

Paul Callaghan

Bolwarra – NSW

Loft report by
Barry Trewin



I was able to catch up with Paul late one evening during my visit up the coast. Dave Hunter and myself got a little way laid at Mick and Dini Watt's place, chatting all afternoon and enjoying their hospitality. This would have to be the whole essence of what pigeon racing should be about, being able to sit and talk with people who have a great fascination with our feathered friends. More fanciers should take the time to visit as many different fanciers as they can to get a broadview of the sport and the many different ideas and aspects on the development of our sport into the future. Paul races with the Maitland Club and the Newcastle Coalfields Federation. The Federation has no boundaries and has a front of around 130 Klm's east to west.

Paul began racing in 1995 and although only a new comer to the sport in terms of time, he is has spent his time well. He maintains Janssen's, Harrison's and Appleby's. He obtained some birds from good friend Eddie Furze who lives at Wingham near Tarree.

Paul's loft is facing North, out over a very scenic view, you could see the birds homeward bound from a long way out. He starts his season with around 70 young birds and 20 old birds. He says the Janssen's win out to 450 miles (720 Klm) and then he is trapping cross-breds to the 550 Mile (880 Klm) mark, he seems to be only running places not winning. He will be fazing out the Appleby's as his best wins have been with the Janssen's, he say's "they are more predicable and are repeat winners, you see the

Janssen's breaking, so they are the clear winners!" As I have also found the Janssen's are leaders rather than followers. His Janssen's are the Stamvater, Sheer Elegance and Old Merx lines which he has found can handle the hard, fast and steady days.

Paul use's the standard yankee trap and landing board set-up and trains his young birds slowly using a cage on the landing board for breaking. He also locks down his birds when they are in the heavy moult around February, which is usually when he has a heavy predator presence, so his birds can be rested and not placed under undue stress. He starts to train the birds around the loft in March, usually encouraging around 35 – 40 mins everyday, he likes to call them in between the 40 - 60 mins once they are working the loft.

He tosses twice a week starting at the 5-km mark, once the birds are clearing quickly they are then moved to the next point. This year he gave the bird's 5,10,15,30 km tosses and his youngsters never circled. He trains his birds towards the coast, as he believes if he heads in land it lends to bad toss results. He heads in the direction of the beach approx. 30 miles and then onto the line of flight, he also travels the major highways for ease of training and his furthest training run is 50 miles (80 Klm's) which is with the Transporter on Sunday's. He likes his birds to have a 30-mile training run on Tuesday's and try's to always give the birds a headwind workout. Paul also stated that the early tosses are there for the birds to gain their education and he want's them well educated before he heads on the line of flight. Paul trains all the birds together and his hens and cocks are also kept together. The only thing he does is separate the young birds from the old birds. He races his cocks on a weekly basis and lightly races the hens preparing them for the distance events. "There are a lot of things I'll do, but I don't have the time, the Natural System and Widowhood, one day maybe" said Paul.

Paul use's 2 different mixes for his race birds, a light mix and heavy mix. The light mix is used early in the week, then Wednesday is ½ each mix and then the last 2 days is the heavy mix. The light mix is made up of measures of 4 wheat, 4 barley, 1 milo and 1 safflower. He adds peas if races are harder and maize if it is cold. The heavy mix is made up of measures 4 maize, 4 peas, 2 milo, 1 safflower, 2 wheat, ½ small seed.

He also try's to not use much medication, but once the birds are on the transporter believes you need to treat for wet canker and respiratory. He also uses PVM powder, 2 different kinds of grit (mixed together), picking stones, but doesn't give his birds greens. He also put garlic in the water 1 – 2 days a week.

Paul said his local competition is fairly strong - with fanciers such as Garry Ellicott, Vic Smola, Darren Kursys, Mark Smith (who is starting up again and always tough to beat), Alan Stark and the Field Bros. Paul has represented his club and federation as treasurer and would be a welcome member to any club.

(Paul didn't race in 2002)

Main results in 2001:

2nd in the Coalfields Combine Squeaker Sale Race
1st Ring Race from Balranald 480 Miles
8th in the Long Distance Federation Aggregate

(He was consistently in the leading kit of birds, but couldn't win until the distance races).

Paul has some goals for the up coming season, he wants to win the Blackall Race 700 miles (1100 Klm's) and win the club distance aggregate.