



Young Fanciers newsletter



Summer 2020

Young journeys start here...

Hello all you
Junior Members..

I hope you have all been
enjoying your racing this
year.

Going by the stories in
this edition of our news-
letter, it definitely looks
like you have been busy
and doing really well.

We have stories from
all around the UK, and
also our new feature -
Speedy's Letters - where
you have been writing in
to tell us about how you
have been enjoying the
sport over the past few
months.

We also have big news
on our RPRAs schools
and how they have been
doing, and we announce
our latest competition
winner.

So until next time!

SPEEDY



Tom tells all



See back page

**THE ROYAL
PIGEON RACING
ASSOCIATION**



Vet-Schroeder TOLLISAN

TOPIGEON



www.rpra.org



**Hi, my name is Joseph and I keep fantails and racing pigeons.
My Dad and I came up with the idea of making a website to report lost pigeons:**

findmypigeon.co.uk

Hi, my name is Joseph and I keep fantails and racing pigeons. Ever since I was 8 I had always wanted a pigeon, then last year my mum bought me two fantails. A year later and I now have 10 pigeons, my flock is now made up of 2 doves, 4 fantails and 5 racing pigeons. I have set up an Instagram account called **pigeonboy21** where I post regularly about the birds, and I have 800 followers from around the world.

Recently, one of my racing pigeons called Peanut went missing. I went online and checked the RPR website

where you can report a ring number for a found pigeon, but I couldn't find a website to report lost pigeons. That was when my Dad and I came up with the idea of making a website called findmypigeon.co.uk. Here you can report missing pigeons from around the world, as well as ones that you have found. You can also follow *findmypigeon* on Instagram, twitter and Facebook @findmypigeon. I hope that this website helps a lot of people to find their pigeons again.

Great work, Joseph!

Hi Speedy,

My name is Jamie and I am 6 years old. My Mum and Dad race pigeons in Durham and I have just started to like helping them, seeing as I can't go to school at the minute.

I never used to like the birds but helping my Mam has got rid of my fear. I help clean them and call them in when they have finished training.

My favourite pigeon is a blue hen called tummy - we call her that because my Dad always says she knows where her belly is, as she likes to be hand fed.

I hope to one day be able to go and help basket them at the club and get more involved.



Speedy's letters



Hi Speedy,

My name is Mia Hoddinott and I'm 11 years old. I joined the Crossways pigeon club this year to fly 14 young birds as I have one section in the loft.

My first ever race was on Sat 1st August from Newton Abbott with the Dorset Fed. I sent 14 young birds and clocked 3 birds by rubbers to achieve 1st, 2nd and 4th Club, velocity 1688, 1684 and 1674.

I was also 3rd, 19th and 22nd Fed against 37 members sending 768 birds.

I was really happy with this as it was my first ever race, and I really hope that it is the first of many good results. It must be in my blood as my Grandad who lives with me and flew as LJ Fry has won the BICC twice in the past.



Hi Speedy,

My name Libby Johnson and I'm 14 years old. This is my first year racing from my own loft.

I'm racing using a T3 clock loaned to me by John Wheatcroft. I am racing against my Mum and Dad, and I have a team of 21 pigeons.

My Dad has been racing since he was young with his Dad, who sadly isn't with us now, so it's nice I get to do the same with him.

The 21 young birds I have are from my Mum and Dad, and the majority from my uncle, Darren Johnson.

I would like to thank John Wheatcroft for lending me the clock and Darren for the birds.

I hope everyone else is enjoying pigeon racing as much as I am.



We do like to know what you are up to - please let us know by emailing your stories and a photo to speedy@rpra.org

Hi Speedy,

My name is Sam, I'm 13 and I recently started pigeon racing and love the sport already.

I decided to start racing due to my Dad and Grandad racing pigeons - this inspired me to join in racing pigeons.

I would like to inspire more young racers like me to get involved in the sport, and to know more about what it actually is all about and how much fun it is.

My Dad has given me a few birds to get me started, and told me how to look after and care for them.

I hope you are all enjoying looking after your pigeons.

Back to School



As some of you will know, we have a number of schools involved in the RPRA Schools Project: they race pigeons as part of their school curriculum. That's right - imagine going to school and looking after pigeons as part of your lessons!!

This year has been a little different to other years, due to the UK being in lockdown. However this has not affected the results of the schools - in fact the schools have done even better than they have in the past.

We sent Speedy along to see how the schools have been doing and how they have had to change during lockdown.

Things have not been as straightforward as usual at our schools due to the Covid 19

restrictions, and a lot of you have not been able to go to school as much as you normally would do over the past six months. This does not mean that no-one has been going to school though.

A number of your parents will be what we call 'key workers' and some of you were allowed to attend school while they were at work. This meant that these children have been looking after the pigeons and getting them ready for racing.

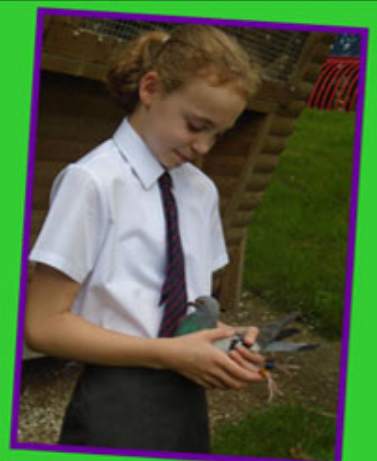
It has been great to hear that so many of these children have been busy, and also that new people have joined up to look after and race the schools' pigeons.

Diggle School in Oldham did exactly this - they had three children in school looking after the pigeons and getting them ready. You can see Mia in the photo (right) holding one of the school's best pigeons 'Top of the Class'.

Mia and her friends have been working really hard with school staff Mr Ryan & Mrs Cocker. They did an excellent job of looking after the pigeons, getting them really fit and flying seriously fast.

This hard work led to the school's best ever result from a Midlands National Flying Club race from Vire, 330 miles away in France. This pigeon flew an average of 46 miles per hour and was 4th NW Section out of 1345 pigeons, and 143rd Open out of 5343 pigeons, winning £672 for the school.

Now that's what I call a performance!



Things do not stop there for our schools. If we travel further north, to the Blackburn area in Lancashire, we have had two other schools do exceptionally well. Some of you may remember them from last year, as they both won RPR Awards for their achievements.

First up is Longshaw Community Junior School in Blackburn, led by Deputy Head Mr Berry and Mr Airey (right). Longshaw won the RPR Schools Award for 2019, achieving the fastest recorded speed of any pigeon last season.

They are once again backing this up with a string of great results in their club so far this year, including 2nd & 4th Club, 5th Fed and 7th Combine from Cheltenham.

It's great to see the school doing so well as they were one of the original schools supported by the RPR.



Our next school is no stranger to the lime-light: they are the RPR Schools Champions from the past two seasons, St Andrews Primary School, Oswaldtwistle (top left).

This is the school's third year competing, and they have seen the project grow from a small loft, funded with support from local member Peter Hargreaves. They have become one of the names to beat at Oswaldtwistle Homing Society and for very good reasons.

The project is led by a team of teachers: Mr P Burns, Mr A Burns and Mr N Wilkinson, and over lockdown there have been three students on hand to help keep the birds in top condition for racing.

St Andrews have also continued their winning form with a set of performances that has stunned the pigeon world in the North West of England:

- Penkrige - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Club, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Federation 557 birds, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th West Pennine Amal 822 birds
- Hullavington 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th Club, 5th, 6th, 7th, 13th Federation 291 birds, 13th, 14th, 15th, 27th Combine.

To say these are outstanding results from all of the schools in 2020 is an understatement, and the competition is growing year on year, with more and more children getting involved in the sport of pigeon racing all across the country.



St Andrews also supported another local school this year, by racing pigeons on their behalf. St Nicholas School in Accrington was due to have its own small set up this year, however because of lockdown this project has been put on hold for the time being, and St Andrews took their birds and raced them on their behalf.

In a race from Penkrige, St Nicholas School came 5th, winning £52 which is an excellent achievement for their first season in the sport.



Competition winner!

Thank you to everyone who entered last edition's competition to win a cuddly Speedy toy.

We had lots of entries, with some excellent pieces of artwork, which made it really hard to judge! However we are pleased to announce that the winner is **Alexandra Sinclair** from Putney, London, who is 7 years old, and wins with her excellent colouring in and happy looking clouds in the background. Well done Alexandra, your cuddly Speedy will be in the post to you very soon.



Emily turns nursemaid

My name is Emily Armstrong and I am 13 years old and from the North East of England.

My Dad has had pigeons since he was a little boy. We attend the Blackpool pigeon show every year and a few years ago I signed up to be in the young fanciers club. I used to help my Dad out in the pigeon loft a little bit, but never felt comfortable being around the pigeons on my own, or picking them up myself.

All of this changed a couple of weeks ago when my Dad told me about an injured baby, whose parents had neglected it and caused injury to its head and wing. My Dad did not think it would survive because it was so badly injured, but I told him I would care for it.

We brought the baby inside and hand fed it some corn and cleaned its wounds, and put antiseptic spray on, as well.

Each day it grew stronger and one day I could see it was trying to fly - next thing I knew it was on my shoulder, sitting quite happily.

We decided to put it back into the pigeon loft as it became stronger, in the babies section away from its parents, with the other babies.

Now I help my Dad mix the corn for all of the pigeons, including the babies, the old birds and the stock birds. I stay in the babies section for about 30 minutes every day, picking them up and feeding them two cups in the trough and two cups out of my hands. I get about six pigeons on each hand and some fly onto my head to get a "bird's eye view". My Dad hasn't been well over the past week, so I have been looking after the whole pigeon loft and going in on my own. The injured pigeon took me as its Mam, and is now flying for a few minutes with the other babies. I now love looking after the pigeons and I will try to keep you updated. Thank you for reading my story and I hope you enjoyed it.

Through the eyes of an 11 year old boy



Alan's latest update

Hi everybody, it has been a while since I put pen to paper, or - in today's modern world - pressed the keys on my computer.

Things have started to progress and move on: my new loft has arrived, for which I would like to thank Steve Blakesley. My team of young birds are in my loft and have settled in really well. They are also exercising really well. There have been a lot of things to learn and take in - feeding system and routine, but I have been given a lot of tips by other pigeon fanciers.

I have only just started training my first round of young birds, but it is fascinating to see how they find their own way home. It is remarkable that we take pigeons to the middle of nowhere, liberate them from a basket and leave them to get on with it and find their own way home. If it was possible for a pigeon to have an IQ Mensa test, I wonder what the results would be!

If we took a human being to the middle of nowhere and asked them to find their way home, they would have to use instruments like GPS, satellite navigation or a mobile phone.

I have just joined my first pigeon club (Tipton Premier) where I was welcomed with open arms. There are many rules and regulations to learn and take on board. A few of the members have invited me to their lofts, for which I would like to thank them. A few members have also given me young birds for this season - many thanks. It has been a great experience and I have picked up some great ideas and tips. I have also been promised some young birds for the 2021 season (many thanks to those people).

The sportsmanship at the club is great to see. Even though the club has its serious side, it is great to see that it has its characters too, e.g. Timmy Wilson aka Granville

(Granville ferferferferfer fetch your cloth). Also Neil Tonks aka the burger buster, who likes a well branded burger which I will not name because you will all know it. There are a few more characters that I will mention in later write ups, but that is only if I survive this one!

This year is a big one for me as I am starting secondary school. There is not long left until I will have to change my headline as I am soon to become 12 years of age. I am looking forward to meeting new people and lots of new classmates. You never know, I might be able to persuade them to start the pigeon sport (wish me luck).

I am afraid to say that it is time for me to close the lid on my laptop as my Dad is calling me, as my new ETS system has arrived. He is very clever as he has a few tricks up his sleeve. As I am walking down to my loft he is waiting for me with my wellies, my loft coat and my scraper. I think I need to brush up on my skills. Hopefully I will have some time to read about heroic pigeons in the world wars.

It's that time of year to pick out your best results of 2020 and send in your nominations for the

Young Fancier Awards 2020



You could be in with a chance of being one of our Young Fancier RPR Award winners, and this year it is even easier to enter. There are four categories just for our Junior Members:



Best Sprint Pigeon - 0 to 250 miles
Best Middle Distance Pigeon - 251 to 450 miles
Best Long Distance Pigeon - 451 miles and over
The Guy Barrett Trophy

The Guy Barrett Trophy is awarded to young RPR members based not just on performance, but also on attitude to the sport and how the young fancier helps their club. To enter this category you need to get a club mate to submit a letter to the Region Secretary, outlining what you have done in 2020.

For the other awards, all you have to do is select your best pigeon for 2020 in each of the categories, and fill out the forms that are enclosed with this newsletter.

Each pigeon must have its own form per category. **DO NOT** put all of your pigeons on one form!!

Once you have filled in the forms, ask your club secretary to sign it to confirm that what you have entered is correct, and send it to your Region Secretary listed on the RPR website at www.rpra.org/about-rpra/rpra-regions.

IT IS THAT EASY! Please note the deadline for your Region on the enclosed form. What are you waiting for? You could be the star of 2020!! Good luck!!



Tom's royal connection

passed away two years ago. My Dad raced in the late 90s, and with his help I have now started racing my own birds.

Last year I was kindly given four youngsters by the Queen's Loft Manager, Mr Peter Farrow, to breed and race.

This year I joined my local club, called Wisbech Flying Club, who have made me welcome and given me some good advice. We fly south road.

Last Sunday was the first young bird race of 2020, from Bovington. The club sent 306 pigeons, and I took 16th position. Thankfully all my birds came home. My first pigeon home was a blue hen (the daughter of Peter Farrow's hen).

I rested my birds all the next day, and then gave them herbal tea in their water. I cannot race this weekend as I'm on holiday, but looking forward to the next race.

My favourite pigeon is a dark chequer with white flights called Bluey. He tends to sit on my shoulder while I try and clean them out and give fresh water.

I can't think of a better hobby to be involved in; I just love it.

Hi, my name is Tom Parfett and I'm 13 years old.

Two years ago I helped my Dad build my first pigeon loft. It started off very small, but soon grew and became three sections with a separate stock loft.

My Grandad raced pigeons in the 1980s, but sadly