

Warrnambool Open No.1 Winner

Andrew Muirhead and Faye Fuller won the Warrnambool Open No. 1 with their BBC SA 09 03112 with a flying time of eight hours 57 minutes. The breeding of their Warrnambool winner is down from Andrew's 1979 smash Bathurst winner who in her own right bred a 1982 Bathurst winner for Andrew.

When Andrew first started into pigeons along with his brother-in-law Bob Gitsham they went to or rang the 20 best flyers in the Assoc from the previous year to try to get some of their birds.

Andrew breeds from thirty pair of stock birds and takes three rounds off each, with 30 to 40 old birds from the previous season. This takes the numbers up to around 200 birds. He would like to have less, but to compete these days you need at least 150 or more, he says.

Training starts on Anzac Day. He tries to have them working well about a month before that around the loft. First toss is Dublin or Pt Parham. Usually Andrew tosses with Leo Duits. Andrew hasn't tried single up tossing since the 1980s and feels it's not warranted.

He has got the ability to be able to back his unit up to the loft and can have the birds loaded and out the gate within a half an hour. He hasn't tossed as much in 2010 as he has done in previous years.

Andrew does not separate the cocks and hens - they stay together all the race season.

Andrew thinks that loft position in the shorter club races can be critical, but in the longer Assoc races which "turns him on" he doesn't think it matters much. You can occasionally be disadvantaged sometimes but your turn comes.

He thinks the wind on the day in the shorter races has an influence and to a lesser extent in the middle distance races but hardly at all in the long ones. "You can never anticipate the wind, you just have to take your chance and hope it turns your way".

Andrew thinks a retired person has an advantage over someone who works full time, "you have to aspire to the best you can, you have to have the time and be able to afford it and have the basic enthusiasm". It's much easier when you're retired.

Andrew likes racing late bred birds but he does several things differently with them, he does not let them join the mob until he thinks they're ready and he keeps them separate and lets them out in the afternoon. He will give them a few short tosses by themselves then they go for a couple of longer tosses on their own.

He has success with them around derby distance because that when they're coming of age and finding out about the opposite sex they will do anything to get home if they are right.