# THE ELIMAR PERSONALITY PROFILE.

# FEATURING: KEITH MOTT OF CLAYGATE.

## **Questions by Jim Emerton.**

## Q1) Did you love and observe nature as a child, and were your parents keen on pigeons?

A1) I would like to think I'm an animal lover and as kids my brother. Phil and I had all the usual pets, but were obsessed with racing pigeons at a very young age in the 1950's. My uncle had a farm in Winkfield, near Windsor (Mark Gilbert country) and we spent most of our summer holidays when we were young working on his farm, and I must say, enjoyed every minute of it. I am fascinated with pigs! I was born in Feltham, near Heathrow Airport in 1950 and no one in the family were pigeon fanciers. My younger brother, Phil, and I started keeping pigeons in our early youth and the Mott brother's pigeon career stared when we obtained a pair of birds, 'Alma' and 'Charlie', from a school friend, which were housed in a small rabbit hutch. This pair of pigeons was bred at the loft of Terry Smart, who was in partnership with the Groombridge family of Kingston and it is common knowledge that Terry with his wife Carole, became the secretary of the London & South East Classic Club some 25 years later. After a few years of flying them around the rooftops we had to give them up, as we moved house. I played the drums and was very involved at the time with the top rock n' roll band, 'The Impalas', and backed many top artists, including, Dave 'Screaming Lord' Sutch, Shakin' Stevens and Gene Vincent at the London Palladium in 1969. I really enjoyed playing live in front of thousands of people, just as much as recording and TV sessions. I was lucky enough to record tracks at 'Morgan' studios, which was one of the best recording studios in the UK at that time and Shakin' Stevens was recording there that day. I was 11 years of age when my parents, Fred and Iris, purchased my first drum kit and I used practice in the back bed room to all the old Beatles and Rollin' Stones records. Our next door neighbours soon got fed up with my drums beating out to the best of the 1960's music scene and called the police in a couple of times to shut me up. My dad couldn't wait for me to join a band and was highly delighted when I finally took the drum kit on the road. I also sat in on recording and television dates, playing the drums. Being a top rock drummer and playing at all premier venues all over the UK was my life for many years, but in 1970, Phil and I, decided to start up pigeons again, this time to do the job properly. We obtained some good stock and start racing, which they had never done before. We acquired some Kirkpatrick and Kenyon stock from the late Johnny Winters of Kingston, which formed the basis of the Mott Brothers loft, and joined the now, disbanded Molesey & District H.S.

# Q2) How did your competitive instincts in life develop, and what and who inspired you to dedicate yourself to winning, and are you motivated by greatness?

A2) Years ago I was very competitive and would like to think I have been very successful racing my pigeons, but these days because of the lack of time, I have found it hard to race pigeons properly, and have turned into a bit of a pigeon keeper or if you like, 'pigeon lover'. The last couple of years have seen me race a few long distance young birds with the view to racing Tarbes in the near future. I have had some great experiences in my life, but there is no 'buzz' like winning pigeon races, especially from 550 miles! In the early days I enjoyed Federation racing and my best pigeon of the 1980's was my great Champion 'Kenny' and this Denys Brothers grizzle cock won 37 positions in the first six, including thirteen times 1<sup>st</sup> club, also 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> in the Surrey Federation. This 'once in a life time' pigeon was eventually put to stock, breeding many winners and his daughter bred 2<sup>nd</sup> open Up North Combine for a fancier in the north east of England. Champion 'Kenny' had several outstanding brothers, the best one being another grizzle named 'Warrior', and he won seven times 1<sup>st</sup> club, also 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> in the Surrey Federation. These brilliant cocks were raced on the natural system and never raced further than Plymouth (180

miles). The third brother, 'Double Top', won three times 1<sup>st</sup> club, including 1<sup>st</sup> club (by 75 minutes), 5<sup>th</sup> Surrey Federation, 7<sup>th</sup> open S.M.T. Combine Penzance. The 1980's were a golden decade for Keith and Betty Mott, winning up to ten firsts in most seasons and were the premier prize winners in the Surbiton F.C. three years consecutively. Since the mid 1990's I have loved long distance pigeon racing and have been lucky enough to own some wonderful pigeons that have scored well up in the open results from Tarbes, Pau and Bergerac.

Probably my best all round long distance pigeon was the 2001 blue chequer hen, 'Foxwarren Complete', the champion 550 mile racing and breeding hen, being the winner of 2003: 32<sup>nd</sup> open L&SECC Dax (530 miles), 2<sup>nd</sup> East Grinstead CC Dax, 2004: 29<sup>th</sup> open L&SECC San Sebastian (560 miles), 2005: 116<sup>th</sup> open L&SECC Pau (552 miles), 2007: 109<sup>th</sup> open L&SECC Pau. A real class hen! Her sire was 'The Cannon Cock' bred by Eric Cannon and winner 331st open NFC Pau (552 miles), 77<sup>th</sup> open L&SECC Perth (370 miles). This cock was the original pigeon Eric bred for me on my restart in 1998 and was a grandson of 'Culmer White Flight' and Champion 'Culmer Sam', being a son of the great 'Culmer 14 Hen'. The dam of 'Foxwarren Complete' was the brilliant blue cheque stock hen, 'Pathfinder', bred by Brian Denney and her dam was Champion 'Blue Pau' winner of 41st, 201st open NFC Pau (738 miles) and dam of many premier long distance racers including Champion 'Classic Lad' winner of 1st open Northern Classic Saintes (573 miles on the day of liberation). 'Pathfinder' was lightly raced before being put to stock and in 2001 flew 900 miles in three weeks to record 91<sup>st</sup> open L&SECC Perth, 52<sup>nd</sup> open L&SECC Thurso (520 miles). 'Pathfinder' was a champion breeder, producing many premier 550 mile racers, including 'Foxwarren Complete' and 'Foxwarren Pretender' dam of Champion 'Brian's Blue' winner of : 2008: 1<sup>st</sup> section K, 61<sup>st</sup> open NFC Tarbes, being clocked on the day of liberation flying 748 miles,1<sup>st</sup> RPRA UK Long Distance Champion 2008. 'Foxwarren Complete' proved to be a 'gold mine' stock hen breeding many top 550 mile racers, including 37th open L&SECC Tarbes and a late bred from her was donated to the BHW Blackpool Show Charity Auction in 2010 and was sold for £740. 'Foxwarren Complete' is the dam of the fantastic stock hen, 'Foxwarren Northern Complete', dam of many premier 550 mile racers including: 2<sup>nd</sup> Federation Bourges (581 miles), 3<sup>rd</sup> Federation Bourges, 4<sup>th</sup> Federation Bourges, 5<sup>th</sup> Federation Bourges, 8<sup>th</sup> Federation and is grand dam of 1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> Federation, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> Amalgamation, 8<sup>th</sup> open NEHU (2,355 birds) Bourges (581 miles) in recent seasons. She is the dam of Fred Dickson's champion cock, 'The Five Times Bourges Cock', winner of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> Federation Bourges and sire of 1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> Federation, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> Amalgamation Bourges (581 miles). Northern Ireland long distance 'ace', Ronnie Young has a full brother '01148' to 'Foxwarren Northern Complete' and he is the sire of many premier racers including: 2011: 191st open INFC St. Milo (OB) National (1597 birds), 2012: 215<sup>th</sup> open INFC St. Milo (OB) National (1408 birds) and grand sire of: 2012: 200<sup>th</sup>, 250<sup>th</sup> open INFC Yearling National (4319 birds). The wonderful record of 'Foxwarren Complete'!

#### Q3) Did your early education and peer groups sow the seeds of your future success?

A3) Because of what I do in the sport of pigeon racing, I have been very lucky to have met many of legends of our sport through the years and have taken note of many of their winning methods. I have several close friends who are some of the very best in the business and rubbing shoulders with these great fancier, you can't help but leaning something about the game! I think we all get knowledge along the way from fanciers we met, but most of what I've learnt has come from great friends like Eric Cannon, Brian Denney and Ronnie Wasey, who are all legends of long distance pigeon racing. In the early years when I was into Federation racing, I used to look to the methods and performances of many top racers, including my great mate, Bobby Besant, who is one of the best sprint pigeon racers I've ever met. In my opinion my close friend, the late great Eric Cannon of Godalming was one of the best pigeon fancier I've ever met and when Eric passed away in the July 2000, I lost my mentor and my best friend, and the sport of pigeon racing lost one of its greatest fanciers. He was always there for advice, putting me right, not only on pigeon matters but on life in general and was a true friend. I have a good knowledge of Eric's wonderful long distance family of pigeons, being close to Eric and his pigeons for well over 25 years, I had the sad job of arranging and running his dispersal sales in the winter of 2000. Here we are over ten years on and

there have been countless reports of fanciers putting up premier performances with Eric Cannon's pigeons, including two N.F.C. winners. In my opinion is that the name, Eric Cannon, will live on in the list of racing pigeon greats forever!

# Q4) Can you describe the individual personal qualities that you demonstrate in life and sport?

A4) This is a hard one! I think the honest answer to that is: I've worked and given 110% to the sport I love all my life, most of the time to the detriment of myself and my family. I wouldn't think anyone has worked harder for the sport of pigeon racing all their life, than me! The work I loved, and must add I've been lucky enough to meet some wonderful people in what I've done over the years, but have had no appreciation in many cases. Now I've hit 60 years of age, I keep clear of pigeon clubs and pigeon 'politics' and do what I have really enjoyed doing for the last 45 years, racing a few pigeons and writing quality articles in the pigeon fancy press.

# Q5) Are you motivated by pigeon celebrity fame and culture or wish to remain relatively detached from it all. As some key fanciers do?

A5) Another hard one! Although it's never been intentional or pre-meditated, most of what I've done in my life has been high profile, but 'motivated by pigeon celebrity fame', I don't think so! I am very well-known and hopefully respected in our great sport, but if I wanted to be famous I would not have packed up playing in a band. I get motivated because I love pigeons and get great satisfaction working hard for the sport.

#### Q6) Have you made a study of books, of the art and science of pigeon racing?

A6) I must confess that although I have been writing in the pigeon fancy press since 1972, I am not a great reader of books or looking at pigeon videos. I think you are born with good stock sense and all the pigeon racing 'greats' are born naturals. The great Eric Cannon was a brilliant pigeon racing, but was also wonderful dog man and was a great general stock man! In my opinion, we 'mortals' mostly learn our pigeon racing trade from the good fanciers and then by the 'trial and error' method in our own loft. Although I am a keen pigeon racer, I also love showing my birds and must say, I can't turn off in September, as soon as we finish racing, I switch into show mode! If I had a big garden and not the postage stamp we have now. I would defiantly have a second loft for Show Racers as well as my long distance racing team. We have been very successful through the years and won hundreds of prizes and trophies showing our birds, and have won at all the National Shows. I am well sort after ever winter as a judge and travels hundreds of miles carrying out the duty, and I have judged at most of the big Show Racer Society Open Shows, three at the BHW Blackpool Show, twice at the RP Old Comrades Show at the NEC Birmingham and three times at the NEHU Peterlee / South Shields Show in Newcastle. The reason I write this is, I think my many judging jobs through the years has taught me how to condition pigeons and win with them in the show pen and race pannier. A lot can be learnt from pigeon books and videos, but personally I like to be hands on!

## Q7) What, if any are your tastes in art, books and music?

A7) Music is still very dear to me and I still derive a lot of pleasure from listening to all types of music, from Guns n' Roses through to Katherine Jenkins. When I was a kid and kicking a drum kit all over the UK, I always maintained that to be a good musician you had to appreciate all types of music. The main music we played was Rock, but in our spare time our bass player, Keith Reed, and myself used to sit in on Jazz jam sessions around the London area. The best drummer I ever heard was the late great John Bonham of Led Zeppelin and he was everything I wanted to be as a musician. Another drummer I really rated from the other end of the spectrum was Brian Bennett of The Shadows; just listen to his solo on 'Little B'. A fantastic musician! I think I was lucky to be a teenager in the 1960's, because that's where it was at and bands played live in those great times,

and were not 'Karaoke' singers, performing with backing tapes running behind the stage curtain, as they do today. As I've previously stated I enjoy all types of music, but love Rock music! I really like Steve Winwood (The Spencer Davis Group / Traffic) and have been buying his albums since 1965, and have seen him play live twice. My cousin, Peter Creswell, was a top session guitarist in the late 1960's and recorded with Steve Winwood at that time and promised to take me to one of the studio sessions, but I never did get to meet Winwood. My choice in music isn't every ones cup of tea, but I enjoy listening to Guns n' Roses, Paul Rodgers (Free / Bad Company), David Gilmour (Pink Floyd), Lynyrd Skynyrd and Led Zeppelin.

# Q8) What is your take on the image of pigeons as perceived by the public – is it a working class hobby or dominated by rich and powerful who may be different?

A8) I personally think the image the sport of pigeon racing has in the public domain needs a lot of working on! We need to kick off the 'Trafalgar Square' image, which creates the joke undertone to most of the coverage our sport gets in the media these days. I have appeared on the TV eight times with the pigeons since 1984 and have turned down quite a few other offers through the years because I could smell a 'micky take' involved for our sport. In my opinion I don't think the general public has enough knowledge of pigeon racing to know if it is a working mans or rich man's sport.

### Q9) Do you like football, athletics and other sports, and who are the top in their field?

A9) I love sport, so much so, I would watch two fly's race up the window pane! I could not survive without Sky Sports and watch a lot of sport on the television. My best mate, Peter Taylor, comes up to my house ever Wednesday evening for our regular 'boy's sports' night and we drink tea, and watch mostly Speedway, Boxing, Athletics and Darts. My wife, Betty, introduced me to Speedway when I first met her 45 years ago and at that time she was really into the sport, having visited several European countries to watch world champion meetings. Our second date was on a Thursday evening at Wimbledon Speedway and we used to watch all the great riders, including Ole Olson, Barry Briggs, Ivan Mauger and of course the 'Dons' wizard Ronnie Moore. It was great to see Tai Woofinden become the Speedway world champion at Torun FIM Grand Prix in Poland in October 2013. His championship win was a good 'buzz' for Peter and me, as Woofinden is the first British world champion for many years!

#### Q10) How do women differ in their personal approaches to livestock?

A10) I think woman make brilliant pigeon fanciers because they have a wonderful infinity with the birds and animals in general, more so than men. I have met many outstanding lady pigeon fanciers through the years and in my opinion, none better than the late, great Nora Major of Putney.

I first met the late Nora Major in the mid-1970 and she really was one of the best lady fanciers I've had the pleasure to meet. I first visited her Putney loft in 1977 for an article. Nora was a great worker for the sport, always willing to help anyone and was famed for her blunt manner. A spade was a spade with Nora, but she got the job done. In 1968 Nora built a loft and by 1970 she had a loft full of Alex Fleming pigeons and never looked back. Nora said at the time all her best pigeons were Fleming and she owed all her success to Alex. From that day the trophies poured in with the Fleming pigeons winning out of turn and in 1976 when she recorded 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> club Dax (537 miles), having the only pigeon on the day of liberation in the Richmond club. Nora lifted all the trophies in the club that season, leaving three trophies for 40 other members to share. Nora told me, she was a hopelessly addicted pigeon person and thought she should have been a man. She considered one of the nicest compliments she had received was in 1973 when she had won the much coveted 'Brooker Gold Cup', in the London Coly for the second time. A veteran of the sport came and shook her hand and with his congratulations he said, 'Nora, you are a jolly good pigeon man, to win the 'Brooker Gold Cup'. Her best pigeon was her champion blue pied hen, 'Nora's Hen', and this brilliant bird was a champion in the truest sense, winning, 1975: 3<sup>rd</sup> club, 1977: 1<sup>st</sup> club, 1<sup>st</sup>

Federation, 1<sup>st</sup> open London & South Coast Combine (2,868 birds) Bergerac, 1<sup>st</sup> club, 5<sup>th</sup> Federation, 13<sup>th</sup> open Combine Nantes, 1978: 1<sup>st</sup> section E, 4th open N.C.F. Pau (£1,052), 1st club, 5th Federation, 18th open Combine Nantes, 1979: 26<sup>th</sup> section E. N.F.C. Pau. What a pigeon! She was bred from the Alex Fleming lines when crossed with a pigeon from Mick Graham of then Richmond and when Nora retired from the sport in the early 1980's this champion hen was sold to C.H. Besant of New Malden for £1,000. Nora's loft housed many Federation winners and found it hard to tell of her best achievement but in 1974 she was highest prize winner in the West Middlesex Federation, winning Young Bird Average Cup, Federation Points Shield, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2nd Federation in June, and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Federation in August. She was 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> club Bergerac (450 miles) in the Putney club in 1973 and Nora's loft was premier prize winner in the Richmond club six seasons out of seven in the 1970's. A wonderful record! As well as being the secretary of the Richmond club and the London Coly for many years, she was also a vice president of the RPRA London Region and president of the London Federation. She was very hot on bookwork, recording everything on paper. The late great Nora Major! Probably one of the best lady pigeon racers ever!

### Q11) What is your perception on how a bird orientates and homes?

A11) I personally think the birds use the sun and on non-sunny days the earth's magnetic field. In my opinion, not only do we have bad races in the dead sky situation, 100% cloud cover and no sun, but also by the atmosphere created by wind direction. When I say wind direction, I don't mean head or tail winds affecting the birds work rate, but the general conditions in the atmosphere created by the wind direction. When the wind is in the East the conditions are mainly hot, heavy and dead, but after nine years as a convoyer, I've come to the conclusion that a North West wind generally creates the very best conditions for pigeon racing. Reluctantly at the end of the 2010 season I retired after nine good years as chief convoyer of the London & South East Classic Club and Central Southern Classic Flying Club, which took me to all the major race points in France, including twice Tarbes and six times to Pau. I loved convoying and could write a book about my experiences while driving the pigeon transporter on the continent, but I would never go to Guernsey for a holiday as I took the Classic young birds there 15 times and have had enough of the place.

On one cold winter's night in the mid 1990's my phone rang and it was his good friend, John Tyerman, who at the time was the President of the L&SECC. After a few minutes 'chewing the fat' about the sport in general. Johnny asked me if I fancied joining the Classic's convoying set up and assisting Doug Went, who at that time I considered to be one of the best convoyers in the country. Doug Went and I did our first job together when we convoyed the first Classic of the 1997 season from Alencon, which had a record entry at that time of nearly 2,400 birds. Doug Went was one of the greats of convoying racing pigeons, with many years' experience on the South and North roads and I must say, working with him for 18 months taught me a lot about being on the road with the pigeons. I took over as chief convoyer for the young bird Guernsey Classics in 1998 and I think the best liberation site we visited was Bordeaux. I loved convoying the pigeons through France to places like Bordeaux and Tarbes, but it is very hard work, and is a young man's game! I retired from convoying the L&SECC at the end of the 2008 season, as I thought at 58 years of age I was getting too old for the pressure and sleeping rough in Lorries. I had no intention of ever doing 'big time' convoying again, but the Central Southern Classic Flying Club chief convoyer's job was offered to me at the end of 2009, which involved no driving and the prospect of the luxury of the use of one of the premier transporters in the country. I had convoyed South and North Road inland, but the main enjoyment for me was convoying the pigeons to France and it gave me a great buzz to produce good Classic racing from over the English Channel. It must be the 'gipsy' in me that made me except the CSCFC job in the 2010 season, which gave me the opportunity to visit some new liberation sites in France, including, Messac, Carentan and Bergerac. I must say that in my time as a convoyer, I've never seen a perfect pigeon transporter or been to a perfect liberation site. We don't live in a perfect world and we can always find something to criticize! I personally like the old fashioned baskets, the like of which we used in the L&SECC for many years and were used by Catterells Pigeon Transport of Blackpool who served our sport so well for many years, before

packing up about ten years ago. When you are in France with the pigeons it's nice to know you have a good team behind you at the home end and was lucky enough to have my good friend Steve Appleby doing my weather for me! I think convoying racing pigeons, whether it is for a big Classic or small club race is the most responsible and demanding job in the sport! The only advice I can give to any youngsters who have dreams of becoming a racing pigeon convoyer, is when you are away with the pigeons in France be your own man, with your utmost priority being the bird's welfare and producing the best race possible, with the situation you are presented with that weekend. Do not be influenced by outside voices or follow club rules if I think it will be detrimental to the welfare of the pigeons in your charge. Your paramount priority when convoying is the welfare of the birds!

John Tyerman and I have been good friends for many years and we have been through several pigeon campaigns together, including serving on the NFC and L&SECC committees and convoying pigeons together. We roomed together when we travelled for the National Flying Club committee meetings and in 2003 we convoyed the International birds to the waiting train in Belgium, when Brian Sheppard of Trowbridge won the race with his wonderful blue chequer cock, Champion 'Legend'. When the members of the NFC sent their birds to their first International, no one really knew what an outstanding success it would be and that British racing history was in the making. That Dax International marked the start of a new era in British long distance pigeon racing and John and I were very proud to be a part of it.

#### Q12) Do you see mankind as being superior to other forms on earth or not?

A12) No I don't! I'm a great believer that 'RESECT' make the world go around. We might be a bit more intelligent than other life forms on this planet, but everything should be shown resect. I must add to that, rich or poor, we humans are all equal, as we all come on this earth with nothing and go out with nothing!

#### Q13) What do you think about writers, committees and politics?

As I previously stated I have served all my pigeon racing life on committees and been at the cutting edge of pigeon politics all that time and on most occasions I have finished up getting my 'arse' bitten. I felt very honoured and really enjoyed my three years as President of my beloved London & South East Classic Club. I am still a life vice president of the classic, which is great! As I previously said, now I've hit 60 years of age, I keep clear of pigeon clubs and pigeon 'politics' and do what I have really enjoyed doing for the last 45 years, racing a few pigeons and writing quality articles in the pigeon fancy press.

I have been writing in the fancy press since 1972 and enjoy doing my regular pages every week in the pigeon fancy press. The very first article I did in the fancy press was the prize presentation, in the winter of 1972, for the old and now disbanded Molesey club and very soon after that had my own regular page in the Weybridge based Pigeon Racing 'Gazette', then run by Roy and Audrey Bishop. Later in the 1970's I was judging at the Inter Counties Federation show in Hertfordshire and met Mike Shepherd for the time. Mike worked for the 'Racing Pigeon' newspaper at that time and invited me to submit some articles and photos for inclusion in the 'Pictorial', which was then and still is today the premier glossy monthly pigeon magazine. Really at that time Mike was the man who took me to the top level of pigeon journalism and set me up for what I do in the fancy press today. Mike is my mentor and we have been good friends all through those many years! I have got many good friends in the pigeon racing journalism world, but another man I respect and consider a good friend is the former British Homing World editor, Cameron Stansfield. Cameron is a nice guy and his knowledge of long distance pigeon racing is second to none. I made my first pigeon photography box on a building site on a cold winters day at the end of the 1970's, with the sole purpose of enhancing my pigeon article and it is a practice I still carry out today. Nothing looks better than an article with plenty of quality pigeon photographs! I think I must have been the

press office for every organization I've belonged to and in the 1990's I was press officer for the National Flying Club. Writing is what I do and still enjoy it, even after all those years.

#### Q14) Is a belief system of value to you?

A14) Yes, life would be a shambles without a system and everything should be neat and tidy, with no loose ends! Being a very tidy person, I believe this. Everyone should have a 'Belief System' to work them through life and create ambition. What more can I say!

### Q15) The Universe is vast – is it possible that life exists beyond the Earth?

A15) Fascinating question! Where is the end of the Universe? Its mind blowing to think about, as we all know everything stops and has an ending. Yes, I believe there is something out there and there is life forms on other planets. Why should life be unique to Earth? Fascinating!

### Q16) What is the ultimate goal in your pigeon life?

A16) To enjoy the greatest hobby in the World! For many years I have strived and worked very hard to win pigeon races and I think I was successful on that score. These days, now I'm a bit older, win or losing has no real consequence to me, I just love pigeons. I can't turn off summer or winter; I love Show Racer and Racing Pigeons and derive great pleasure from both. Since 1972 I have written in the Fancy Press, which for most of the time has been detrimental to my racing success because of lack of time, but the writing has opened other doors for me and I have many the legends of our sport. Many times through the years I have been sitting at my computer writing an article and thought to myself, I should be in the loft doing so and so, or down the road training the birds. At the end of the day, I just love pigeons and had some great times messing around with them!

#### Q17) Is strain creation still valid today?

A17) I don't see why not. I know it is common knowledge that most of the lofts in the pigeon racing world, success or not, survive on and race other fancier's successful families or cross families. The great Eric Cannon had his own base family of 550 mile pigeons that he created after the Second World War and was always looking for a good cross, but always kept the original family intact. Eric had wonderful cross from Fear Brothers, Tommy Gilbertson and Michael Spencer through the years, which all produced some great champions for the Wormley loft. My good friend, Brian Denney of Strentsall is the same, he has his original base family created in the 1960's, based on the Derek Smith of Great Ayton and Gerard Van Hee pigeons, and he brings in the odd cross from time to time. I think almost all successful fanciers follow this practice, so strain creation can't go out of fashion.

#### Q18) What must a pigeon racing great achieve to be given the distinction?

A18) Achieve many outstanding performances over a long period of time! Whatever sport you are involved in, it is very hard to become 'top dog', but it's twice as hard to stay up there. I can name fanciers all day long who have come up and won something big and then disappeared the following season, but the real great pigeon racers are up there year after year.

#### Q19) Which is the top pigeon racing nation on Earth?

A19) The United Kingdom, what more can I say!

#### Q20) How do you wish to be remembered in history?

A20) As one of the great worker for our wonderful sport of pigeon racing and showing. We work hard for the sport, most of the time to the detriment of other important things in our life and all we need in return is a bit of respect. We don't do want we do for pigeons, for financial gain, as quite often we are out of pocket, we do it because we love the sport. The key word that makes the world go around is RESPECT!

KEITH MOTT - www.keithmott.com (OCTOBER 2013).