

# Pigeon Notes

By  
Vin Blanden

## More Birds Bred In Australia

*The average Australian racing pigeon owner breeds many more birds than his counterpart in Belgium, France, Holland, Germany and the British Isles.*

Figures published in "Squills 1965" of annual ring sales and membership in these various countries leave no doubt that on the average, the Australian owner breeds, feeds, races and loses more pigeons every year than the European fancier.

In 1961, about 165,000 people raced pigeons in Belgium, 108,000 in the British Isles, 95,000 in Germany, 47,000 in Holland and 47,000 in France.

The average ring sales amounted to 20 rings per owner.

The lowest total was 15 in France, and the highest, 33 in Germany.

About 5,500 people, give or take two or three hundred, race pigeons in Australia, where the numbers bred each year would not vary much between the States.

Ring sales each year average about 80 per owner.

"Squills" gives no figures for the US or Japan, where pigeon racing is a popular sport so a comparison between these countries and Australia cannot be made.

In Mexico, where less than 100 owners race pigeons, had an average of 67 rings sold to each fancier — the nearest by far to Australia.

Details of other countries in relation to members and ring sales are:—Denmark 4,925 (44); Hungary 4,308 (22); Italy 4,297 (26); Yugoslavia 600 (12); Luxembourg 220 (27); Norway 200 (15); Austria 1,210 (16); Poland 23,080 (27); Portugal 11,738 (9); Spain 5,382 (14); Sweden 1,032 (23) and Switzerland 577 (43).

## Rescues

Stories concerning physically handicapped people who describe their affliction and be-

cause of a hobby have found enjoyment in life, often make news.

Many readers will know blind Victorian fancier, Norman Rees, who has met with considerable success with his birds in Melbourne.

Mr. Rees was a guest speaker at the SAHPA annual presentation fixture a few years ago.

Since then he has topped the VHA aggregate to win the Victorian "Champion of the Year" award.

This achievement was all the more remarkable, because although Mr. Rees is totally blind, he does most of the work to his birds himself.

He looks after the feeding and watering of his team and knows his pigeons as individuals by sense of touch. He is assisted by his wife and son, who carry the race team to the clubroom and clock the birds upon their arrival home.

Outside of his family life, Mr. Rees has found in his pigeons the extras in life which are enjoyed by others who have not been deprived of their eyesight.

Another instance of pigeons playing a major role in providing a few rays of sunshine comes from England.

It is provided by Mr. W. F. Price, winner of the first North of England Flying Club's National from Niort, who writes in a recent article:—

"Just over seven years ago I was struck down with rheumatoid arthritis and was paralysed. I was told by three specialists that I would be bed-fast and would never walk again. This is where my pigeons came to my rescue. No one at home knew anything about them. They were just fed and watered, but although in untold pain, I was determined that I was going to get up and look after my birds.

"It took endless energy, patience and will power, and within three months I was down stairs on two sticks with my pigeons.

"Since then, my two sticks have carried me to many countries and nearly half-way round the world."

## Weak In Legs

Two complaints have recently been made of squeakers in the West being unable to bear their weight at the time they should be moving freely about in the nest box.

Both reports of this leg weakness came from fanciers who had not provided a proper grit

ration for the breeders, and one stated that he had not fed shellgrit to his birds this breeding season because he was warned that it scratched the squeaker's throats and so caused canker.

There are many reasons for canker and there is no doubt that irritation to any part of the bird's body, internal or external, is one of them.

In most cases canker in the navel is found in squeakers which have not healed normally in that region of the body after hatching, and many a canker removed from a pigeon's body has had a splinter or similar foreign body embedded in it.

Reports of three-cornerjacks found inside throat cankers are not rare.

## Calcium

However, calcium is essential in the parent birds' diet if strong squeakers are to result and plenty of shellgrit is the easiest means of providing it.

Canker can ruin a breeding season in any loft, whether spotless or dirty, old or new, but leg weakness due to lack of calcium is never found in lofts where shellgrit is provided in ample proportions.

It must be remembered that shellgrit is not a true grit in the sense of the word, and is more or less useless as a grinding agent for the gizzard.

Gravel grit is needed to act as the bird's "teeth" and plenty of this can be found in river sand. It is a good idea to spread plenty of river sand and shellgrit over the floor of the breeding loft and feed a supply of pigeon grit, made up of the other essentials, which can be purchased ready-mixed in hoppers.

Youngsters which have been deprived of calcium at this early age are a complete loss.

## New Clubs

Two more clubs which will operate with the association next year have been formed.

One of the clubs, comprising Hills fanciers, has been formed at Aldgate, and the other at Gawler.

Sergeant W. J. Day advises that Mr. O. F. Schumann, of 24 Borral street, Woomera, brought 2007 ACS 65 to the Woomera Police Station recently.

The bird was found bleeding from the mouth and was dead on arrival.