

A Star has Risen

By Len Vanderlinde QRPF Inc. P.O.

In 1978 Craig Ian Porter, then 17 years old, clocked in a Blue bar hen CHPC 77 442 to win the prestigious Townsville Open Federation race, at 1040 klms it is a race most long distance flyers would just love to win. Merv Bishop, then Publicity Officer for the QRPF wrote after Craig's great win, "A Star Is Born". In 1992 Craig won the trophy for Champion Flyer of the QRPF and so now the "Star has Risen".

Craig's 1992 results were 1st Open Fed from Collarenebri 493klms, 2nd Byrock National 735klms, 4th Walgett Futurity 557klms, 14th Goondiwindi 293klms and 15th Fed in both Wilcannia 1040klms and Broken Hill 1224klms. Racing in the strong Cannon Hill Club, Craig was again the club champion for the 2nd year running, winning 10 club races and taking 2nd place 7 times as well, a truly champion flyer and at just 31 years old a lot more to come I am sure.

The blue hen which won the Townsville race was based on the Jimmy Watson bloodlines and these same lines are still winning for Craig today. He has put a couple of crosses through his family, the Appleby bloodlines, the Ref ABC of Barry Hutchinson and two Delbars from Shaun Elliott. Of these the Delbar cross has been the most successful with one pied cock producing 69 clock birds in the last 5 years, 27 of these were winners with 12 Fed cards, a remarkable success rate. Twenty five pair of stock birds are kept but only 20 pair are bred from each year.

Craig starts the season with approx 100 young birds and around 20 old birds, he separates the hens and cocks from the day he puts them in the race loft and keeps them separate, through due to pressures of work he trains both sexes together in the afternoons only. Arriving home from work at 4.40pm means the birds have to work right up until dark, especially in mid winter, in order to give the them enough exercise. Those birds which are not racing on the weekend are taken on a Saturday morning toss of around 45 to 60 minutes on the wing. Special mid-week tosses are only given to birds he is preparing for special races, this entails Craig taking time off work (without pay) in order to set these birds for big races. These tosses are given on the Tuesday afternoon prior to Thursday night basketing.

Feeding plays a big part in Craig's preparation of his race team, he does not like to over feed his birds, usually stopping when 6 or so birds have taken a drink, though he does feed them up on Saturdays and Sundays and prior to the long races. Craig's feed mix is a commercial one, using the "summer mix" in the off season and a race mixture of 2 corn, 2 wheat, 1 milo, 1 peas, 0.5 Safflower and Sunflower, extra maize is fed to the birds as the distance gets longer. Silverbeet is given to the race birds twice per week and vitamins after racing, stock birds get silverbeet every day while breeding.

Medication does not play a big part in Craig's team management, he will treat his stock birds if necessary for canker but does not believe in flock treating his race team, except to worm them, all other sick birds (he has very few) are treated individually.

Craig does not have any theories on racing pigeons, though he is very observant and

watches his birds closely, he believes short wing birds are just as good at distance racing and bloodlines are more important than any theory. As far race form is concerned he finds it hard to put into words but he knows when his birds are right and keeps a close watch on their race record in the lead up races, he also likes them to feel "spongy" and not heavy.

Advice to beginners is to stick to the basics, good clean feed, clean water and plenty of exercise. Birds with ability will come through, but trying to many different theories and making changes to the routine will lead to your down-fall, be regular in every thing you do and keep your birds happy.

Since marrying Kathryn over three years ago and moving to his new address Craig has noticed his birds are a lot happier in their new surroundings and with a happy married life style for Craig and Kathryn, no doubt this has helped Craig to become the QRPF Inc. Champion Flyer for 1992. We wish both of them many years of happiness together and lots of luck for their continued success.