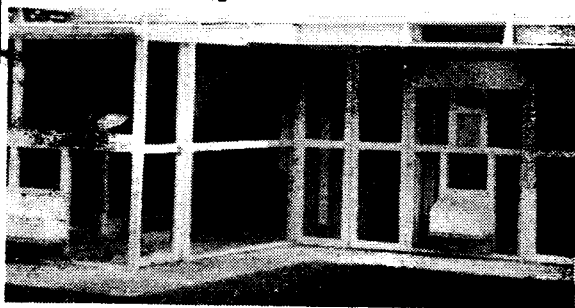


Quick rise to top ranks



In the relatively short space of 10 years Hampstead flyer Bob Blyth has established himself as one of SA's most successful racing pigeon owners.

Last season he finished second in the aggregate points of the SA Homing Pigeon Association to Allan Brown, of Lefevre.

The Hampstead club is one of the strongest in SA.

It has a membership of almost 40 and during the 1973 racing season the club raced an average of almost 500 pigeons a week.

Two of the most impressive performances of the Blyth loft during 1973 were top association honors in Temora, and a fourth in Oodnadatta.

Bob, 50, has developed a "family" of pigeons of his own, with the foundation of his loft centred on birds from the lofts of Arnold Smalacombe, a former SAHPA president and South Suburban flyer, and Vic Pape of Hampstead.

The Blyth loft won the SAHPA points in 1971, and the "blood" of the birds has been proved over all distances, and on both north and south lines.

He has been chairman of his club for six years.

The Blyth loft houses about 150 birds, and a number of these are old and proven champions, which have earned a home for life.

Bob, a master plumber, gets help in looking after his birds from his wife Joyce and son Geoff, 19.

Feeding, watering and around-the-loft training are just three of the areas in which they assist.

On hampering nights Bob

and his wife sit down and clean and oil the feet of each race bird in preparation for racing.

It's little wonder the birds like their home with the attention they receive!

Geoff Blyth drives a training trailer which carries race birds to release points on Sunday mornings.

The Blyth birds are exercised around the loft twice daily, starting in April.

They are also sent on training tosses at week-ends.

Youngsters are trained on the north to Port Wakefield line before being separated on the north and south lines.

They are then educated accordingly, with the south (east line) pigeons being worked up from Nairne and Monarto South.

Bob says he enjoys the strong competition in his club, and believes this is one of the main reasons why it is so closely knit.

The volume of owners and pigeons competing each week permits the club to offer 10 prizes a week, but only one prize can be won by an owner.

This is often three times the prizes offered in other clubs.

FOOTNOTE — The SAHPA will hold its first squeaker sale at the Henley Beach clubrooms on Sunday, with proceeds going to the building fund for new land and premises at Gepps Cross.

SA's most successful racing pigeon flyers will be represented in the extensive catalogue and the youngsters on offer are some of the best bred in SA this season. The sale will start at 10 a.m.

— GRAHAM BADGER.