

Jan Hooymans of Kerkdriel

Dutch Superstar and Proud Owner of Harry, a Pigeon Megastar

When you hear the name Jan Hooymans you immediately think of a pigeon called Harry which will undoubtedly go down in history as one of the greatest long-distance performers to fly into the Netherlands in recent times. He was the winner in 2009 of 1st National Region 7 from Blois against 5,653 pigeons (fastest of the Netherlands boven rivieren, 37,728 pigeons), 1st National Region 7 from Châteauroux against 5,979 pigeons (fastest of the Netherlands boven rivieren, 22,340 pigeons) and 3rd NPO Region 7 from Châteaudun against 8,781 pigeons (also 3rd Northern Union, 21,520 pigeons). He became the 1st National Ace Pigeon Europa Cup Dortmund 2010 of the Netherlands, 1st National Ace Pigeon One-Day Long Distance, the Best of the Best of the Netherlands and he is the best-ever candidate to achieve the title of 1st National Ace Pigeon One-Day Long Distance WHZB 2009.

I had the pleasure of handling supreme champion Harry on a recent visit to Jan Hooymans in the company of Alun Jones of Red Star Lofts and I can say in all honesty that although I have visited hundreds of the best lofts in Europe and South Africa over the last 40 years, Harry, along with his brothers and sisters, is one of the best pigeons I have ever had the pleasure to handle, with absolutely perfect balance and beautiful feathering.

So where did it all begin? For many years Jan was obsessed with long-distance races and his main strain was based on the Theelen/Saya, with which he had success. Later on he strengthened his breeding colony with birds from Cor de Heijde that eventually made up 90% of his colony, which again brought him success. However, from the late 1990s when

"Harry"

1e	Blois *	37.728 d.
1e	Châteauroux *	22.340 d.
3e	Châteaudun	21.520 d.
6e	Morlincourt	4.418 d.
15e	Strombeek	4.358 d.
21e	Châteauroux	5.496 d.
23e	Epehy	3.709 d.
30e	Nanteuil	3.249 d.
50e	Mantes La Jolie	4.182 d.
90e	Salbris	7.573 d.
91e	Epehy	3.475 d.
210e	Blois	5.186 d.
306e	Salbris	5.989 d.

(zonder dubbelegen)
[* = snelste van Nederland boven rivieren]



**Jan Hooyman
Kerkdriel**

NL07-2007621
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Harry.

Jan started entering the race programme he felt that finishing 2nd really wasn't good enough. He has been a winner throughout his life and until a few years ago was a very successful football player and a member of the team that won the National Championship on no fewer than three occasions with VV Rossum. He has always had an iron will to win and he realised that only an exceptional strain of pigeons would be good enough so in 2006 he completely rebuilt his racing team. Like many before him he went to the Grand Master, Gaby Vandenabeele of Dentergem. In fact it was a pure twist of fate that Jan went to Gaby in the first instance. Gaby is an accountant by profession and one of his customers recommended him to Jan who first visited in 1999 and over the following years visited again on many occasions. After his first visit he bought two youngsters from Turbo and one youngster from Wittenbuik. Later he purchased a couple of youngsters from the combination of Wittenbuik and Klein Blauwke (half-brother/half-sister) as he is a great believer in inbreeding. At that time Wittenbuik was not available so Gaby gave Jan Klein Blauwke to take home, where she was paired to Cupido, son of Wittenbuik. Later, four youngsters were acquired from a sister to Wittenbuik, which were full brothers and sisters to James Bond, which won 1st National from Bourges. Incidentally, these were purchased by

"Jonge Bliksem"



BE01-3266512

Jonge Bliksem, sire of Harry, bred by Gaby Vandenabeele.

"Dirkje"



NL05-1936558

Dirkje, dam of Harry, bred by Gerard Koopman.



Gea Veenstra being congratulated by Jan.



Jan's house.

Jan before this great win. It was not long before the sister to Wittenbuik was herself on the way to Kerkdriel. Jan then bought the best lines of Kleinen, followed by youngsters from the well-known Bliksem, but he was insistent that Gaby would pair him to Dolores, a full sister to his sire, Kolonel, the end product being Jonge Bliksem, the sire of Harry. The other half of the super pigeon, Harry, is a daughter of the world-famous Kleine Dirk from Gerard Koopman. When Jan bought this pigeon in the Koopman sale at the beginning of 2006 he had never met Gerard. However, he had read about his strain for a number of years and was

well aware that a new addition to the Koopman dynasty appeared with the acquisition of Golden Lady in 1997. She, of course, is a daughter of Kannibaal, 1st National Ace Pigeon Middle Distance, and was owned by Dirk van Dyck who was relatively unknown at that time. Golden Lady was bought by Gerard Koopman on the occasion of the Gouden Duif celebration. The Gentil (Olympiad pigeon from the old base) and Golden Lady were coupled and Kleine Dirk was born, eventually to become a world-renowned racing and breeding champion. Of course, today most of Gerard Koopman's top pigeons have the blood of this Super Couple in their veins. When Jan coupled the daughter of Kleine Dirk with his best breeder, Jonge Bliksem, a new world-class breeding couple was born. Harry was the direct result of this coupling and, as stated, he has already won 1st National twice.



The old bird racing loft.

Interestingly, it was not until 2009, when Gerard Koopman had his sale in Thorn, that he first met Jan but within a month, Jan visited Gerard accompanied by his friend, Cor de Heijde, they got to know each other well and it was not too long before Gerard visited Jan to handle Harry. This is what Gerard had to say about the champion: 'Harry is without doubt a real champion with a strong body and fits well in the hand. He is also very intelligent with a strong personality, just the way I like it. In my eyes he is a potential successor to my Kleine Dirk.' Incidentally, when Gaby Vandenabeele visited Jan, this is what he had to say: 'In September I went to Kerkdriel and I took Harry and his brothers and sisters in my hand. These pigeons were beautiful specimens and were typical of pigeons every fancier dreams of owning. It is hardly possible to breed them even more perfect than they already are. Jan wanted to inbreed



Alun, Jan and John.



John & Alun holding Harry.



Jan with his manager, Piet, holding two children of their Super Couple.

them as he loves the breeding side of the sport and I wished him a lot of luck for the future.'

When Alun and I visited Jan at Kerkdriel we could not fail to be impressed by his beautiful home and wonderful set-up, which can only be described as a pigeon paradise. Before visiting I zoomed in on Google Earth mappings on Kerkdriel. You cannot fail to see the large factory complex which is Hooymans' Compost BV. Jan and his father, Gerard, were mushroom cultivators who decided that they were not satisfied with the standard of compost available, so arranged to produce it themselves. Today their company collects about 6,000 tons of horse manure each week and converts it into compost for mushroom cultivation. This makes Holland the leading country in the world for compost production.

Getting back to the golden pair of breeders, Jonge Bliksem and Dirkje, it was late in 2006 that a pair of youngsters was raised and, put in the racing loft, they performed very well. The following year, 2007, seven more youngsters from the pair were entered into the racing team, five of which won at least 1 x 1st winning position on Dutch teletext. The grandchildren also performed well. Jan confided in me that after Harry won his two National victories the demand for children and grandchildren of the Super Couple was incredible. Being a sportsman and great competitor, he clearly did not want to sell any of them but decided to contact Jan Hermans of De Duif to see what he could do. Jan suggested we sold one round of youngsters so that everyone had a chance to buy something related to the Super Couple and 57 perfectly reared youngsters were selected, all out of the line of the Super Couple, although only one actual pair direct from the Super Couple would be sold. Jan said he will never, ever sell any further birds from the Super Couple and he added that anyone who knows him can confirm that this is a vow he will keep forever.

The rest is now history. The Dutch pigeon sport came to a standstill on Friday, 15th January, 2010, when the sale took place. The first bird sold, a beautiful blue cock from the Super Couple, went for €36,000 (including tax) to Comb van Wanrooy from Geffen. Lot 6, a direct daughter of Harry, was knocked down to Hans Eijerkamp for €13,200. However, there was



The young bird loft.

a hushed silence in the venue when the last lot, 57, came under the hammer, an exceptional daughter of the Super Couple. There then commenced what can only be described as a true battle royal between two of the most famous fanciers in the Dutch sport, Koopman and Veenstra. Gea Veenstra paid €96,000 (including tax) for a daughter of the Super Couple in the absence of her husband, Pieter, who was hospitalised. Gea's husband must have had quite a shock when she rang him in hospital to tell him she was successful. Pieter was recovering from back surgery. Of course, since that time the Veenstras have had a clearance sale which raised a world record sum of €2.5 million for 245 pigeons and in this sale, Hu Zhen Yu, who runs a shipbuilding company in China, broke the world record for a single pigeon which amounted to \$US328,000. The sale for Jan made €216,000 for 57 pigeons, an average of €3,790 per pigeon, with notable buyers who included Peter van der Merwe, Gaby Vandenabeele, Comb Verbree, Rik Cools and Gerard & Piet Lindelauf, to name but a few.

Finally, a special mention must be made of loft manager Piet Brothers who arrived on 1st January, 2009. Jan openly admitted he loves the breeding side of the sport but leaves the finishing touches and team preparation to Piet, who has done an excellent job since his arrival.

I became aware during our visit in 2012 that Jan's compost company was founded on the motto 'Only the Best is Good Enough'. It certainly seems to me that this philosophy was Jan's benchmark as a sportsman in his youth and remains so today, as strongly as ever, in the pigeon sport where he has excelled and this has well and truly earned him his Dutch Superstar status.

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Scottish Midland Fed

After the terrible weather throughout the old bird season we had hoped that the young birds would have more luck. Some hope! The first race of the season was from Eaglesfield a distance of approx 65 miles. Race day began with leaden skies, heavy rain and a fresh wind. After many phone calls, a gap in the weather was found to allow the 851 birds to be liberated at 1230hrs into a fresh south-west wind. It was inevitable that the birds would meet heavy showers en route, and so it turned out. The fresh wind ensured that the birds would come into the Fed from the east, and it was the clubs in the east of the Fed that got the early arrivals.

Fed Top Ten – The top ten Fed tickets were shared between the Denny and

Wattstown/Caldercruix Clubs. Pride of place went to the Denny Club with Peter Brown 1st and 5th on 1168 and 1057, and clubmates John Ross and T & N Meikle 2nd and 10th on 1090 and 1026. The remaining six places were taken by Wattstown/Caldercruix with Willie Duncan 3rd, 4th and 6th on 1082, 1071 and 1037. Sam Shanks was 7th and 9th on 1041 and 1037, and John Craven 8th on 1040.

Around the Clubs now starting with **Airdrie** where 22 lofts sent 315 birds. The red card went to Bobby & Stephen Peden on 984, together with 3rd on 979. Splitting these two was Jimmy Kilgour on 983. **Chapelhall** had 11 lofts sending 216 birds: 1st, 2nd and 3rd went to Tom McCafferty on 1009, 1008 and 1007 – a

great start. **Border** and 2 lofts sent 37 birds: Alex Scott was 1st and 2nd on 833 and 700 with Grant & Cairns 3rd on 631. **Denny** had 6 lofts sending 90 birds. Taking advantage of the weather conditions was Peter Brown 1st and 3rd on 1168 and 1057, with John Ross 2nd on 1090. **Wattstown & Caldercruix** had 9 lofts sent 193 birds. Willie Duncan showed everyone the way with a clean sweep on 1082, 1071 and 1054. As usual for a first young bird race the returns were not great – but we can only hope that the weather will improve for the remainder of the races, or the race controller is going to have even less hair than he has at present.

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