

Harry Shannon from N. Ireland

1. How long have you had pigeons and in particular Tiplers? Why Tiplers?

I started in the early teens. First competition was Aug. 1950 with young birds in N. Ireland. Tiplers flew 3 hrs-30mins. Why Tiplers? I liked the idea of owning highflying birds. Started serious cycling the following year and disposed of the birds. Started again after getting married in 1958.



Harry Shannon and Tom M'Taggart

2. How did you acquire your Tiplers and from whom?

Birds acquired from top local flyer Victor Arbothnot whose birds came mostly from English top flyer Sam Billingham from Sheffield. Victor also bought a few other winning kits from the A.E.T.S. competitions (All England Tippler Society). He was a quite wealthy man (shop owner).

3. How big is your loft and how many pairs do you breed from? What is the method by which you breed?

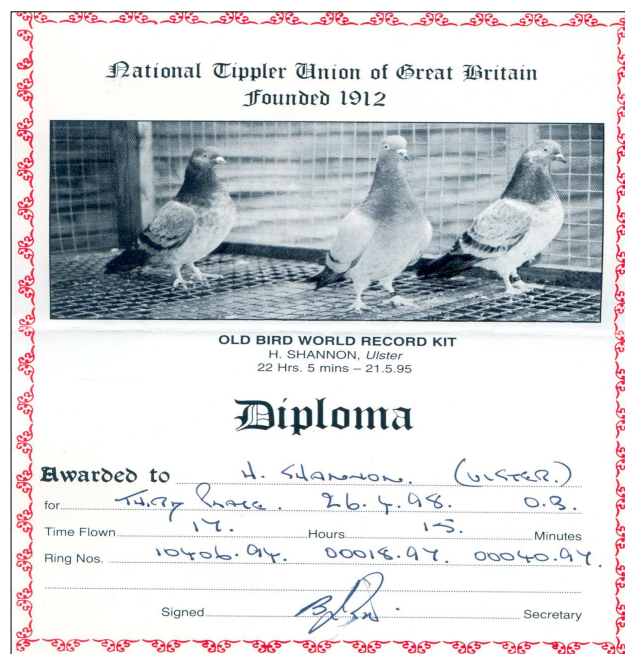
Two lofts, the first are 12x12 and the second 11x6. No strict breeding method except only in family. Three crosses used in the last 40 years came from Jos Davies of Wales, Les Curry of Bristol and Ken Potts of Willenhall. As I feel hens are more important I do not usually fly any exceptional ones for too long before they go to stock. I may couple some very close related birds because I think it is more important if their genes are compatible.

4. How do you settle your youngsters and method of training once they are settled?

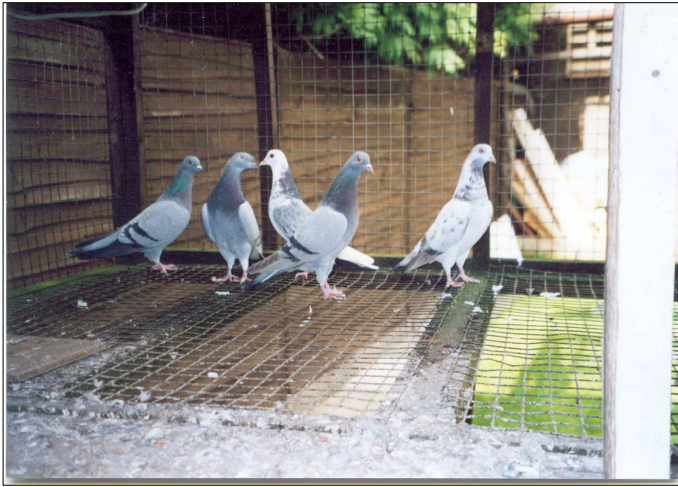
As soon as the young ones can fly to a low perch they are set out with droppers for two days. Third day onwards they are left with droppers on loft top. Each one is set 5 meters away on house extension to fly down to droppers; this enables them to get a good look at loft top. At this time they are only fed sparingly, but with a good small seed mix to keep feather condition.

If any strike up too soon I put droppers up and try to drop them or at least hold them. When I feel they have had a good look round then I select a calm day and throw each one with a dropper for their first real fly. As soon as they are flying together they are fed a depurative mix. I also get them used to kit boxes but with two or three in each.

Some two weeks later they are kitted separately. At this stage they are fed sparingly on the above but with a little oil seed (canary mix) but only flown twice weekly 3 to 7 hours. Common sense is important here; as birds like all living things need vegetables, minerals etc. but just enough for good health.



NTU diploma with Harry's Old Bird World Record Kit at the top. Flown 22Hrs. 5 minutes on May 25, 1995



Harry's 5 hens went 20 hrs and 2 minutes on May 25, 2003. Seems to be a good date (May 25) for Harry.

Three weeks approximately before each fly day I train every other day. I like to have my youngsters 14 to 18 weeks old for competition; this gives me enough time to get them into dark. This I do slowly. If they are flying too strongly I do not consider droppers too late instead I choose an evening they maybe looking for the loft and let them go as long as possible. At dusk I drop them and let them sit with droppers until dark with lights on. This I continue until they are accustomed to lights. Eventually I fly one at a time with my old kit in training to finish their dark training.

5. Do you fly in competition or do you fly for personal pleasure? Explain reason for either answer.

Competition is the pleasure.

6. What grains do you use in training and in feed up. What determines your selection?

I prefer mix of all grains, maize, 75% legumes and 25% small seeds. No maple peas, just mainly carbohydrates after Thursday for Sunday fly. If we follow a marathon runner's training program when carbohydrates are reduced until the body wants to store this energy before the race.

7,8,9 and 10 questions are answered in the first six.

11. Top three tips from your experience with Tipplers.

Use all printed or verbal advice as your guide only, even mine.

<http://www.tipplers.ca>

Tip I. Your 4-6 weeks management will decide your success or otherwise. It is equal to common sense and not the secret of some magic or black bottle in the last four day build up.

Tip II. Do not fly too long training hours. Regulate your feed to suit time flown, especially with young birds. Good birds will want to fly too long but they must be controlled.

Tip III. Patience and understanding, good husbandry and avoid letting common sense going out the window.

Yours in the sport...

Harry Shannon.



Tex Brooks' loft or part of. From left to right Paddy Caldwell, Tom McTaggart, Tex, Ken Potts and above D. Walker



Ken Potts' loft

Thanks Harry for answering the questions and for the pictures as well.

-CNTU