

SYDNEY NOTES.

Ryde and District F.C. showed a satisfactory balance sheet at their recent annual meeting, and as this Club paid from £4 to £7 prize money per race, and also had the whole of their liberation expenses, which were heavy, in addition, the Club officials are to be congratulated. It is anticipated that the Club will largely increase its membership this season. It has been decided upon to fly the Mildura route.

The special ring race from Naran-dera, 270 miles, is a thing of the past. 900 odd yearlings were liberated at 7 a.m. on Saturday, 17th inst., to race for the £70 offered in prize money. The weather was kind, and a south-east breeze helped the birds; consequently many birds homed before their owners, and wives had to get busy. Mr. L. Davies clocked the winner shortly after 12 p.m., and Mr. T. Richmond follows him very close for 2nd prize, both members of the Leichhardt Club. Another Leichhardt man, flying with Old Sydney's, fills 3rd place—Mr. W. Parkinson. Both Mr. Davies and Mr. Richmond had a field day; they sent only one bird each in the ring race, winning first and second, and in the Leichhardt Club Championship Race, flown the same day from the same race point, Mr. Richmond wins first and Mr. Davies second. We hope to publish photos of the winning birds in our next issue.

Mr. J. Imlay won the Cootamundra smash race in Leichhardt Club with a Grooter and Wormald, Long-gun, Lady Pirie, Hansenne Logan and Hansenne Ward, Plintinckx and Barker; he had two birds home on the day.

SOUTH COAST NOTES.

The Colelale Homing Pigeon Society held their race from Cootamundra on 3rd November 1917, which was a smash. The birds struck bad weather. There were a great many birds lost. One member got two home out of seventeen. Mr. Kitching had bad luck; he left home a little after 6 o'clock to go to the Club rooms to take charge of the clocks that were in, and then went to the picture show at night and on arrival home at 11 o'clock discovered two birds home. Had he clocked in he would have got second and half third place. He had two hens home on Monday shot. I think something should be done for the protection of our birds from pot hunters. I think they should be somewhere in France having a crack at the Huns. They might make good snipers; if not, they will get plenty of practice there, and it will be doing our birds a good turn, and leave them only the hawks to dodge. There has been a number of complaints among our members about their birds being shot of late. I think it is about time the Government stepped in and had a shot at the pests that waylay our birds on their way home on race day. If the Government would give a reward I feel sure that there is someone who would keep a sharp look out to catch them, seeing that the Government can claim all birds under the War Precautions Act.

OULD DARKEY.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NOTES.

The South Australian Homing Pigeon Association flew the last of the series of five races promoted by them for the 1917 season from Albury on October 27th. The birds left Adelaide in charge of Mr. H. E. Niharn, who had instructions to release them early on Saturday if the weather was favorable. Unfortunately the weather on Saturday was such that it necessitated holding the birds over until Sunday morning, when they were released at 6 a.m. in a fine clear light west wind. The weather in S.A. was very boisterous on the Saturday preceding the day of liberation, the wind blowing very strongly from the west with occasional heavy driving showers of rain. It is a query if Sunday, the day of liberation, was any better than Saturday so far as the wind was concerned. It certainly did not rain, which is no doubt an advantage to the birds. On Monday morning the wind was blowing from the north-east, which would help the birds along somewhat. However, looking at the race from the returns, it cannot be called a great success, and, following on the big smash from Melbourne, it means a severe blow to many fanciers. Many birds which had done the distance on more than one occasion failed to get through this time.

BRUNSWICK HOMING CLUB NOTES.

The old bird season has closed, and members are now looking forward to the young bird series, which will start in earnest towards the end of January.

The Club has had a most successful year, and more birds have been sent to the race points than in any previous season.

The weather conditions have been extraordinary, for although the wind has frequently been blowing from the south during the week, at the time of liberation it has been almost without exception from the north, with the result that the birds have had more assistance than most fanciers desire. The last race from Hammond was an exception, for we had a very strong head wind and showers, with the result that most birds were lost, and only two birds were home in the day from the whole of Melbourne's clubs, and very few more arrived on the Sunday.

The Brunswick Club must be congratulated in having the six positions filled before the close of the second day, and two of its members fill 2nd and 6th positions in the Federation race.

J. Linane's good red chequer cock, which put up the remarkable performance of flying Hammond in the day, and securing 1st Club and 2nd Federation, was bred from a cock of Read and Curtis blood, and a hen Read and Brooks.

H. Balfe's winner from Yarcowie is a Harrison (of Oakmoor), bred from birds sent from Sydney by T. Richmond. Three sisters to the winner flew the same journey, and were all home within a few minutes of each other, and have all been in the clock during the season.

—Press Correspondent.

SIGHT v. INSTINCT.

In your first issue of the "A.R.P." was an article by P. John on "Sight v. Instinct," a subject which no doubt deals with two of the most vital factors in the Racing Pigeon. It is a subject which I was pleased to see, and hope to read more about. But one thing I noticed was that our friend did not dwell much on the sight of the Homing Pigeon, but kept to the instinct, and thus left one portion of his article at rest. Our friend refers to Mr. Logan being unequivocal in his opinion that there is nothing in it but observation. I do not take kindly to this as being the only factor that the Homing Pigeon depends on for guidance. Observation no doubt is a big bite out of the apple, but at the same time has little bearing on the actual sight, but a greater bearing on its wonderful memory. For instance, if we toss an uneducated bird 100 miles from its loft, what will be the result? It is beyond its power of vision, it observes plenty of landmarks, and transfers them to its memory, but probably never reaches home, or, if it should reach home after a long time, what was its power of guidance? Authorities such as Dr. Barker, Edgar Chamberlain, and many others, advocate training birds at 1, 2, 4, 8, and 10 miles, so on, up to 50 miles, and plenty of tosses at the shorter stages when the birds are young. Why? My personal view of this is that the first stage is within an easy range of vision, and they are gradually trained at the other stages to extend their power of vision, at the same time taking observations such as landmarks, and probably the position of the sun. For instance, some birds may be trained to fly from the east of their loft in the west, or, in other words, flying from the sun, and vice versa. Thus it is feasible to believe that the sun acts as the compass for the Homing Pigeon, and here we get the assistance of observation. There is no doubt that in a good many cases the old bird helps the youngster up to a given point. I have trained young birds up to 89 miles, and then sent them to the 225 miles stage at nine months' old, and have been successful, and, as they were trained privately, I know there were no old birds to help them on, but were always trained in the one direction, namely, flying to the sun. Science has proved that the power of vision or actual sight of the homing pigeon is 50 miles, and that it can see and recognise its own loft at 25 miles. This probably accounts for the training at short stages within its power of vision, while the power of observation is developing. So much for sight.

If a racing pigeon does not possess reason, or instinct, what forces it to extend its power of vision in search of its home, or what compels it to take observations as a guide to its home? I will not try to answer this question, but feel satisfied in myself that the Homing Pigeon possesses both instinct and reason, or some such powers which are developed by careful training and education. A child is born with many talents which would remain dormant if the child were not educated and trained for the work that is in store. When man set himself the task to produce a fast, long distance racing pigeon, he found it necessary to introduce various crosses to secure a high standard in each of the necessary forces required in the Homing Pigeon. And I venture to say that the development of the homing instinct is still dependent on man.

In closing this article I would like to add my congratulations to you in producing such a valuable paper as the "A.R.P." as I feel sure it is the means of setting the pigeon racing men thinking, and thereby taking keener interest in the sport.

W. J. REYNOLDS.

It is after a hard fly the master hand nurses his birds, rests them all he can, and gradually coaxes them back into form again. If they recover quickly, and if they show no signs of trouble in the subsequent moult, it is a fancier's own fault should such a bird fail the following season.