

In Memory of the Outstanding Breeder,
Writer and Judge,

OTTO FRIESE

Text: Martin Zerna, PR Manager of VDT

Translated of Mick Bassett

Historical photos kindly provided by Martin Zerna.

Otto Friese was during his lifetime a prominent breeder of Fancy Pigeons, also well known as a Judge and a writer with vision. He was one of the biggest Pigeon Personalities of his time in Thuringia and in Germany as a whole. To the present day his name is closely connected with Erfurt where he lived between 1919 to 1943 in the Town of Arnstadt.

He was often referred to as 'The Chemist' - he was a chemist by profession and in that branch also made a name for himself. Born the sixth of seven children on the 24th August 1872. His father was at that time a busy restaurant and hotel owner in Fehrbelin, in the small district of Belline (Brandenburg) Northwest of Berlin. At Easter 1878 his father sold the family business and moved with the Family to Eisleben in Saxon-Anhalt to take over a larger premises, the 'Mansfeld Court'. In the large Hall of this premises Pigeon and Poultry Shows would be held and it is probably here that the young Otto Friese discovered his love for the various breeds of pigeons which was to shape his entire life.

Probably due to the pressures of work, Friese moved several times. It is documented that in 1916 he was living in the Rhineland. In 1919 his name is entered in an Arnstadt address book. We know he was married in 1906, as published in the 1st April 1931- 'Illustrated Supplement to Thuringian Poultry-



O. Friese, jetziger Vorsitzender

Pigeon-Waterfowl Breeders' was a Congratulations Notice on the Silver Wedding Anniversary of Mr and Mrs Friese by the then Chairman of the LV (Regional Association) Saalfeld, William Mesch. From February 1925 for ten years, Friese was Chairman of the Local Arnstadt Club. The club members became almost addicted to the interesting and informative Breed talks. His success as a chairman arose from the lucky circumstance that he could rely implicitly on the services of several Breed experts within the Club, who were able to cover a wide range of Breed Topics.



Left: Archangel, bronze black wing. Photo: Mick Bassett.

In the early years it was with the help of Benjamin Kieswetter, a local Counsellor but he was also assisted by Arthur Unbreit, an exceptionally successful breeder of German Beauty Homers, who later became the successor to Friese as Chairman and later Hermann Koch, also later a Chairman of the Club and Breeder of German Long Face Tumblers & Thuringian Croppers. Others were Kurt Decker, who was a Fantail Expert and active writer, also Hans Weißbach, who developed into an exceptional Judge. This then was the Committee that surrounded Otto Friese.

These brilliant 'Arnstadters' helped pave the way for Otto Friese's fame and reputation, so that later his contact with Dr. Paul Trübenbach (a publisher) who appreciated Friese's friendly and knowledgeable character, was all the more successful and Friese was able to use this contact to publish 'Facts on the Fancy' in Trübenbach's Journals produced by his publishing Firm.

Quite logically, Friese was also a well respected Judge, and was in demand both Nationally and Internationally. For instance on a visit to Denmark he brought back the Danish Suabian and in 1938 exhibited a pair in the Arnstadt Show.

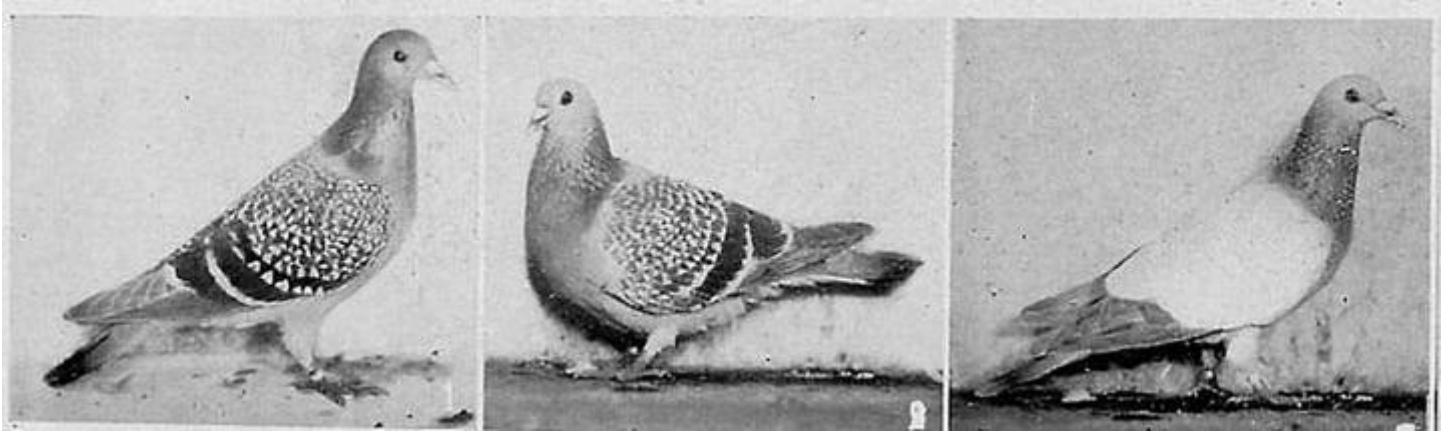
**Right: Danish Suabian.
Below: Lark Marked
Coburger.
Photos: Mick Bassett.**



Otto Friese also knew the BDRG President Emil Schachtzabel from Halle, who was also an honorary member of the Arnstadt Club and they fostered intense contact with one another.

Friese was a well known personality in several breeds. Without his knowledge of breeding, the Coburger Lark would not be what it is today.

He was responsible for forming and directing the Special Breed Club. Friese's Trademark was the Lark Marked Coburger.



His vision of the Breed was published in 1925 as "The Coburger Lark in Word and Pictures" by Paul Trübach's Publishing House in Chemnitz; the book was somewhat of a Bible for the Coburg Lark Breeders and provided a quantum leap in the fortunes of the breed.

Friese also stamped his breeding knowledge on the development of the Thuringian Cropper, particularly the Self Whites; in 1938 he exhibited an aviary of 10 in Arnstadt with great success.

Right:
Thuringian Cropper, Self White.
Photo: Ad van Benten.



Below: Archangel (Gimpel)
Copper Black-Wing.
Photo: Mick Bassett.



The Area around Arnstadt was always a Hot Bed of Gimpel Breeders; Friese bred them on Copper Black-Wing (Archangel) and was very successful.

It was during this time that he came of the thought that another colour of the 'Gimpel' Pigeon could be bred, in that the Colours of the Gimpel (Archangel) were reversed, so Black Body, Ground Colour and Copper Wing Shield and in Plain Head and Shield. The Idea would not let him rest, so he spoke with the local Gimpel Breeders on the subject. They were from the outset curious of the outcome of such an endeavour and gave him some encouragement.

Friese took the idea seriously and a few years later was able to present pigeons with a black body and copper colour wing shields, both plain head and peak crest. Obviously there were still many birds with greyish flanks and bronze reaching into the neck, breast and head and black tips to the shield feathers, so because of this, the Gimpel breeders refused to acknowledge this 'new' Variety.

So the Dream of a Black Copper Wing Gimpel faded away, or so was the thought in those circles, but not for Otto Friese; he considered what could be made of this new colour pattern and his thoughts turned to the possibility of turning this into yet another Thuringian Pigeon Breed.

**Right: Thuringian Gold Beetle.
Photo: Mick Bassett.**



This was how the 'Thüringer Goldkäfer' (Thuringian Gold Beetle) came about and the Breed was first exhibited in Thuringia in Arnstadt, so we know that Otto Friese was the actual and spiritual creator of the Thüringer Goldkäfer; a breed that was re-made in a very short space of time, by Thuringian Pigeon breeders after World War 2.

Otto Friese was also acting chairman of the Thuringian Rare Breed Colour Pigeon Club until his death. After the 2nd World War, the Local Arnstadt Club erected a Memorial Stone to this Great Breeder, who died in 1943, in the cemetery in Arnstadt, bearing the Inscription:

"To that Great Patron of the Pigeon and Poultry Hobby,
Otto Friese, 1872 - 1943,
'in the Fancy', his Arnstadt Friends"

Unfortunately this stone was later removed and never found again.

The Fanciers in Thuringia have always been aware of the Renown attached to the name of Otto Friese and even under the Government of the DDR, Prizes at Shows were given to honour his name.

At the 59th VDT Show, in November 2010, the German Association of Fancy Pigeon Breeders (VDT) took this opportunity to award Special Prizes to the following Breeds: Coburg Larks, Thuringian Croppers and Thuringian Gold beetle Pigeons, in memory and appreciation of this outstanding and gifted Breeder, Judge and Author.

