

Cliff Bannister

Cliff Bannister, a signwriter and painter of Plympton, has formed a successful partnership in pigeon flying with his sons Andrew and David.

They compete as members of the South Australian Pigeon Union, and are ranked among the top five flyers.

Cliff has been involved in the sport since his youth.

As a three-member team, the Bannisters have become a real force in a short time.

Last season they were awarded more than 20 certificates from the Plympton club and the union.

Club wins included both Benalla events and one from Temora (NSW).

In the first Benalla the Bannister loft also won second place.

Early in the season the loft was awarded second placings in races from Pimba, Marree, Oodnadatta and Maryborough (Derby) in the club, and thirds from Carrieton and Keith.

When union races began placings won included ninth (Marree Open and Oodnadatta), eight

(Maryborough Derby), fifth and eighth (first Benalla), second (Benalla No. 2) and sixth and seventh (Temora).

The Bannister loft is founded on birds of the Cudmore-Jurion and Grooter bloodlines. The Grooter birds came from Sydney.

Some top owners are represented by birds in the loft and among them are Ernie Heaven (Port Adelaide Association) and Allan Pearce (SA Homing Pigeon Association).

The Pearce birds have been used for in-breeding with established birds in the Bannister loft.

In his earlier days Cliff flew as a member of the SAHPA — the State's largest bird racing body — when he was in the Ovingham Club.

At that time he helped his father Fred, then a leading identity in the sport.

When his father died, Cliff's mother sold the birds and Cliff was out of the sport for some years, although his interest was high.



The 1973 season will be a challenge for the Bannister loft and they are hoping to improve on their best performance — second in the union and third in the club.

Cliff holds a lot of respect for a good cockbird and believes that on even terms a cockbird will beat a hen in a race.

Not surprisingly, half the Bannisters' certificates last season were won by cockbirds.

Preparing for the coming season Cliff and his sons have been working their racebirds around the loft early in the mornings. They make their birds work in the dark before dawn.

This encourages the racebirds to work harder and prepares them for races which end towards dark.

The Bannisters only exercise their champions in the morning but take them on occasional tosses away from home. They have no preference for racepoints on the north or south, and the birds are trained and raced on their merits.

— GRAHAM BADGER