

PIGEON NOTES

By Graham Badger

● ROSS COWLEY

Fifty-one-year-old Ross Cowley of Semaphore Park flies 50 pigeons to an 8 ft. x 6 ft. loft, but has success equal to other top "larger" flyers in the SA Homing Pigeon Combine.

He was among the top five owners in that organisation last year, and is hoping to do even better in the coming season.

Ross was a foundation member of the Osborne Pigeon Racing Club and is one of the best known flyers in the Port Adelaide area.

He now races pigeons as a member of the Peterhead club, which has 14 members. Last year he won the club's aggregate points.

Originally when Ross began in the sport he planned only to contest races on the one line. However in fairness to other owners he decided to race birds on the north and south lines.

As a result his small team has won places for him on both lines.

Main bloodlines in the Cowley loft are Mifsud-Barker, with birds coming from Sydney, and local owners Laurie Lloyd (Lefevre) and H. Dunning (retired).

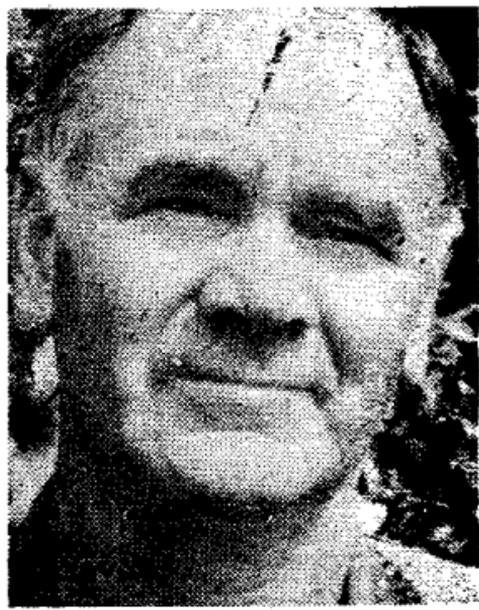
Some time ago Ross's two sons were also competing in the sport, but now only the youngest of the two, Leon, is still flying.

Ross has been living in his present home for six years, and has put into practice much of the knowledge he has gained from reading English pigeon magazines and journals.

He believes in hard training of his birds, and provides them with the best food he can obtain.

In past years Ross has exercised his pigeons twice a day around the loft. However he is experimenting this year with only once daily training.

Prior to the season each year he takes a month of his holidays from the Osborne works of ICI to train his pigeons. Every day he follows a set training pattern to educate his young birds from every direction to his home.



In between training his pigeons, and working during the day, Ross finds time to follow his second "love" gardening. His backyard is very well kept.

Ross has also had an interest in another racing sport — greyhound racing, and he has had success in this field as well.

Fifteen years ago Ross owned and trained Manatoo's Wonder, which won the Sydney Derby and ran in the Oaks.

He says he may take an interest in the sport again to "keep me fit." He says he needs the daily exercise which would be needed in walking a new dog.

However Ross has no intention of giving up the ground he has made in the game of pigeon racing.

The release point of Maryborough on the Combine South line has proved a particularly good one for birds from the Cowley loft.

He won the Derby from that point three years ago, and was placed 11th, 2nd and 14th in past seasons. And the most important thing to note about these performances is that the placegetters were from the same blood.

An outcross of local blood to the imported Sydney birds has proved the winning ingredient, and Ross has mated his breeding birds up the same way again this season in expectation of further good results.