

voice

# JULY PR MEMO

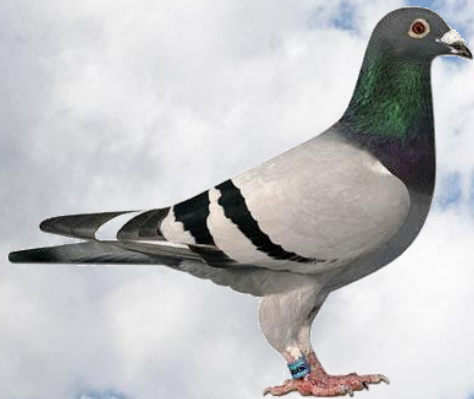


PIGEON RACING UK & IRELAND  
**RAPTOR ALLIANCE**  
PROTECT OUR PIGEONS AGAINST RAPTOR PERSECUTION

This month's activity has consisted of a mixture of both regional and national liaison. We have continued to liaise with the national media regarding 'Feral Pigeons and Racing Pigeons - Worlds Apart', in addition to a new release about the Secret Messages school project and a press release about the role of pigeons during in conflict.

The national liaison has gone hand in hand with our sustained regional efforts which has continued to be successful at raising awareness of the issues facing the pigeon racing community.

In addition to this, educational titles have shown a lot of interest in the Secret Messages school project and this has resulted in some great coverage.



# NOTTINGHAM POST

## Nottingham Post

The paper featured an interesting article on pigeon fancying around the Nottingham area - including interviewing local fancier John Schofield.

[Click here for the feature](#)

# INDEPENDENT EDUCATION TODAY

## Independent Education Today

The Secret Messages story was featured on the online version of Independent Education Today. This publication reaches around 7,000 education professionals.

[Click here for the feature](#)

## Creative Teaching and Learning

The blog for the publication Teaching Times published a feature about the Secret Messages initiative.

[Click here for the feature](#)



WORKSOP

# Guardian



12

WORKSOP GUARDIAN

## Future of pigeon racing under threat

A Worksop pigeon racer fears the future of the once popular pastime is now under major threat across the county.

There are around 42,000 pigeon racers in the UK, with an estimated 1,000 in Notts.

However, numbers have dropped dramatically in recent years due to the number of attacks on racing pigeons by Sparrowhawks and Peregrine Falcons.

Ernest Green, who has been involved in pigeon racing since he was 12, including racing them for 30 years, has seen his pigeons attacked twice this year so far, losing a total of seven birds.

The first attack saw four pigeons not return home and one which was killed in his back garden in front of him.

"I love my pigeons, but I don't know if I want to carry on racing them," Ernest said.

"I can't even feed the little wild birds as the sparrowhawks come down and

attack them and it means that they end up waiting for me to let my pigeons out for exercise."

Ernest is yet to race any of his pigeons, having spent the last few years putting together a group of birds that he hopes will be able to compete.

However, the loss of pigeons in attacks by predatory birds has set this back considerably.

Lee Fribbins, representative of Pigeon Racing UK and Ireland, commented: "It is important that the tradition of pigeon racing is kept alive in Notts."

"Pigeon fancying is a significant part of the history of the UK and the birds played a pivotal role in both World Wars."

"We want to encourage more people to take up the hobby, whilst lobbying for the protection of our birds to safeguard the tradition for future generations."

# pick

west oxfordshire  
issue seven  
August - September 2014

## in this issue:



Beers and bells in Bampton



Pick: Carterton



Silverstone Circuit



## The unsung heroes of World War One

With today's age of technology, it can be easy to forget about how animals paid a pivotal role in the First World War - in some cases they meant the difference between life and death. In the centenary year of World War One, it's important to remember how many creatures, including the humble homing pigeon, played a vital role in communications during the conflict.

Pigeons were responsible for sending rescue messages back and forth from soldiers to their base. Over 100,000 birds were used, with an astonishing success rate of 95% getting through to their destination with their message, proving the huge impact they had when other communication systems were still unreliable during this time.

The pigeons would use their natural homing ability to get home, with their magnetic and solar compass following landmarks by aerial recognition and their sense of smell.

Lee Fribbins, representative of Pigeon Racing UK & Ireland, commented: "2014 marks 100 years since the start of the First World War. Not only do we remember the bravery of the soldiers, but we also want to remember the amazing achievements of homing

pigeons during this terrible conflict. Pigeons were an invaluable form of communication during the war and the birds literally saved lives - without them, many more men would have perished."

The homing pigeon is said to be one of the toughest birds on the planet and will voluntarily fly over 20,000 miles a year, which is the equivalent to flying completely around the world at the equator.

Today there are still around 43,000 pigeon fanciers in the UK with Pigeon racing continuing to be a popular pastime around the country. Not only have they served Britain for generations, they have proved their many talents across a wide spectrum and should be treasured for the foreseeable future.

Racing Pigeon Pictorial International has just produced a special, one off magazine dedicated to the commemoration of the work that pigeons carried out.

The magazine is available from the Racing Pigeon, Unit 65, The Seedbed Centre, Wyncolls Rd, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9HT. Contact 01206 842221 / racing123@btconnect.com.



# EAST ANGLIAN

## DAILY TIMES

Wednesday, July 16, 2014 | EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES

### Children learn how pigeons helped war effort

A new and interactive educational project, Secret Messages, is offering school children across Suffolk and Essex the opportunity to learn about the vital and dangerous work that carrier pigeons undertook during the world wars.

A collaboration between the Midlands National Flying Club and the Royal Pigeon

Racing Association, the project will teach children how to write simple secret messages and demonstrate how pigeons carried important messages during the wars.

A successful pilot took place at Sir Robert Hitcham's Primary School in Framlingham. Year 5 teacher Emma Montague praised the experience, and claimed it created a real life context for the pupils learning. "The children were really taken aback," said Emma. "It was

quite amazing to see the birds take off."

During the Second World War, over a quarter of a million pigeons were donated by British fanciers to help in the war effort. Once the war was over, pigeon racing was resumed, however their contribution to the war effort did not go unnoticed, with 32 of the 62 Dickin medals awarded to date going to carrier pigeons.

The very first pigeon to win the Dickin medal was Royal

Blue who won the medal "for being the first pigeon in this war to deliver a message from a forced landed aircraft on the continent while serving with the RAF in October 1940".

Royal Blue was donated by the King, illustrating the Royal family's strong connection with pigeon racing since the late 1890s. To this day, there is a loft at Sandringham and Her Majesty the Queen is now a patron of the Royal Pigeon Racing Association.

British history has seen many patrons who strove to make our country a better and safer place. However, many forget that the humble homing pigeon played an enormous role in emergencies during both the world wars and still give great benefits to fanciers today.

Donna Beard, who delivers the lessons to the school children said: "We have had a really positive response to taking pigeons into schools in the past, which is why we feel that the Secret Messages project will be of great value to children and their teachers alike.

"Children enjoying handling the birds and learning to write their own secret messages will help to show the importance of these birds' contribution. What a great tribute to all involved in the First and Second World Wars."

Schools are able to apply to Flying Back to Nature for an experienced handler to visit with a small team of homing pigeons. The Secret Messages project is a free service for pupils of all ages.



“Children enjoying handling the birds and learning to write their own secret messages will help to show the importance of these birds' contribution. What a great tribute to all involved in WW1 and WW2.



# AUGUST AT A GLANCE

We will continue to follow up all our regional and national press releases throughout the course of August in order to raise even further awareness of the impact that pigeon racing has in the UK and its historical importance.

We are also meeting with Raptor Alliance on Tuesday 12 August to discuss the RSPB and moving forward regarding any issues which may be raised by the organisation in the coming months.

