

Denis and Lesley Cornish



Became interested in pigeons at the age of 12 after buying a pair of pigeons from a classmate. They cost 2/6 or 2 shillings. From then on has been interested in anything concerning pigeons. Has raced from the same location since 1997. Started to become interested after a neighbour (Ron Harris) took him along to the North East Invitation Club. Alan Thede and Allan Brown were big help early on as well. Denis's wife is his flying partner. When he worked afternoon and night shift she looked after the birds and on week-ends also cleaned the loft. Retired now, Denis thinks you still have to have the pigeons for the "job" – but being retired

time is not an issue – but money does become one. He also gets help from Peter Pollard, especially when vaccinating. His son Tony Cornish (Bowen / Cornish partnership) has also been a big help especially after recovering from a hospital stay.

The Alice Springs winner's sire is all Allen Goodger, the parents having come from Allan Thede. The dam is $\frac{3}{4}$ Alan Brown and one quarter John O'Donnell (Goodger).

Denis has had some success with the longer races as with his favorite pigeon – SA07 06076 BBH having gained 11th Alice Springs 2000, 3rd Alice Springs 2011 and 1st Glendambo 2008 (club). He has had a few good clubs wins (not too many according to him) but 1st Marla in 1996 SAHPA and mid-week Iron Knob 2nd, Marree 3rd in 96 and 1st Carrieton in 94 come to mind. He likes flyers to have good sportsmanship. Doesn't really care if it's hard or slow – a winner is a winner. Just likes any race with a bit of distance. But the wind does make a difference.

Alice Springs positions over the years: 7th (1975), 10th (1984), 20th (1988), 21st (1989), 26th (1990), 31st (1993), 20th (1996), 13th (2004), 19th (2005) and was first cock bird clocked, 11th (2010) and 3rd (2011) with 06076 also 14th (2010) and 1st and 27th in 2015.

Has had some memorable moments in racing – 1st Marla 1996 Assoc, 11th Alice 2010 with the same bird and 3rd Alice Springs in 2011 (to Ken Watson). His advice to a beginner: patience and to enjoy pigeons and the racing.

Can the imported birds compete at distance? Well he has SA07 06076 BBH Janssen with 11th and 3rd Alice Springs (small per cent Van Loon). Another Janssen / Allan Brown (50/50) earned 13th Alice Springs. However, his days of buying pigeons are over and if new introductions would come then they would be from Allan Thede (Goodgers).

Feeding and Medications: Denis mixes his own feed but buys John Pryor small seed mix from Gilbertson's. Has tried pellets on his stock birds in the past. Likes to increase the carbohydrate by adding a big percentage of maize as the races get longer. Uses garlic oil and garlic bulb crushed in water, also apple cider vinegar and cold liver oil on seed. Feeds barley in moderation - mainly the stock birds. Worming is done prior to racing and during racing. Also adds Troy Vite B



Bloomford Epowder (Rob Marhsall) and Beyers Prote-inna (brewer's yeast). Vitamins and probiotics are used during the year.

Breeding

He used to put a pigeon straight into the stock loft but now has the view that they are there to race. Also doesn't really like keeping prisoners so tries to keep all his stock birds flying out. Would keep about six pair of stock birds at any time. The bloodlines are basically Alan Brown x Allen Goodger (Thede) and then bred around this. About 50 or 60 birds are available for this season – next year approx. 40 young birds. Pairing up is done on the 1st September or thereabouts with approx. 12 pair. Keeps around 12 stock birds (flying out), old birds around 18 1-2 year olds and approx. 60 young birds. Denis thinks some people are born with a “gift” of knowing what is a good stock bird. He would only breed off an old hen for stock. The oldest he would keep is 2007.

The Loft, racing and training

Denis likes the idea of having the loft elevated off the ground to have air-circulation between the ground and the loft floor. He has three sections in his loft for ease of catching birds when training. The loft faces north-east and the sections are 17 ft. x 5 ft 5 in. x 6 ft. high. Cleaning of the loft is haphazard offseason but regular when racing is underway.



The type of bird preferred is a medium size but mainly it's consistency in performance. Training in the racing season, early on, is twice a day around the house. Two training tosses on the Assoc. unit per week and later on in the season when numbers drop he trains privately – any direction against the wind. Birds are trained relatively hard but

late in the season mainly short tosses. Hens and cocks are not separated, only the stock birds about one and a half months before pair up. Has never tried widowhood.

The Future and a couple of tips

The old transport unit served the SAHPA members for a number of years but now is the time to move on. Professionally made overseas by professionals should be the answer. Still undecided on the pre-paid system but time will tell. E-vitol – wheat germ oil for stock birds. And bath water – condys crystals, Fino bath salts (Beyer) and common table salt. He also let slip he keeps the birds drinking water in a bucket for three days before he puts in out for drinking.

