

‘HORSES FOR COURSES’

By Duncan MacGregor

Over the years you sit back and listen to the various pundits, oracles and experts, who themselves come in all shapes and sizes. They will tell you how to solve a wide variety of problems, which birds are best, what to feed, how to train your birds etc. etc. They can even fix the problems with your sex life at home, sometimes without you even knowing!!

Like most of us you most probably only take notice of those ideas that already match with your own perceptions. In reality we only

‘hear that which we want to hear’

Ever since the laws regarding the importation of birds were changed I have been a devotee of the imported strains, the Janssens, Muellemans, Houbens, Van Loons etc. In most cases these birds are simply faster, easier to manage, they don't seem to suffer the psychosis of some of the older breeds such as the Harrison's and of course they handle better!

It was only the recent win of Jesse Egan and Marg Warren in the Greater Melbourne 600 mile race that made me think of words uttered long ago by Denis Holt.

Denis Holt, who has long passed on, was a grumpy old bastard who found it easier to make enemies than friends, most probably due to the fact that he would readily offer advice to all and sundry as to **‘where they should go, and how they should get there’**.

However, once past that gruff exterior he was a very knowledgeable and helpful person.

He also had an excellent eye for a good pigeon and experience in keeping and racing birds that had been honed over decades of involvement in the sport.

Denis was also the beneficiary of some imported blood that was brought into this country nefariously, many years before it became legal to do so.

For reasons best known to Denis, he and I managed to get along pretty well and I would visit him on a regular basis. We would argue the merits of the imports versus the locals, the need to breed and train strains of pigeons for specific distances and whether there would still be a place for the traditional Australian breeds in years to come. It was during one such discussion that he was extolling the virtues of the ‘Horses for Courses Theory.

The theory is nothing new, simply put..

**SPRINTERS FOR SPRINTS & DISTANCE PERFORMERS FOR THE
DISTANCE RACES.**

As I said, it's simple enough, they manage to do it with racehorses, greyhounds and even homo sapiens, so why as pigeon flyers don't we do the 'bloody' same. Yes, the imported birds are magic, they fly fast and true but it is no earthly use sending them off to do a task that they are not designed to do!