

Training: The birds go every Sunday and Tuesday to Port Wakefield 125 km (weather permitting). The SAHPA have two training units, one for north flyers and one for south flyers. Birds not going to the Saturday race would also get tossed on Thursday from Semaphore 54km.

Once I started training, the Alice birds would go every Sunday & Tuesday (weather permitting) to Port Wakefield 125 km north from my loft at Aldinga Beach. After their last race in the Lyndhurst Open 552 km, they had one more toss to Port Wakefield 125 km the following Sunday, then just flew around the loft.

Then two weeks before hampering, on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, I took them 23 km north to a place on the coast arriving just before dark. I released them later and later each time. Leaving the lights on in the loft, I would take twelve pigeons always releasing the same three together twelve minutes apart with always the last three which were chosen for Alice Springs. My theory was to teach the birds to fly a bit longer in the night which might help on the 2nd day of the race. If there were any falcons lurking on the way home, they would be worn out from chasing the first three fit groups.

At 1.31 pm after clocking the three birds that came together I walked inside, Vicki turned to ask if I got one, I could not speak and could only hold up my three fingers!

These birds were the three we sent, not knowing any other times. To this day I am still very excited and proud of the efforts of my family of birds. *Acknowledgement: Peter J. Matthews.*

About me: I got started in pigeon racing in 1971 with my father Don Andrewartha and Sons (4 boys). Have raced from present location for last 10 years. My father was the most influential factor. I get help from my wife Vicki. I do value the support & friendship of fellow fanciers and I am pleased when other people do well with my birds. My favorite distance is over 500 km. I don't believe in wing or eye theories. I do send droppings away to be tested. My family of birds are: Goodger/Metcalf, Eitzens and Koopmans. The birds are wormed and I use vitamins and probiotics during the year. Feed consists of: peas, wheat, safflower, milo, rape & linseed. Barley is fed for the moult. I do use pellets.

General: I don't think a retired person does not have an advantage because we all have 24 hours in a day. I clean my loft every day and I think good planning is necessary to win. I think 3 or 5 bird specials would give a small flyer a chance. They need to be released 1 hour after the main bunch. Health of the birds is the most critical aspect in winning races. Beginners need to ask questions but don't get confused.

Breeding: I keep 30 pairs and I pair up winners to winners and also keep bloodlines/families. Koopmans are my stock family. 150 birds I breed for the season and I practice line breeding and inbreeding.

The loft: Best idea for beginners is fresh air. I do not keep sexes separated and there is no particular system to motivate my birds. Training methods are 1 hour per day round loft & 2 tosses per week (long & short). I start the season 150/170 birds 30 old birds, I prefer hens. I prefer head winds. I have practiced single up training and I educate the birds to feed and water in the basket before training and racing.