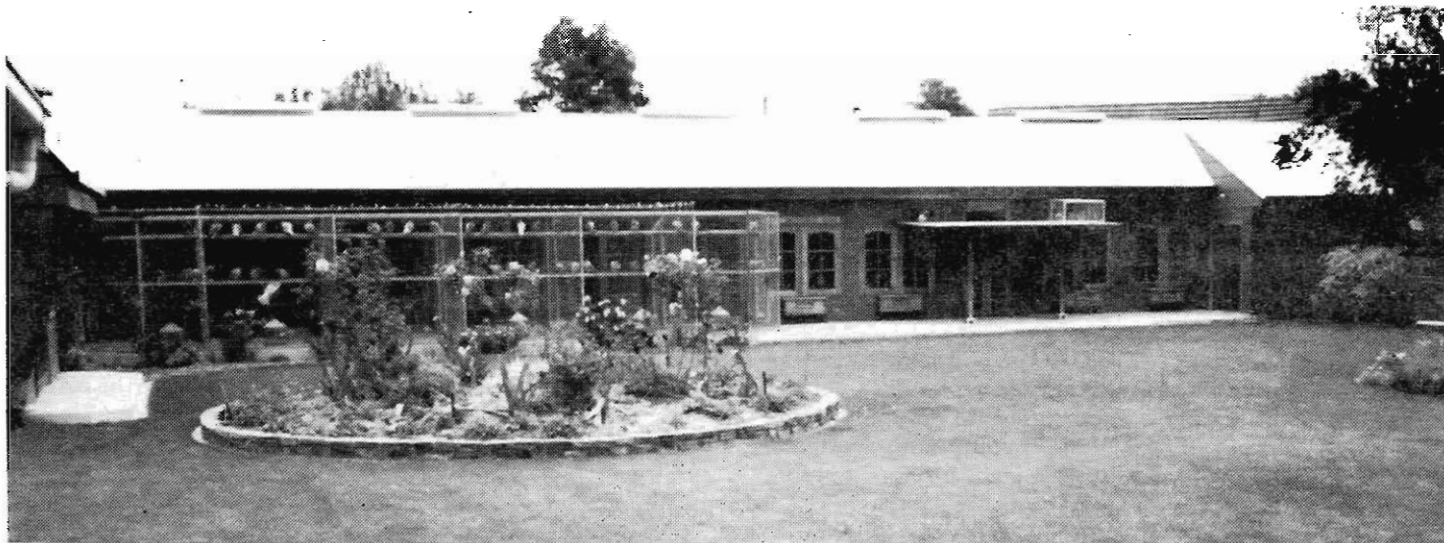


A VISIT TO ROSS HOCKING OF ADELAIDE

by JAN PEARSON



An overall view of Ross Hocking's Pigeon Palace

Whilst in Adelaide on holiday staying with friends Jill and Charlie Forbes of Paralowie, Kevin and I had the pleasure of visiting the racing and breeding lofts of Ross Hocking who has shifted to Broadview.

As can be seen by the photos of the loft, it is a very large loft located on grounds surrounded by lawns and gardens. For the last two years Ross has been constructing the loft and re-establishing the lawn and garden to his exacting standards. The lofts feature a pitched roof which allows plenty of ventilation and the stock loft has a grill mesh floor for hygiene. Ross stated that in his travels both in Australia and Overseas he constructed the loft in his mind many years ago, but did not have the time or the space to construct his "Pigeon Heaven". Ross was quick to point out that a good environment was only one of the requirements for enjoying your pigeons, pigeons will come to a fruit box on the wall.

After looking in awe at what must be pigeon heaven, we were invited to look at the stock birds. Like the loft, the birds were unbelievable being of the highest standard I believe money can buy anywhere in Australia.

The birds which have not been flown a full season at Broadview as yet are based on the best that could be bought at Allen Goodger's sale and at Keith Wickham's sale, also Stef Orfanos' pigeons were crossed into the Goodgers with excellent



Close up view of Ross Hocking's Pigeon Palace

results when Ross flew in the strong Woodville Club. Ross has never been afraid to purchase a good bird from a sale anywhere in Australia, nor is he afraid to part with any of these if they do not perform. At Croydon, under a lemon tree, Ross planted many so called champion producing pigeons.

The Allen Goodger pigeons Ross purchased were hand picked by this master and his cousin Grant Paterson. Allen received a lot of pleasure seeing his birds win for Ross and openly stated that this was keeping him alive as he would go down to Ross's loft to inspect the new crop of youngsters, unfortunately Allen passed away before Ross shifted to Broadview and did not see his new racing set-up.



Ross Hocking's Pigeon Office

When Keith Wickham decided to finally hang up the scraper, Ross was quick to arrange an appointment to view all of the Wickham birds at Keith's home in conjunction with Keith's lifetime friend Bill Verco. As with the Goodger birds Ross purchased the very best of the Wickham birds which anyone who attended the sale would know, buying all the birds he set out to buy under Keith's guidance, they truly are magnificent pigeons. When you consider Keith won nineteen Federations, why would they not be magnificent?

The Keith Wickham family of pigeons have won many Federation prizes in all states of Australia and are keenly sought after, Ross states that they are without any doubt the best imported family of pigeons in Australia today.

We asked Ross as to what he thought about the new imported pigeons which were now available in Australia, and after some thought Ross stated that he likened them to our Prime Minister Mr Keating... yet to prove themselves. We were surprised to then be shown a couple of Janssen birds from the first Ponderosa shipment, likewise a pair of Stichelbaut, a Cobut Hen and a Van Wan Roy cockbird. Ross then showed us Janssen pigeons (3 of) he purchased at the Louella sale in Sydney. Ross paid a lot of money for these pigeons but is sure that if any of the imports are going to fire consistently in this country it will be these pigeons sold in Sydney as the winners are close in the bloodlines of the pigeons sold, which as Jim Biss of Brundall, Norwich England told Ross during his visit to this mecca of pigeons in the U.K. that the good fruit never falls far from the tree. Ross believes firmly in this statement and it has been proven by the Goodger and Wickham families.

Although Ross has flown only four races to his new location, it has not been without success. In his first race to Broadview he was 2nd club, and 10th in the strong Hampstead/North Suburban Group from Little Topar 480km and 30th SAHPA after a 4 minute trap. At his next and last flight on the 1.9.90 his beautiful BBPH "Miss Victoria" was 1st club, 1st group, 1st SAHPA Emmdale St.Ledger 634km. Ross received a tremendous thrill winning this race but states his biggest thrill was seeing his great friend Robert Saggars of Altona Victoria clock in from the National Race last year, the 700 mile race from St. George in Queensland. Robert won the National and also finished 13th with both pigeons being bred from pigeons Ross had given to Robert. Robert's first five birds were bred from Ross's gift birds over the years, all were Allen Goodger based pigeons. Ross felt as much of a winner as Robert and was pleased for Robert as he had bred "Miss Victoria".

I would like to thank Charlie for taking us to meet Ross as I know Ross is a very private person.

Ross's advice to anybody purchasing pigeons is - never be afraid to pay good money for a pigeon, as a cheap pigeon nine times out of ten turns out to be expensive and no good to anyone. Also, if you want a particular family of blood, go straight to the fountainhead, not to people who say they have this blood or that blood. Be very careful and remember the old saying "buyer beware". I tried to draw Ross out on this, however he declined. I am sure we all got the message Ross.

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NATIONAL RACE RULES - Continued from Page 12.

22. Any competitor returning a clock with the seal not intact, except where broken in conformity with Rule 18, will forfeit all rights, privileges and claims for that race.

23. No smoking is to be permitted at tables where clocks are being opened and tapes are being read.

24. Race velocities will be corrected to the third decimal place and calculated in metres per minute.

25. The SAHPA will provide a trophy to the Open winner of the race.

Further details to be advised later.

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