For the love and care of Fancy Pigeons / Vir die liefde en versorging van Sierduiwe

Die Sierduif

The Fancy Pigeon

October / Oktober 2026

Lionel Phillips

07-11-1946
to
10-09-2026

Official mouthpiece of SAFPA / Amptelike mondstuk van die SASV

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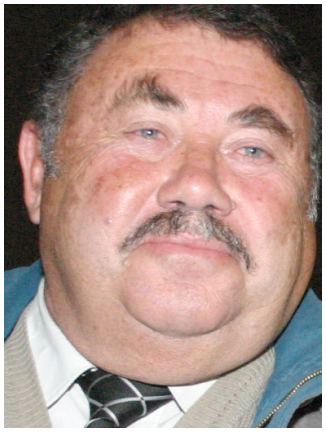
Verjaarsdae / Birthdays

N063 -	Marius Van Tonder	01-Nov
G057 -	Liam Coffee	05-Nov
G058 -	Melissa Smuts	07-Nov
G056 -	Stefan Smuts	10-Nov
D022 -	Hein Hoffman	10-Nov
D040 -	Frik Butler	10-Nov
C023 -	Jannis Esterhuizen	12-Nov
W026 -	Bertie Wessels	12-Nov
W038 -	Kitty Botes	12-Nov
B070 -	Otto Pretorius	13-Nov
N056 -	Shane Pollock	19-Nov
K075 -	Westley Sternberg	21-Nov
B033 -	Tatum Myburgh	23-Nov
B004 -	Nollie Oosthuizen	24-Nov
J002 -	Johan Nel	25-Nov
B059 -	Chris Engelbrecht	28-Nov
B024 -	Willie van Zyl	28-Nov



Voorwoord

At van Jaarsveld

Voorwoord skryf en ek is nie maats nie. Dan dink ek altyd aan Christo Munnik wat vir jare die redakteur van die Sierduif boekie was. Hy het vir elke uitgawe die voorwoord self geskryf. Waar hy al die idees vir sy insette gekry het sal net hy weet.

Sit ek ander dag en wonder wat laat mense “klick” om duiwe aan te hou of net lief te wees vir duiwe in die besonder.

In my geval was dit die optel van ‘n siek duif wat my Ma gesond gedokter het. Een het later baie geword en dit is jare gelede.

Daar is seker ander faktore wat bydra. Het Oupa of Pa duiwe aan gehou? Is daar by vriende besoek afgelê en het die gogga gebyt?

Sommige duiwe boere kan ure by die duiwe hokke spandeer. Moeilike dae, bekommernis en dan het duiwe kyk weer rustigheid in die gemoed gebring.

Groot lekkerte van duiwe boer, is die uitsoek, oppaar en die wag om te sien wat uitbroei. Om die groot word proses dop te hou. Die kleure wat soms te voorskyn kom wat ‘n mens laat kopkrap. Die besluit om te skou of nie. Die lekkerte van skou bywoon en om ou vriende weer te sien en nuwe vriende te maak.

Die wag tydens be-oordeling om te sien of jou duiwe ‘n plek gaan kry. Die heerlike kuier aande voor skoue. Die stories en verhale wat vertel word. Ou legendes wat geskiedenis gemaak het word weer oor vertel. Op ‘n skou het iemand gesê dat indien al die stories by mekaar gevat word, daar ‘n boek geskryf kan word.

Skoue is verby en die broei seisoen het aangebreek. Duiwe maats word sterkte toegewens met die broei seisoen wat op hande is. Broei daardie Kampioene en geniet jul stokperdjie.

Groetnis

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Lionel Phillips

07-11-1946
to
10-09-2026

A Lifetime in the Lofts .....

Carol Phillips

Lionel Phillips was born in Creighton and raised on a dairy farm alongside his parents and siblings. He began his early education at the local school before graduating from Weston Agricultural College in Mooi River.

He was a man of many passions: he loved his work, sport, nature, music and above all his family. Lionel and Carol married in 1969. Together they raised three children, who are now adults with families of their own. They were blessed with five grandchildren and a very special great-grandson.

Around 1971 he became an enthusiastic member of the Estcourt Racing Pigeon Club, where he pursued his passion for racing homing pigeons. Pigeon racing was much more than a hobby; it was a passion that demanded dedication, patience and many hours on the road. In those days, Friday evenings meant travelling to Estcourt from Kamberg to deliver the pigeons for the race, while Saturday brought another journey to clock the returning birds, record their times and discover how they had fared against the competition. The excitement lay in waiting for the birds to return home and seeing where they had placed. Whenever Lionel was on farm duty, Carol was on racing pigeon watch! She would sit in the garden patiently waiting and watching the sky. The moment the birds returned they had to be caught, the leg ring carefully removed and clocked instantly to secure its placing in the race.

Eventually, the long distances and the travelling required on both days became too demanding, and he had to make the difficult decision to give up a sport that had brought him so much pleasure.

Although his days of racing homing pigeons were behind him, his enthusiasm for birds continued in a different form. His move from racing pigeons to breeding and selling ornamental birds marked a

Carol and Lionel

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new chapter in a lifelong interest.

He turned his attention to keeping and breeding other birds, including cockatiels, lovebirds and various types of parakeets. What began as a new interest soon developed into a rewarding little venture. He bred the birds and sold them to others, earning a useful supplementary income along the way. It was an activity that combined his enjoyment of birds with a practical benefit, allowing him to continue working with the creatures he had always found so fascinating.

Sadly too, this chapter of his life eventually came to an end as well. At some point, restrictions on the export of birds from South Africa, possibly to South America, affected the market. With fewer opportunities to export birds, the market became increasingly saturated, and local pet shops could no longer absorb the growing numbers of cockatiels, lovebirds and other birds being bred. What had once been an enjoyable and worthwhile little business gradually became less viable. In time, he had to bring this venture to an end, closing another chapter in his life that had been built around his love of birds.

Lionel finally turned to his roots and dedicated his focus to the art and craft of breeding and showing pigeons, this time fancy pigeons.

He was a longstanding and highly respected member of South Africa's fancy-pigeon community and a familiar figure within the pigeon fraternity associated with the Royal Agricultural Show in Pietermaritzburg.

His involvement with fancy pigeons spanned many years. A dedicated breeder and exhibitor, he kept and showed a remarkable variety of breeds and was also an active contributor to the wider pigeon community through club administration, show organisation, publicity, and the sharing of his knowledge and experience.

His association with the Royal Show extended over many years through the Pigeon Section and the broader Royal community. Lionel played an active role in Royal Show pigeon activities over many years, not only as a successful exhibitor, but also through his contributions of photographs and reports, and his service as Secretary of the KZN region of the South African Fancy Pigeon Association.

Lionel had a lifelong interest in aviculture. He belonged to a community of dedicated breeders, exhibitors and volunteers whose commitment helped make the bird, poultry, pigeon and rabbit sections such an enduring part of the agricultural character of the Royal Show.

These sections were never simply about competition; they brought generations of breeders together, introduced the public to specialist breeds and husbandry, and helped preserve knowledge and traditions that might otherwise have been lost.

In July 2013 Lionel was AWARDED National Colours in the Administration Category by the SA Fancy Pigeon Association.

In 2016 Lionel and Carol uprooted from Wartburg, KZN and moved to Plettenberg Bay to be closer to family. For seven years after moving, Lionel remained dedicated to breeding and showing pigeons - a cherished persuit he reluctantly had to set aside three years ago following his illness.

It was back in 2010 that Lionel was diagnosed with Parkinsons Disease. Through every challenge, he fought his illness with incredible bravery right to the very end. In August Lionel and Carol were blessed to celebrate their 57th wedding anniversary together.

He passed away on the night of 10th September 2026 at the age of 79 years. He is at peace now and pain-free.

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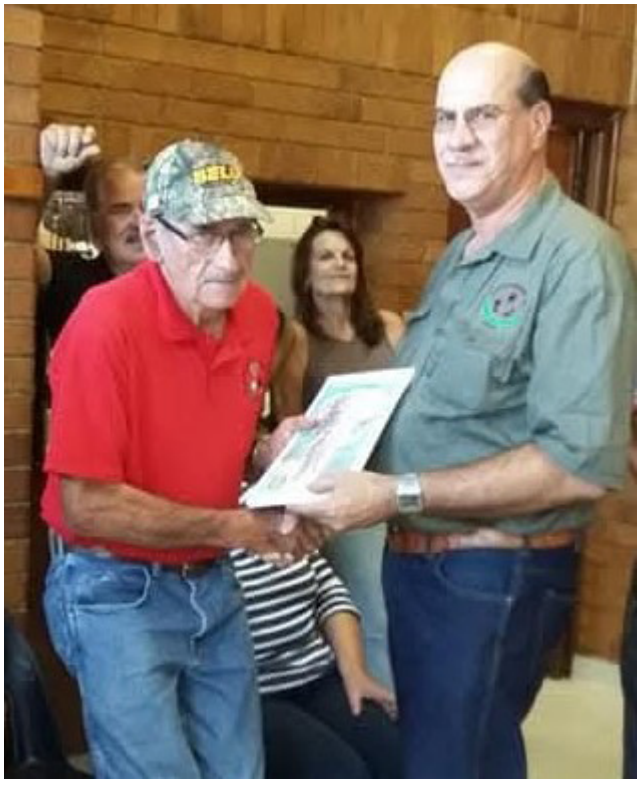
Lionel won the "Champion Bird On Show" in Gqeberha



Lionel during his last visit to Addo Elephant Park. This was the place he like to visit.

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Tribute to the late Lionel Phillips

Christo Munnik

I met Lionel for the first time in 1992 at the Natal regional show in Pietermaritzburg. What a nice person and gentleman always running doing what he had to do as Regional Secretary.

I joined the Northern Freestate region in 1992 and all the members decided that we would attend the Natal regional show even if we only send pigeons down to take part in the show. We kept on doing that for the next 20 years of which I was part of every year non stop to show and judge at the show.

In 1994 the region's name changed to Kwazulu-Natal region and as always the show was big and good and the hospitality of the members were outstanding and there were always Lionel Phillips that made everything worthwhile down there.

We used to sleep over at Lionel and Carol's place Friday and Saturday nights as well as by the late Neil Raw and Angie Raw.

Lionel became a very good and dear friend of mine over the years. One thing he never forgot to do over the years, was to write everybody that attended the regional show, a thankyou letter, whether showed your birds or judged the birds at the show.

In 2014 me and Cora moved down to the South coast and I became the President of KZN with Lionel still being the Secretary of KZN, what a pleasure it was having him as my Secretary because I knew that everything will be in place and the show will run smooth with all the other guys doing their bit as well.

When Lionel and Carol retired I saw them twice at the Eastern Province regional show where he showed his birds and did well with them but by then Lionel was already sick and in a wheelchair. I felt so sorry for the once active running around man now sitting in a wheelchair but as always the gentleman that he was.

Lionel my friend my wish is that you rest in peace until we meet again.

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Augustus 2025

The History and Origins of the Birmingham Roller

By Nando Oosthuizen

Part 1 of 2

(Important : Please see references at the end of the article)

So a colleague at work was talking to me about pigeons he saw on one of my WhatsApp status and to be honest anytime anyone starts talking to me about Birmingham Rollers or Pigeons in that fact, they probably regret it after 20min, but on this day he asked me the same question everyone always does "why do Birminghams roll" and then he asked "where do they come from and when were they developed" and I did not have the answer so that sent myself down a rabbit hole of research that costed me my entire lunch time for that day.

So, after all that I thought of writing an article of what I found, but the history is very vague and not everyone always agrees and some of you might even know or heard a different history as I have found but none the less hope you enjoy.

The History and Origins of the Birmingham Roller

There are few performance pigeons with a history as fascinating as the Birmingham Roller.

Today, the name Birmingham Roller is known throughout the world. Fanciers recognise the bird for its rapid, continuous backward roll, its ability to perform as part of a kit, and the incredible speed and style that a quality roller can display.

But where did this bird actually come from?

The surprising answer is that **we don't know exactly.**

There is no surviving record telling us the precise year the Birmingham Roller was created, no single documented mating that can be called the first Birmingham Roller, and no breeder who can conclusively be credited with creating the breed.

What we do have is a much more interesting story: a performance pigeon that appears to have developed gradually in the **West Midlands of England**, particularly around Birmingham, through generations of fanciers selecting pigeons for what they could do in the air.

Before There Was a Birmingham Roller

To understand the Birmingham Roller, we have to go back before the name itself existed.
Tumblers and pigeons capable of performing aerial somersaults had been known for centuries. Flying tumblers were particularly well established in the English Midlands, including Staffordshire and Worcestershire. Historical accounts indicate that these birds were being kept and flown long before the Birmingham Roller became recognised as a distinct type.

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The important point is that **“roller” was not always the name of a breed.**

It could describe what a pigeon did in the air.

Early English fanciers had different types of flying tumblers, and they paid attention to the way each bird performed. Some tumbled slowly, some spun horizontally, and others developed the ability to make rapid backward somersaults while descending through the air.

The birds that eventually became recognised as Birmingham Rollers were the result of fanciers continually selecting the performers they liked best.

That distinction is important.

The Birmingham Roller was not necessarily “invented” in one moment.

It was **developed through selection.**

Birmingham and the Working-Class Pigeon Fancy

Birmingham became an important centre for pigeon keeping during the Industrial Revolution.

The city and surrounding Black Country were heavily industrialised, and pigeon keeping became deeply connected with working-class life in the region. The Birmingham Pigeon Archive describes pigeon fancying as an important part of the social history of the West Midlands and specifically identifies the Birmingham Roller as one of the region’s claims to fame.

For these fanciers, the attraction wasn’t simply owning an unusual-looking pigeon. It was seeing what the bird could do.

The birds were flown, compared and bred according to their performance. A pigeon that displayed something special in the air could become extremely valuable to a breeder—not because of its colour or appearance, but because of what it might contribute to the next generation.

Generation after generation, breeders could keep the birds that showed the characteristics they wanted and breed away from those that didn’t.

Eventually, this selection produced something considerably more specialised than the ordinary flying tumbler.

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When Did the Birmingham Roller Actually Appear?

This is where the history becomes particularly interesting.

We often hear that the Birmingham Roller was developed during the 1800s, and that is a reasonable broad description. However, historical evidence shows that the story is not quite that simple.

The National Birmingham Roller Club records the exact date of origin as uncertain and notes that Fulton mentioned the Birmingham Roller in 1876, while references to the breed also appear in the late 1870s.

That gives us an important historical clue.

By the late nineteenth century, the Birmingham Roller was sufficiently recognised for the name to appear in written records.

But that doesn't mean the breed suddenly appeared in 1876 or 1879.

The pigeons themselves almost certainly had a longer history.

In fact, the NBRC's historical account points out that flying tumblers were already common throughout the West Midlands for at least two hundred years before 1900.

So the safest way to describe the origin is that **the Birmingham Roller emerged gradually from the flying-tumbler tradition of the English Midlands and became recognisable as a distinct performance type during the nineteenth century.**

What Birds Created the Birmingham Roller?

This is another question where certainty becomes difficult.

There isn't enough surviving contemporary evidence to give us a definitive recipe.

The NBRC specifically states that the birds used in creating the Birmingham Roller are uncertain because of the lack of contemporary literature. One historical theory, mentioned by Lydell in 1887, was that the Birmingham Roller descended from the Dutch Tumbler described by Moore in 1735.

Other accounts and later fanciers have suggested influences from different types of tumblers and rollers, including Oriental and Persian birds.

What we can say with much greater confidence is that the **Birmingham Roller belongs to a much older family of tumbling and rolling pigeons,** and that Birmingham fanciers took existing performance traits and selectively developed them.

That is a much more defensible explanation than claiming that one particular breed created the Birmingham Roller.

From Tumbler to Roller

The real achievement of the Birmingham fanciers was not simply producing a pigeon that could tumble.

Pigeons had been doing that for centuries.

The goal became to produce a bird that could **roll.**

A good Birmingham Roller doesn't simply perform an occasional backward somersault.

The roll should be a rapid, continuous sequence of backward rotations, with the bird losing altitude as it performs. The ideal performance became associated with speed, tightness, control and a straight line through the roll.

This is where selective breeding became so important.

A breeder might have several birds that could tumble, but only a few might possess the combination of characteristics needed to become exceptional rollers.

Those birds were the ones worth breeding.

And then their offspring were tested.

The best were retained.

The weaker performers were removed from the breeding programme.

Over many generations, the performance became more consistent.

The pigeon was no longer simply a tumbler that happened to roll.

It was becoming a **specialised performance roller.**

The Birth of the Kit

Another important part of Birmingham Roller culture was the development of flying birds together as a **kit.**

Instead of judging only one bird at a time, fanciers could evaluate a group of birds flying together and watch how they responded to one another.

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The ultimate goal wasn't simply to produce one spectacular pigeon.

It was to produce a family of pigeons capable of performing together.

This changed breeding.

A breeder needed birds with individual quality, but also birds that could work together, maintain the kit and respond correctly when the opportunity to perform came.

The Birmingham Roller therefore became more than an acrobatic pigeon.

It became a **team performance bird.**

The Men Who Took the Birmingham Roller Forward

As the breed developed, individual fanciers became increasingly important.

There were many men who contributed to the Birmingham Roller, but one name eventually became almost inseparable from the modern breed:

William H. Pensom.

Pensom did not create the Birmingham Roller.

That distinction is important.

The breed already existed before him.

What Pensom did was take the performance pigeon that had developed in the Midlands and become one of its greatest advocates, breeders and historians.

William H. Pensom

Pensom is arguably the single most influential figure in modern Birmingham Roller history.

Born and raised in the Birmingham area, he became deeply involved with the roller families of the English Midlands. According to the NBRC's historical material, Pensom collected birds from different families in the region and eventually exported rollers to fanciers in North America.

His influence wasn't simply genetic.

Pensom had a very definite idea of what the Birmingham Roller should be.

For him, depth alone wasn't enough.

The ideal roller needed **speed, style, control and quality.**

The traditional description of the correct Birmingham Roller became a pigeon turning over backwards with extraordinary rapidity through a considerable distance, like a spinning ball. That concept became central to the breed's performance standard.

Pensom also wrote extensively about the breed, most famously in *The Birmingham Roller Pigeon.*

His writings became enormously influential because they didn't just discuss pigeons—they attempted to

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explain what a true performance roller should be.

The National Birmingham Roller Club describes Pensom as a figure who fundamentally changed the hobby, both through the birds he collected and exported and through the methods he promoted for flying Birmingham Rollers.

The Birmingham Roller Crosses the Atlantic

The Birmingham Roller was not confined to England.

The breed had already reached North America by the late nineteenth century. The NBRC records that Charles Leinhard of Cincinnati imported the breed in the late 1870s, with birds being advertised in 1879.

Further importations followed.

Fanciers in Canada and the United States began obtaining birds from the English Midlands, and later Pensom became particularly important in transferring Birmingham Roller families and knowledge to North America.

This would have a profound effect on the future of the breed.

The Birmingham Roller was no longer simply a Birmingham pigeon.

It was becoming an **international performance breed.**

Pensom and the Modern Roller

One of Pensom's greatest contributions was bringing together birds from different English families.

Interestingly, this means the phrase **"Pensom bloodline"** can sometimes give a misleading impression.

Pensom himself worked with birds from multiple Midlands families. The historical accounts of his exports indicate that his pigeons were not necessarily descended from one isolated family, but represented the culmination of different English roller families that he had gathered and selected.

This is one reason his influence became so widespread.

He wasn't simply passing along one family of pigeons.

He was passing along a **breeding philosophy.**

The philosophy was that the Birmingham Roller should be bred for performance.

Not simply for depth.

Not simply for colour.

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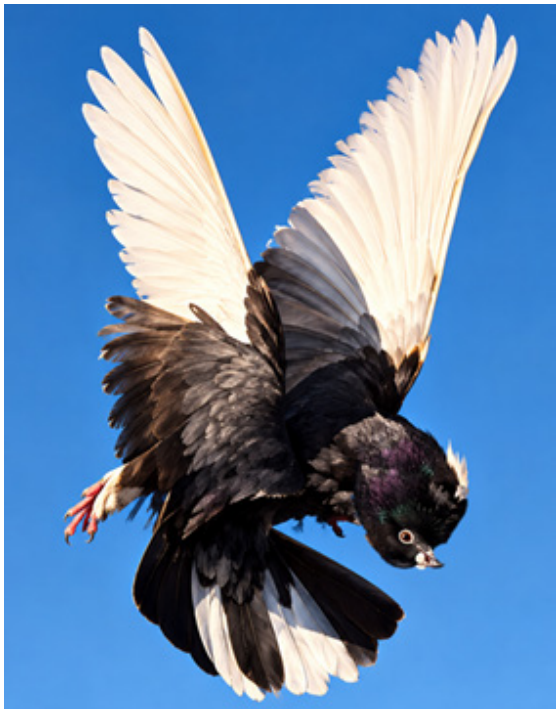
Not simply because a bird had a famous name in its pedigree.

The bird had to perform.

The Standard of the Birmingham Roller

Over time, the qualities expected from the Birmingham Roller became increasingly defined.
A quality roller should possess:



- **Velocity —** the speed of the roll.
- **Style —** the tightness and quality of the rotation.
- **Depth —** how far the bird travels while rolling.
- **Frequency —** how often it performs.
- **Control —** the ability to complete the performance and recover correctly.
- **Kitting ability —** the ability to fly and perform properly with the rest of the kit.
- **Break quality —** the impact created when several birds roll together.

These qualities are what separate the Birmingham Roller from simply being a pigeon that tumbles.

And this distinction has existed for generations.

Historical descriptions of the Birmingham Roller specifically emphasise the continuous backward somersault and the quality of the performance rather than merely the ability to turn over.
I'd use **proper references rather than a generic "various sources" list.** The sources I was able to verify include:

1. **National Birmingham Roller Club (NBRC)** — *Explore Origin: The Birmingham Roller* — historical information on the breed's uncertain origin, early references, English development and movement to North America.

2. **William H. Pensom** — *The Birmingham Roller Pigeon* — foundational historical and performance-standard material. The NBRC confirms the publication and its importance in Roller history.

3. **National Birmingham Roller Club** — historical material on William H. Pensom and the development of modern Birmingham Roller flying.

4. **National Birmingham Roller Club** — *My Life With Birmingham Rollers* / *Historical Standard* — information concerning the traditional Birmingham Roller performance standard.

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5. **Kate Whiston** — Pigeon Geographies: Aesthetics, Performance and Place — academic research discussing Birmingham's historical importance to roller and tumbler pigeon culture and the development of flying competitions.
6. **Birmingham Pigeon Archive / Community Archives** — historical material documenting pigeon fancying and the Birmingham Roller as part of Birmingham's working-class heritage.

7. **Wendell Levi** — The Pigeon — historical reference work concerning pigeon breeds and tumbling pigeons.

8. **Richard K. Entrikin & Lawrence C. Erway** — *A Genetic Investigation of Roller and Tum bler Pigeons, Journal of Heredity (1972).*

9. **R. K. Entrikin & S. H. Bryant** — *Tumbling in Pigeons, Nature (1974).*

10. Piet Brouwer, "Geskiedenis van die Birmingham Rollerduif in Suid-Afrika," Die Sierduif, January/February 2004. This is probably the most valuable source for the section because it pecifically discusses the South African history, early clubs, competitions and English imports.

11. South African historical material on Birmingham Rollers, including the record identifying the 1945 Ken White imports.

12. National Birmingham Roller Club, "Explore Origin." Useful for independently confirming the international status of Ken Payne, O.D. Harris, Bob Brown and other English exporters.

13. Graham Dexter interview, Winners with Spinners history. Particularly useful for Dexter's first-hand recollections of Ken White, Ollie Harris, Bob Brown and the other English fanciers.

14. Ken White letters/articles published in Die Sierduif — particularly valuable because they give us material written by White himself rather than somebody remembering him decades later.

Pelser Loft

Teel met
Birmingham Rollers
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Adres: 78 Zombastraat, Doorn, Welkom

Januarie 2026

sluit aan by ons...

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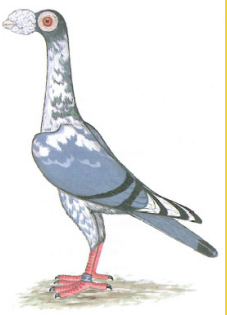
Prestigeskou ***Augustus 2025***

3de Saterdag van Januarie elke jaar in Kroonstad



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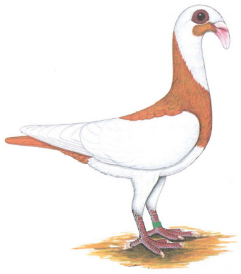

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Bankovs and Manie Fourie Trophies/Trofees

Rules

1. The duration of the competitions will be from the 1st of July to the 30th of June.
2. An informative/factual article written and researched by a member will earn 300 points. An informative article from another source send in by a member will earn 150 points.
3. A letter from a member will receive 150 points.
4. Regional news will be awarded 200 points.
5. A match meeting report will earn 200 points.
6. A Regional, Young bird, Agricultural, District or Speciality Club show and the Championship show will earn 1 point per 1 bird, exhibited plus 200 points if areport is send with.
7. A good idea will earn 100 points.
8. A region which increases its membership as explained in 1 above will receive 100 points for every additional member.

NB Any member who obtain a R1000 full page advert for the Magazine will earn free membership for the following year.

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1. Die tydperk van die Kompetisies strek van die 1ste Julie tot die 30ste Junie.
2. ‘n Leersame/feitelike artikel deur ‘n lid self geskryf en nagevors verdien 300 punte. ‘n leersame artikel vanaf ‘n ander bron wat net deur ‘n lid ingestuur is verdien 150 punte.
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8. ‘n Streek wat sy ledetal verhoog soos in 1 hierbo uiteengesit sal 100 punte ontvang vir elke addisionele lid.

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1. North-of-the-Vaal:	**1200**

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3. Northern Freestate:	**844**
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5. Northern Cape:	**0**
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