

PIGEON FANCIERS' GAZETTE

South Australian Homing Pigeon Association Inc.

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Picture: S.A.H.P.A. Ring Secretary Brian Healy
Fires up the "barbie" on one of his many conveying treks

• Can the Import Compete? • Chief Sitting Bull • Reg Muller Dominates Sprint
Racing • Wentworthville - Celebrate with Fear • Back to Basics • Holland's No.1
Day Racer

TEETAKA INVITATION HOMING PIGEON CLUB

will be holding their "First"
PRESENTATION & SQUEAKER SALE
on Sunday November 12th at 12.00 noon

As we are a new club any donations of squeakers or stock birds would be greatly appreciated.

"Please" advise us with the numbers wishing to attend by the 31st Oct. 1995.

**A Barbecue lunch and drinks
will be provided.**

Further Information contact

Lyn Starick (085) 682 249

OR

Dawn Rainsford (085) 246 360

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

by Andrew Carrington

There are plenty of people writing articles about all facets of pigeon racing but really does everyone understand the basic principles that this sport is based upon.

The ones I want to touch on briefly here are:-

1. The homing instinct of a pigeon
2. The velocity system
3. Loft surveys

I write these articles in an effort to get members interested in how their sport works. To make people think about why we do things or why they are done. The rest is up to you. Whilst you're sitting there waiting for your birds to return from a race, kick these ideas around. Maybe you will come up with a better way of doing things which will improve our sport as a whole. Even if you don't, you will have a better understanding of how it works. After all, this is how the early pigeon fanciers created the sport as we know it today. It's about time we did our part in its evolution.

Anyhow, let's tackle the hardest of the three points first. The homing instinct. Countless pages have been written about the homing instinct of pigeons and other migratory birds. Even so, we still don't fully understand exactly how they orientate and navigate. It appears they use a combination of magnetic compass sun placement and sight. All we need to know is that our pigeons have an in built homing instinct which man has developed and refined over the years through continuous testing and selection. If we let our pigeons out at a point they will do their best to fly home to our loft as quickly and directly as possible.

Now comes the part that man has developed to stimulate his competitive nature. The velocity system and its underlying principle of the system of surveying.

The velocity system is a mathematical equation which basically divides the flying time by the distance from the release point to a flyers loft and gives an average velocity result. The system is based on the assumption that race pigeons will fly a straight line between the release point and an individual flyers loft and that they fly at a continuous velocity.

Surveys. Now comes the interesting part. The velocity system is based on two major assumptions. One, that pigeons fly at a continuous speed from release to clocking and two, that the straight line distance between the point of release and a flyers loft is the actual course that the birds fly home. Pretty big assumption! In fact we know that neither of these two points totally true. Time wasted at the point of liberation, whilst the birds orientate themselves, means that they are actually flying faster than their average velocity when they return home. The more time lost at liberation, the more this can affect a race. Back markers can get an advantage. Hang on, I had better stick with one of my own principles: Don't make criticisms unless you can recommend a solution! Maybe the liberation time used for calculating velocities could be the time the first kit clears?

Back to the second assumption. The birds fly a straight line between the liberation and a flyers loft. Line of flight is always a contentious issue. Flyers who live on the west side of any Fed will always complain about the wind affecting a race and let's not kid ourselves it does! Still, I wouldn't feel guilty because I lived east of anybody that would be damn stupid but I will acknowledge that on certain days I get added assistance. What can we do about it? Now this one I can't answer. Maybe some whiz kid surveyor can come up with a co-efficient system, that can be applied in relation to the strength and direction of the wind, so that our distances can more truly represent the actual line of flight. With everybody using computer technology, the old excuse of it being too hard to work out just doesn't stand. Scary though, giving away your advantage. *Food for thought!*

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FOCUS TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000

While reading through the interesting articles in the June Gazette, the thought occurred to me that if your sport is to both grow and prosper in the 21st century, then we need to be giving much more focus towards a number of important issues facing us now. Not the least of which is good future race programming. As I see the situation at present, the whole question of success or otherwise of our sport will depend on this very important issue.

We can no longer assume that because we raced such and such a programme back in say 1977, or even as recent as 1989, that we will be able to successfully do the same today. In recent times, many changes have taken place in the earth's atmosphere that are having an impact on our birds in-built navigation system.

The situation is now so extreme that on the East line for example, our little warriors, in trying to navigate their way home, have in many instances flown hundreds of miles in all directions other than the right one. In fact, back in 1989, when I last raced, between the birds losing their sense of direction and the danger of clashing with other big Federations (Qld, Vic and NSW which all race in that direction) the East line was then becoming almost impossible to fly.

I have included a proposed programme for 1996, together with some suggestions and reasons for the same.

I suggest that we race along the South East coast for the following reasons:

1. With the sea on one side, the birds should be able to orientate better and will also have at least a 50% chance of keeping clear of the hawks.
2. Like on the North West line, we will in the main have the sky to ourselves.
3. It will be much easier and safer for most of us to train along the coast. I have never lost a pigeon from Maslins beach, but I couldn't count the losses I've had training through the dangerous, hawk infested hills.

"A later start and a 20 week programme"

4. This programme commences six weeks later than this year's, for I consider that it is simply suicide to start racing before the shortest day of the year has passed, as the sun's rays are at their weakest and on certain days a bird's orientation can be almost zilch. This later start will also be of great help to those who are working, for they get more daylight time to train their birds.

5. The twenty week programme is generally recognised as the most suitable for both the birds and the fancier.

"On the day racing"

6. Other than Mt Willoughby, there is every chance that all races can be flown on the day, and if conditions are favourable,

Mt Willoughby could also be flown on the day. Whilst I would prefer a shorter 400 mile stage than Coober Pedy, there is no other town closer.

7. I have excluded Parachilna for Hawker, Farina for Lindhurst, and Marla for Mt Willoughby. The reason behind this is to save on transport costs and again to ensure "on the day" racing. For example, Farina is 540 km and Lyndhurst 500 km, so over the three races we save 240 km in transport costs. By using Hawker instead of Parachilna, we save another 160 km, and Mt Willoughby instead of Marla another 240 km. So over the years, by racing slightly shorter 300, 300, 400 and 500 km races we stand to save many thousands of dollars in transport costs.

8. I have also deleted Carrington for Orroroo, for the Association boundary is much deeper now and youngsters flying their first race from Carrington to Strathalbyn or Maslins, etc, have a very long, hard first up race, especially if they cop a strong southerly. The first races should be training exercises, not marathons!

SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

RACE NO.	DATE	RACE POINT	APPROX. DISTANCES
1	29/6	Orroroo	225 km
2	6/7	Cantara	200 km
3	13/7	Orroroo	225 km
4	20/7	Cantara	200 km
5	27/7	Hawker	360 km
6	3/8	Millicent	360 km
7	10/8	Hawker	360 km
8	17/8	Millicent	360 km
9	24/8	Lyndhurst	500 km
10	31/8	Warrnambool	530 km
11	7/9	Lyndhurst	500 km
12	14/9	Warrnambool	530 km
13	21/9	Coober Pedy	760 km
14	28/9	Winchelsea	605 km
15	5/10	Lyndhurst	500 km
16	12/10	Mt Willoughby	880 km
17	19/10	Warrnambool	530 km
18	26/10	Coober Pedy	760 km
19	2/11	Winchelsea	605 km
20	9/11	Wonthaggi	750 km

This programme has been designed with the aim at giving those birds intended to go to either Coober Pedy, Marla, or Wonthaggi, a three week spell before their main event. In addition to this it will not be difficult to slot in 5 bird races, or extra long distance races such as Alice Springs, within the twenty weeks.

Good flying to you all
DAVID JACKSON.

Editor's note

Dave, lots of flyers in South Australia live for Long Distance Flying and others like spring racing. The Committee, I am sure, like to try and be FAIR to ALL. It seems your south track would make you very close to back marker in your section with Millicent 60% over water.

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