

# Trewin in the Coalfields NSW

Report by  
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In late October 2002 I was able to travel up to the Coalfields region of NSW and spend a week with Trevor and Rhonda Barker. Trevor lives in the middle of the Watagan Ranges at Ellalong near Cessnock. There was never a dull moment as we were always on the move visiting fanciers.

Trevor although never asking for any mention, I must say has a very eventful life even without the pigeons. Trevor said, “the birds don’t rule my life, I have too many things happening and the birds are second on the list”. I can vouch for this, as the endless amount of visitors to Trevor’s home would compete well and truly with my own visitors at the *Mallee Classic* Lofts. Trevor’s birds need to be mentally tough, as they have to contend with the daily predator visit, the Watagan Ranges and Ellalong, which is nestled in amongst timbered woodland. His birds need to just keep coming! Trevor had a good compliment of Janssen’s, Meuleman’s, Appleby’s and a few other strains to try out. He said his Meuleman’s are proving to be the good birds at present. Trevor is a keen worker, not only for his club and federation but the *Mallee Classic*. Trevor stated, “people need to realise that if they all make an effort, the benefits could be greater - if only a couple of people do the work, sooner or later you will have nothing, things can only grow with everyone doing a bit!”

The Friday afternoon of my arrival we visited the lofts of Bob and Casey Doherty of which I have already completed a loft report featured in the *ARPJ* in January 2003. On the Saturday evening I also attended the Cessnock club presentation, again a full report was in the January issue of the *ARPJ*.



**Bob and Casey in front of their loft.**

The next visit on the list was to the lofts of Alan and Ray Bailey, They are situated approx. 4 Klm's out of Cessnock with the National Park also around them. They stated that they obtained birds from Bert Vidler and without his help, they wouldn't have had the success they have had. They had Winton Barker's, Harrison's, Janssen's and Wickham's. They gave 12 birds to Bob and Casey this year and one bird won Bird of the Year and its cousin was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Bird of the Year.



**Alan and Ray in front of the Loft**



**Alan with some of his birds**



Next it was onto Allen Wilmott's for another session regarding our feathered friends. Allen has Busschaert's, Janssen's, Ince, Van Breemen, Van Loon, P. Williams (Hanssene and McLeans). I was able to spend some time discussing various topics and view some high quality birds; Allen has gone to the expense to import some of his birds. The lofts, were a neat backyard set-up and this is where I first noticed the breeding box set-up for individual breeding. Boxes set-up outside the lofts with a single pair to each box, the birds were kept in the breeding box during the breeding period and not allowed access to other birds. I had tried this before and had no success in raising youngsters, but I soon found that a lot of fanciers in the region bred their youngsters this way.



**Allen and Alicia in front of his loft**







Our next visit seen us back into the car for a drive to visit Terry Condran, but on the way we ran into Ray Moody of the famous “Journey’s End Lofts”, and stopped for a quick chat and we were informed of the new Lake Macquarie Racing Pigeon Association club rooms which were in the building progress. We detoured back to the clubrooms and met Geoff Garland and Ian Richen’s attending to some of the works before the electrician arrived. The LMRPA has 15 senior and 5 junior members at present. I am sure the clubrooms will be well utilised once completed.

After some time chatting, it was onto Terry Condran’s for a look around which I have a loft report on Terry being completed, so for more details keep your eye on the *ARPJ* in the near future. Upon leaving Terry’s we visited his son Mitch’s loft. Another interesting factor that I had not seen much of before was the fact that some of the fanciers had sprint lofts separate to their normal race lofts. Mitch had a neat set-up of his sprint loft, main race loft and then his breeding loft, all of which were not large but suited his needs. This will be his first year flying by himself and we wish him luck.



**Terry holding one of his prize birds**



Back into the car and we were off to visit Graham Walter's "Boomerang Lofts" at Wallsend. Graham had another simple but effective set-up and Terry and Graham have birds, which are related. Graham also had some very high quality birds at the lofts, so you can soon see the level of competition in the area is hot. It was soon time for some lunch so we visited the local RSL for some nourishment and re-hydration.



**Graham in the "Boomerang" Lofts**



I must admit the weather was extremely hot and down in Ballarat I had left rain to drive into the heat. People should realise that you don't have to travel very far and the weather conditions can be very different to what is at home. We send our birds into heat that they would not be accustomed to and expect them to race home! I can tell you now that our race birds would have struggled in the heat they would have encountered. I would like to see the club executives who allowed the release of birds in this heat to be treated the same and see how far they would get before they would have to give up! A lot more must be done to make sure our birds are treated better and given water at every opportunity, as we know the conveyors make sure they have a drink on the way, then why not our race birds, this type of treatment is out dated!

After lunch we were able to visit the "Sky High Lofts" of Geoff Garland in Boolaroo. Geoff's lofts were magnificent and a credit to him. The lofts were under construction, as he was replacing the old lofts. He had Delbar's from Rod Churchill, Janssen's, Balf Harrison's and the old Two Pound Ten's. Geoff could look out from his lofts over Terry Condran's, with a great view. He had Individual breeding boxes under the bottom front of his lofts with his race loft set on the top with wire grid floors and multiple sections to cater for his race teams. Birds could be moved from section to section very easily. I hope to re-visit Geoff in time when the lofts are completed as I expect them to be quite a sight.



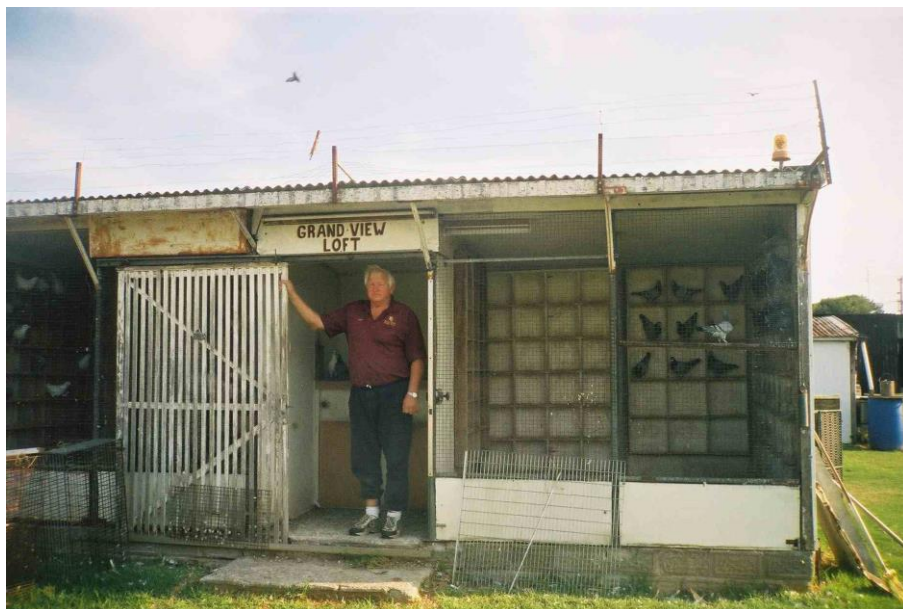
**Geoff in his Loft Fly in**



**The View from Geoff's Lofts – Beautiful!**

The next loft visited was the “Grandview Lofts” of Allan Bennett. Allan had Harrison’s, Hanssene’s, Janssen’s, Jurion’s and Appleby’s. Allan also had 11 pure white race birds of which he uses for weddings. This seems to be very popular at the moment, with quite a number of fanciers endeavouring to do the same. Allan also had some Hunting Dogs, which were walking in and out of the birds walking around the lawn in front of the loft.

Allan said, "they only touch the birds if I turn my back". Next we ventured down to the stock loft for a look at a few of the birds and when we walked back there was a small amount of feathers and only 10 whites left! We were only gone for a few minutes, but that's all it took.



**Allan in his "Grand View Lofts"**

The Next day saw the visit to Michael and Dini Watts. Trevor had some business to take care of, so Dave Hunter took on the job of guide for the day. Although Trevor had a few people on the list for the day, I must say I had a great afternoon chatting with the Mick and Dini. Mick had Harrison's, Goodger's, and Stan Gate's Sydney Blood. They have won approx. 200 races in the 20 years Mick has been racing, and this year saw them only miss out on the Top 10 in the Federation a couple of times. They were 4<sup>th</sup> in the Sprint Aggregate, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Distance Aggregate and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Overall Aggregate in the Federation. They like to try and specialise in racing from 300 miles onwards. I am also interested to do a loft report later on this couple and will try to set some time aside on my next visit.



**Mick & Dini Watts**



After a bit of Hungry Jack's to refuel the engines we ventured off to Paul Callaghan's. Paul was kind to allow me to visit as he was busy with his work and Dave and me were running well behind any schedule Trevor had hoped we would be on. A full loft report has been compiled on Paul, so please watch out for it in the *ARPJ* soon.



The next day we started our visits with Vic Smola. Vic is a very successful flyer and also has a great interest in pigmy pouters. I enjoyed the chats with Vic regarding colours in pigeons as I have an interest in coloured racing pigeons. Vic mainly has Jurions and obtained birds from Peter Pillage.



After admiring all the rare coloured pigmy pouters and the nice kit in Vic's race loft we were on our way to visit the lofts of Garry Ellicott. Garry was not home, so his good wife Pauline allowed us to view the birds until Garry returned. Once again I saw some excellent Janssen's. Garry believes in breeding the best to the best, he culls his stock birds regularly to maintain the quality in his race loft each year. At the distance this year saw him have 9 birds which could have taken 1<sup>st</sup> Federation in the same race. Not bad for

Janssen's! We enjoyed a nice lunch and conversation before it was time to head back to Trevor's home.





Bob Doherty arranged for me to meet with Bill Eastcott in Toongabbie (Sydney) on my way home to Ballarat and again I was able to view some excellent pigeons and enjoy a couple of hours chatting with Bill. I will also have to arrange for a loft report on Bill as he had an excellent set-up and pigeons.

I must thank all the people who took time to allow me to visit and talk with them while I was in the Hunter Valley region of NSW. I must also thank Trevor and Rhonda Barker and also Dave Hunter for taking time out and driving me around to the different locations.



## **Dave Hunter holding his Mallee Classic Trophy**

