

Peter Blaser

1st SAHPA Hay 3-bird Special 2004

Back in the 1960's Peter Blaser was a founding member of the Strathalbyn Districts Homing Club. At it's peak there were 16 members. Now there are three.

Peter says that's an indication of how hard it has become trying to fly pigeons in the country.

He remembers the day when he lived away from the town. He would complain to the other flyers about a pair of peregrine falcons that decimated his team. His town club-mates would not believe him. Now there are at least five pairs of peregrines in the area plus black hawks as well. Eventually the town-based members found out that Peter was telling the truth. Eventually Peter's birds worked out they had to exercise away from the loft to be safe.

Peter Blaser has been forced to develop a family of pigeons that will fly on their own without the protection of a flock.

His Hay 3-bird winner is a nephew of a bird that won him the Willcania cock's special by 100 meters

a minute. It is off his Jack Metcalf family mated to a Janssen purchased as an egg from John Hofman.

When Peter obtained his Metcalf pigeons in the 80's they were made up of Smuts and Goodgers. These pigeons are renowned for their toughness although Peter says they show up from Keith right through to Bathurst weather it be headwinds or tail winds.

On the day he won Hay he clocked his open bird and his 3-bird winner came in next, only 11 minutes later despite being released a day later. It was a very good sign.

Peter Blaser is a serious competitor despite the obvious disadvantages of living off line.

He says the first thing you notice in the country is that in some races you are inexplicably two hours behind when you should only be 20 minutes. It is nowhere near as predictable as city racing

Merv Hatch

1st SAHPA Hay Derby

The marvelous thing about pigeon flying is that age does not necessarily weary them.

Take 85-year-old Merv Hatch as an example. He has won two SA East line Derbies in the past five years proving you're never too old. Perhaps we simply get too lazy.

Merv Hatch has been flying for 58 years. He served in the Army during the Second World War spending five years in the islands above Australia. He had spent his childhood near Port Pirie. He's always felt a strong link with the land and animals.

Most of his working life he worked as a butcher and he made a success of opening up new shops, getting them operating well and then selling them.

That explains many of his moves. In pigeons, he has flown in a number of clubs - Torrensville, West Torrens Port Adelaide, Henley and Grange and finally Onkaparina.

The competition at Henley was red hot with club mates Bill Verco and Stan Ferguson always hard to beat but the club broke up when a 10 bird limit came in.

Later Merv and the late Tommy Jackson were able to negotiate the lease of club rooms at the Lockkeys Oval for the West Torrens club, The club is still in those rooms today. When Merv retired in 1980 he and his wife moved to Mount Barker just out of town on the Strathalbyn Road. More recently they have shifted to a housing development at Littlehampton where he had room for 150 birds.

He found the hawks a challenge when first flying in the hills but they have learnt to tolerate each other. Merv feels the falcons are at their worst at Callington, Birdwood and Hahndorf. Most Eastern tossers would agree with that. Merv has always liked the distance races and has now won three Derbies among his 12 or 13 Association wins. When it was first claimed Merv had clocked his Dordin cock from Hay it was difficult to accept as he was an hour in front of many lofts. His Dordins are from the late Ray McDonald of Port Augusta via his good pal Rob Wilson.

Merv feels the Dordins are very good in the hard races and others that have had this family would certainly agree.

The sire of the blue chequer cock that scored from Hay has now left two Sahpa winners. When mated to a Janssen hen he fathered a blue chequer to win the SA Derby on the East Line. The same cock bred 5th alice Springs.

Merv is sorry that he has lost most of his old blood and he now concentrates on Busschaerts and Dordins.

He has three Association winners in the loft. Rob Wilson's Marla winner was bred from Merv's Busschaerts and has ben gifted to him.

It is a tribute to Merv Hatch's pigeon expertise and knowledge that some of his finest performances have been in his eighties.

He is a sparkling example to his peers.