

A BRIEF INSIGHT INTO THE WARDS GRIZZLES

The Grizzles on offer are known as the Snowy Ward Grizzles and were purchased off Frank Comitogianni who had outstanding results with them. They arrived in Sydney from England about 1900 and were imported by Mr. Con Hanam who owned the Camilla Grove Hotel in Erskineville, an inner suburb of Sydney. It was about 1917-1920 that Snowy Ward took over the entire loft of Grizzles from Mr. Hanam.

Snowy Ward lived in the same suburb as Mr. Hanam and were very close friends. There were some very dark chocolate coloured pigeons amongst the Grizzles. When Snowy raced the Grizzles they were an instant success, winning many prestigious races over 400 miles and still are today. Snowy Ward was from all accounts a very generous man and gave pigeons to many different pigeon fanciers, including Mr. McLean, a very famous name in Australian Pigeon Racing. Mr. McLean only took the Bronze Pigeons or Checkers and I believe that is where the so called Bronze McLeans came from.

Another very interesting story about Snowy Ward was that his backyard backed onto a railway yard where all the steam trains met from all over the country to repair, turn around and head back to the Country. While train drivers were waiting for their train to load up with coal and repairs, which took a few days, they were known to go to Snowy Ward's loft and were given a pair of Grizzles to take home and that is how the Grizzles spread all over the Country.

Snowy Ward sounds like the old timers or a Pigeon Man we would have all liked to have known, a man who put friends and mates before pigeons. I would also like to point out that a few of these Grizzles went to Taiwan a few years ago and one Grizzle Cock bred the biggest winner in Taiwan. I have seen the pigeon and it won over 1 million Taiwanese dollars. (20 Australian \$ to 1 Taiwan \$)

The Grizzles and the Mozaics have a very strong constitution, big hearts and will keep going. They will go the distance as they have proved time and time again over the last 60 years, but to compete in today's competition they need some speed pigeons crossed into them.

SUCCESS WITH STAFF VAN REET

At my 2006 Brisbane auction, Mr Ken Tucker of Rockhampton Queensland purchased a Staff Van Reet at the Brisbane auction. It was a very wise selection as this young hen produced for Ken the winner of the Best Western Mallee Classic One Loft Race shown on this months front cover. This winning pigeon took home a prize of \$10000 and a further \$1500 in pools along with the accolade of being the events Champion Queensland Ace Bird and Champion Overall Ace Bird.

THE PIGEONS OF MAURICE CASAERT

The first thing this is very interesting is that Maurice Casaert only kept about 15 pair of stock pigeons, a very close knit family and all looked alike. Their main feature is that Maurice Casaert bred for pigeons with good pectoral muscle and it shows when you handle them. The Casaert's excel from 400 mile onwards. Late last year Maurice Casaert sold out his entire loft of pigeons, so you cannot buy from the Casaert loft now. The Taiwan pigeon flyers purchased 65 pigeons out of a total of about 200 pigeons. They received over 250,000 Euros in total. When I was in Taiwan in November last year the 05 pigeons had just arrived from Belgium and I was able to inspect them. I was also able to get my hands on a catalogue as well plus a copy of the pedigrees of his three National winners which I will put on display at my auction for those interested in Casaerts. The interesting thing is the pedigrees for his National winners is almost the same as the Casaerts that I am putting up for auction. One of the main pigeons in the Casaert line is LA BELLE DESEYN 628179 87 and that pigeon shows up a number of times in my Casaerts. Also invincible Montauban National winner by 20 min 1992 5335 pigeons is also in my Casaerts pedigree.

DESMET MATTHIJS FOR THE TOUGH ONES

The February 2007 issue of the Journal featured Geoff & Bill Parker of Shepparton who purchased a number of pigeons at my 2006 Melbourne and Brisbane auctions. These pigeons have brought them instant success and played a big part in making them the Goulburn Valley Pigeon Club Aggregate winners for 2007 in just their second year of racing. Some of the performances these pigeons produced for the Parkers are as follows: A Blue Checker Hen won 3rd prize 500 miles only 4 home a smash race. - Three birds homed from 600 mile smash race one a Desmet-Matthijs cross-One bird home from 700 miles smash race a Desmet-Matthijs cross. There will be Desmet-Matthijs in all my 2008 Auctions bred the same as the parents of Mr. Geoff Parkers. Mr Geoff Parker also won races with Houbens whose parents were also purchased from Barry Devine's Phoenix Lofts.

Desmet-Matthijs in stock: BCHAust-02-8678 only pool bird home Young Bird Derby smash of the west 500 km in 2003, 1500 birds competed less than 50 got home. Aust. 02 8678 won \$3000. in pools on the day. Also in stock is BCH SH-04-2015-500km combine winner, also 1st two bird combine winner, and first in the Seven Hills Squeaker sale race \$6000.

The Desmet-Matthijs pigeons are extremely intelligent pigeons. They are very quiet pigeons that think for themselves. In bad circumstances they always seem to come through. I won a 500 mile combine in 2005 from Bairnsdale by a very big margin and the only way this hen could have achieved this result was to cut from the race team and fly a long way on her own. Her Grandfather won a race from Batemans Bay NSW (350km south of Wollongong) into Brisbane and this does happen with the Desmet-Matthijs pigeons as Mr Geoff Parker also found out.

THE GOODGERS

I sold all the Goodgers in 2006. I kept the Grant Paterson pair and one hen from Bill Walford which contains all the good **red hen 494 blood** who was off Lot 60. Bill contacted me before the 2006 sale and told me not to let these three Goodgers go as I will never be able to replace them. The best advice I could have received. As so much publicity came out about the Goodgers later in the Journal. The three I kept have all the right blood in them Lot 53, Lot 60, the Lincoln Cock have a look at the pedigree's. I have had the Grant Patterson pair for some time. I received them from John Share and I have hardly bred off them mainly because they do not seem to race all that good in Sydney. They did breed me a smash winner in I think 2001 from Grafton 500km. A lot of pigeons were lost that year. That pigeon won over \$6000 in the Liverpool Squeaker sale race and one other hen got home from a very bad race on the west when a north westerly came up and the pigeons were blown into Victoria. After that I did not breed much from them. The young pigeons that I did breed off in 2007 are very nice pigeons and most will be sold in the **Melbourne, and Adelaide 2008 Auctions.**

Interestingly the cock is now 12 years old and does not miss an egg, all fertile. Lot 53 shows up three times and Lot 60 3 times in their pedigree, same as these were John Prior's No. 1 pair.

I am told they do not come any better, **as good as they get.**

The Black Racing Pigeon By Barry Devine

What is their true identity and where did they originate from? About 4 years ago I set about trying to acquire a few pairs of quality Black Pigeons with a good track record. I found out very quickly that this would be a very difficult task indeed. In 4 years I have only managed to acquire 5 good ones that have raced or bred winners over four hundred mile.

With patience and time I have now put together a very nice family of Blacks. The one family that stands out that raced extremely well in Sydney for well over 30 years were known as the Hargraves (Gilson Blacks). The Hargraves' have passed on now and ceased racing some time in the late 60's and 70's. It is a known fact that they won more Nationals and Combine's with the Blacks than any other flyers off that time I have been told.

One very famous Black Pigeon in Sydney was owned by Harry Appleby and known as the Black Prince, bred many outstanding pigeons in his day, the 70's and early 80's. This pigeon would be down of the Hargraves Blacks. Peter Condran tells me that his Mother took him to Hargraves as a teenager to buy him a pair of Blacks which surprisingly he still have some of these in his lofts today and Peter tells me they have bred him his biggest winners. Some were sent to Melbourne and raced by a Mr. Winston Cummings and won good races in the VHA. Sid Webster raced Blacks to Tasmania and took prizes with them up to 900 km. Mick Dashwood of Deniliquin had Blacks from Sydney and were known as Micks Mighty Blacks and excelled over the distance. Mick bred the winner of the Victoria Statewide 700 mile race from Coongoola in 2001. The winning pigeon was a Blue Checker was off Mick's Blacks.

This brings us to the question who was Gilson? After a lot of research I discovered that Gilson Blacks were developed by a Mr. Gilson of Antwerp in Belgium in the 1870's and were all purchased by a Mr. J.O. Allen and taken back to England. The Gilson Blacks of J.O. Allen as they became known, played a very big part in the establishment of so many families of pigeons in England as a cross. One example was J.W. Logan who used the Gilson Blacks to develop his strain.

J.O. Allen was also one of the first to import the Gits Pigeons into England. One interesting point is that J.W. Logan's Old 86 was the first pigeon to do 400 miles on the day across the Channel in 1886, his dam was a Gits Hen- 646 a gift from J.O. Allen. This record however was very quickly broken by J.O. Allen's Champion Cock in the same year. It flew 459 miles in 9 hours 30 minutes at 1422 ypm, a record which stood for many years, while Allen's Champion Hen (1/2 Gilson) ran 5th in this same race. There are pages of recorded wins by J.O. Allen's Black Gilsions over many years in England. In 1907 stud register of the great pigeons of the time, of the 900 pigeons listed no less than 212 were descendants of Allens champion pair. It is interesting to note that J.O. Allen was also one of the Chief collaborators with J.W. Logan and Col Colville in forming the first organisation of the sport into clubs for competitive racing in England. Getting back to the Hargraves Black Pigeons in Sydney, it is not clear when they arrived in Sydney but it would be clear to say in the late 1930's I would think.

The Blacks I have put together I have no doubt are down from those Hargraves Black Gilsions,. They are medium size pigeons, and very uniform type. The Gilson Black in the photo is very similar to the present day Blacks that I have put together, maybe not as tailey as the one in the photo. Many thanks must go to Ron Whitford of Bendigo for supplying most of the information on the Gilson Blacks for this article.