

1886 - 2011

**Short Faced Tumbler Club
125 years old**

Photos and text: James E. Mullan (GB)



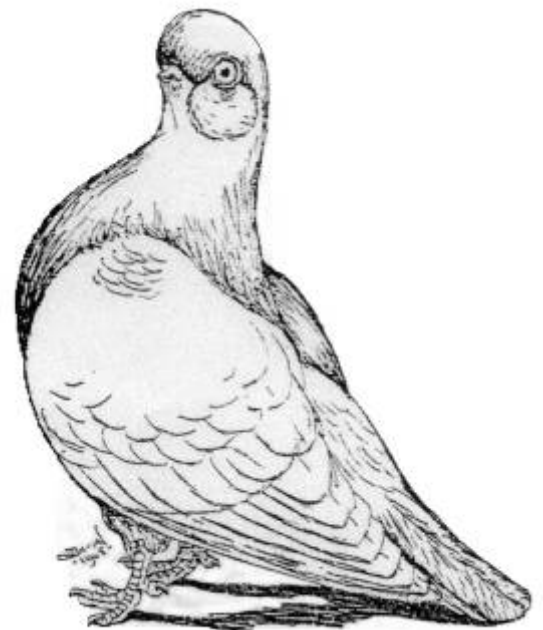
The Short Faced Tumbler Club celebrates its 125th birthday this year 2011. Would you believe the club was started in 1886 in the Globe Tavern a public house in Fleet Street London by a group of short faced tumbler fanciers. Some great names in short face history include Mr. Esquilant and Mr. Fulton who were both short face tumbler breeders.

Above: To celebrate the 125th Jubilee of the Club, I have organised some silk coat patches in Red and Yellow using the artwork of Joe Davin, as to me it captures the essence of a Short Faced Tumbler with style.

Mr. Fulton wrote a whole section on Short Faced Tumblers in his book and put in 7 excellent colour plates to show all the colours, style and markings. Sadly the black mottle has become extinct, which is a real wonder as the fanciers held this colour in high esteem at the time Fulton was putting his book together.

(A quick note; if any Short Face Tumbler breeders would like a copy of Fulton's Short Faced Tumbler section? I still have a few of the green book, which was part 2 of the centenary handbook we put together in 1986)

Right: Joe Davin's (USA) drawing 1965. His drawing is one of the best and looks like our birds of today; note style and beak.



It is indeed interesting reading and I quote the section on the beak as it refers to a goldfinch beak, which has come up in Short Face conversation on many occasions over the past few years, as we seem to be heading for a boxed beak miniature long faced tumbler with dropped flights and our standard drawing in the new NPA Standards book does not do justice to the real style of our Prince Regent. No disrespect to Jean Louis Frindel of France and his attempt at a short face, but he has not got the eye for the finer points and it is a poor shaped English Short Faced Tumbler; it is not fish or fowl and frankly needs to be necked and put in to a black bin liner as it does not represent our style of birds we have now or our ideal that we should be projecting to the rest of the world. We need to put the style back for others to see that we have not abandoned the all important S shape for the more upright position that is being projected by this drawing we have now.

Back to the plot; this is what Fulton wrote in his book on the short face tumblers beak for all to read.



Left: Bill Burnside of Florida USA with my young son Jamie and myself. Bill runs the International English Short Faced Tumbler Society.

At the time of our visit he had Jimmy Zerbo's birds in his loft, I sadly did not get to see Jimmy this time as he was not feeling too great.

his being usually correct in the lower mandible, while the upper is more of a Vandyke-brown or even sometimes black. This is however a comparatively unimportant point, only to be weighed in close competition, as we would not object much to any bird unless both mandibles were black, or what is called a kite coloured beak.

This is a great fault, as it gives a coarse appearance, however good otherwise the bird may be, but it is only found in the hard-feathered birds, or those, which are too deep in ground-colour.

Right: Colin Seymour (L) of Australia on a loft visit to Brian Coulson (R) in England.



The grand points in the beak are the size and the shape, as a bird may have an exceedingly short beak, and yet be bad. The kind of beak most esteemed, but also most rare, is known as the goldfinch beak. When perfect it resembles that of the bird from which it takes its name, on a small scale, and, if not too long, adds much to the fineness of the head. But some of the goldfinch beaks are so long that they become wry-beaked, one of the mandibles crossing the other. Such a beak must always be kept trimmed with the scissors, so as to be as close fitting as possible, otherwise the bird, being unable to preen its self properly, will soon swarm with vermin, and very likely also become cankered in the beak.

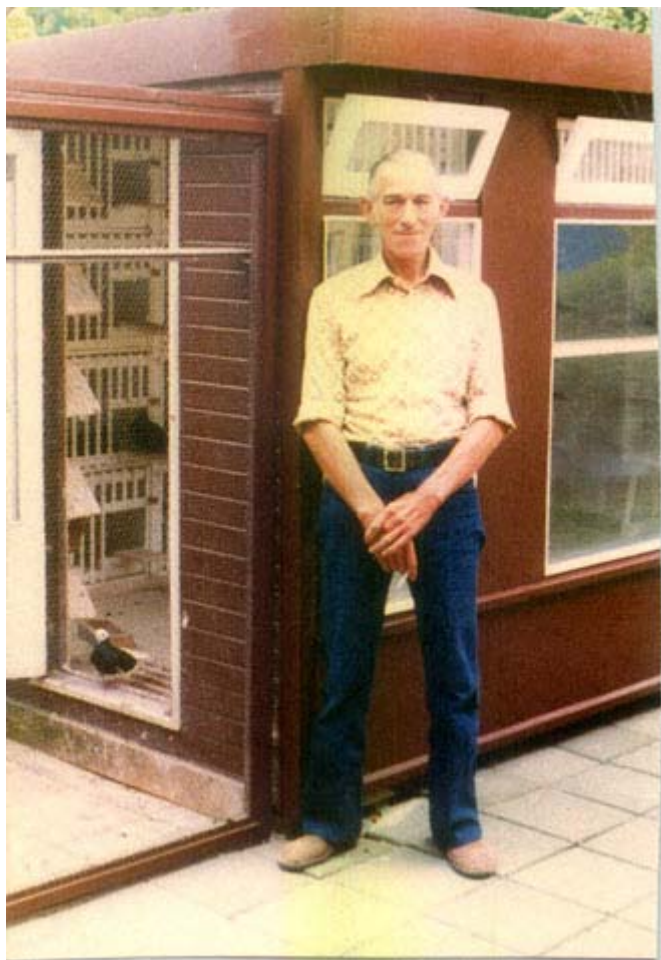
Left: Robbie Mast of Holland on the left, outside of his loft showing off his excellent stud of tumblers, I was impressed with the wire coops as they were on wheels and could be wheeled around the yard to get the sun on the birds when a nice day.



Hence birds having goldfinch beaks at all long must always be well looked after, and attended to on the least sign of the beak becoming wry, and on the whole we prefer as the safest form of beak that which more resembles the half of barley-corn. This class of beak being shorter scarcely ever requires attention, and always looks well; and if the skull be high, short, and good, it shows as well as anything the beauty of the short-faced tumbler.

The upper and lower mandible should be of about the same thickness, closefitting, and straight. There is a kind of beak to be particularly avoided, namely, that which the upper mandible appears much more massive than the other one, hanging, as it were a little over it, and showing a hook or curve downwards at the point, something like the beak of an owl pigeon. No matter how short such a beak is, it never looks well, giving a coarse appearance to the head at best, and in addition, being nearly always accompanied by a coarse wattle, which is about the worst fault that can be found in a Short Faced Tumbler, giving beak and head altogether a common coarse look which every fancier will refuse to look at. This fault is rather apt to be hereditary, so that we advise all our readers carefully to avoid either a coarse beak or wattle, unless they particularly need the bird for the breeding of colour only, and on that account are willing to run the risk.

Right: Pete v/d Zanden Holland outside his loft. Pete kept all colours including some wonderful balds. Below a photo of all his birds in the sun porch eating fruit bread slices as a treat. There were 20 pairs plus a few late youngsters being brought on for the show pen.



Length of face is measured from the front of the eye-wattle to the point of the beak. We decline to give any standard length, as others have done, knowing well that such is deceptive, and that a bird may be really very short in face, and yet measure rather long.

This depends chiefly on width of skull; for it is obvious that in a very broad-skulled bird the "bevel" to the point of the beak will make a great difference in length of measurement, so that a short-faced bird, if broad in skull, might really measure longer than a quite common-faced pigeon. The best-faced pigeon is that which would appear shortest if the skull were supposed to be cut in two longitudinally, and the length measured on this ideal median line.

Right: The late Gerald Manning from Norwich (England) and his outstanding Yellow Short Face.





Mr Esquilant wrote these words on the beak: The beak should be short, fine and straight, similar to a grain of the oat, and cut across the centre and placed horizontally in front of the head. In colour it should be white or nearly so. This beak, which I designate the corn beak, I consider preferable to the goldfinch beak. It is not being so likely to shoot out in length as the other, or become twisted and misshapen. In conjunction with the beak (of which it is generally considered a part) is the wattle at its base; this while serving as a nostril, should be merely large enough to conceal the appearance of the roots of the feathers immediately in front of the head; it should appear to spring from the head and be partly buried under the feathers, not standing out in strong relief, as if challenging attention instead of having to be looked for to be seen.

Left: Eric Hampson outside of his loft in Glazebury in England. Sadly Eric has no shorties at the moment.

Billy Cooke - who painted under the name Inglewood and drew in 1981 these two short face tumblers prior to painting a 3ft by 2ft oil of all the colours - wrote these words: I am a keen beak enthusiast. I do not like to see blunt ended beaks on Short Faced Tumblers; a short-faced tumbler should have a "finch" beak, by this I mean a beak with both upper and lower mandibles pointed, as like the wild goldfinch has.

Colin Seymour wrote on the Short Face Tumbler beak: I do not breed from down faced birds. The fault is consistently maintained in the stud, so do not use down faced birds. Select birds with a straight outlook and use them. Keep a fair proportion of box beaked birds, especially cocks.

The correct beak on a short face is narrow gaped and finch like. The continual mating of finch beaked birds together will lead to the lengthening of the beak. Use the short boxy beak to shorten them up. But do not mate box beaked beak birds together.

Our standard for the beak of a Short Face Tumbler in both the 1986 and 1997 handbook was as follows: Very short, fine, straight and pointed. Wattle small and fine in texture.

Right: Robbie Mast's pure white Short Face Tumbler shown in Germany.

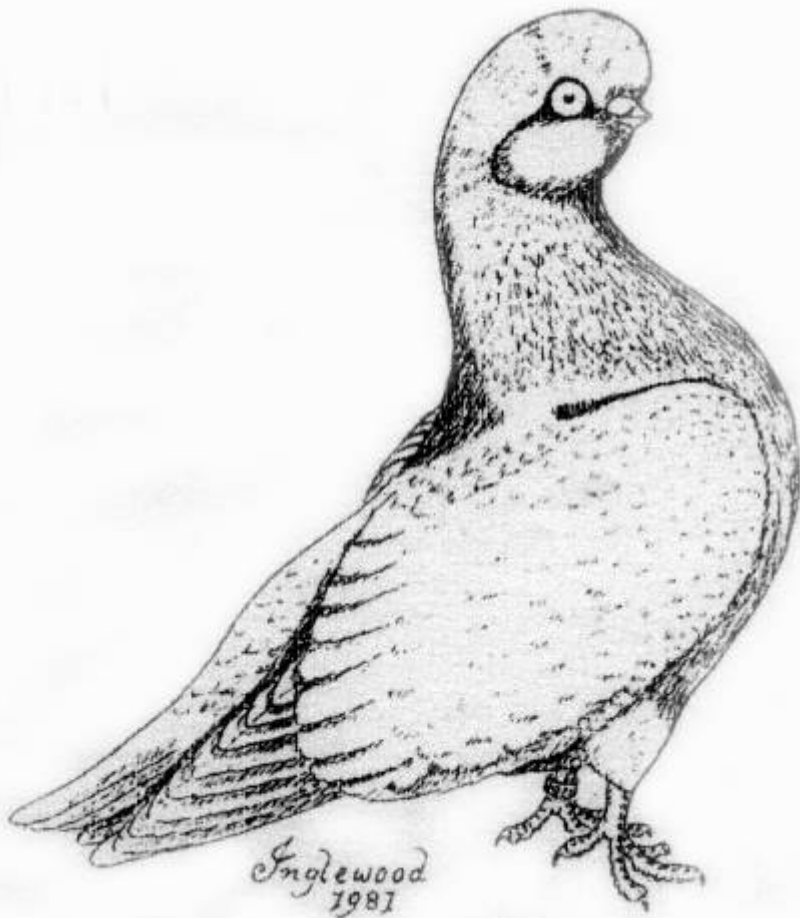




Bearing in mind how long ago some of these sections on the Short Faced Tumbler's beak were written - and we are still striving for that fine beak and we must not stop this quest for perfection whether it is that of a Goldfinch or half a grain of oats - it is still not a box beak that we are looking for on our birds.

Left: Loft visit to Alfons Perrick Germany. From left to right: Bertus v/d Vegt, Alfons Perrick, Rob v/d Vegt, Jim Mullan en Mr. Sharmen.

The Short Faced Tumbler Club added the word 'English' to its title a few years back, as more and more Short Face breeds were being shown in the UK and it was felt by a few - including myself - that our identity needed to be cast in concrete and I printed vinyl stickers in red and white with the word English in the title to celebrate the fact that it is an English breed and listed as country of origin.

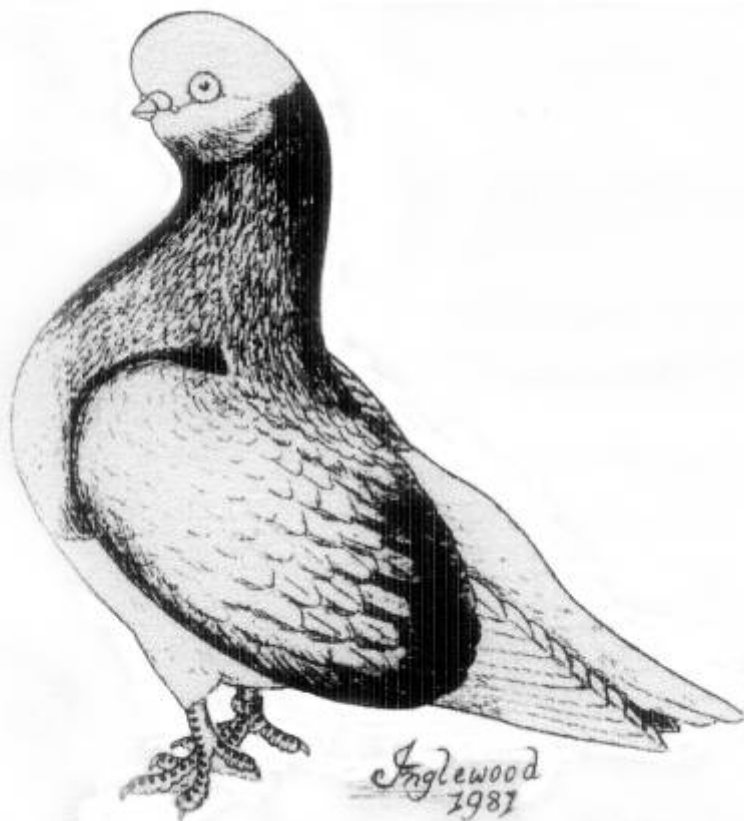


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The brotherhood of breeders all over the world striving to breed this wonderful Prince Regent of the pigeon world, The English Short Faced Tumbler. We are indeed blessed with friends and dedicated fanciers who have taken these little birds to their hearts over the years. Fanciers like the late Gerald Manning of Norwich, who joined the club in 1956; Colin Seymour of Sidney Australia and Brian Coulson of Eye Suffolk England, who joined the club in 1978 with his wife Mary - Brian has the honour of being a past secretary of the club.

Well that's about it for now. I close wishing all English Short Faced Tumbler breeders success in the breeding pen in 2011 and to celebrate our 125th birthday I have organised some silk coat patches in Red and Yellow, using the artwork of Joe Davin, as to me it captures the essence of a Short Faced Tumbler with style. Remember we breed English Short Faced Tumblers, not miniature Long Faced Tumblers with dropped flights. Look to the style of the Fultons prints and Joe Davins drawing: head-back-rump up a classic S shape, which we are in danger of loosing sight of if we do not look to the whole picture of our breed.



All the best for now, by:
Jim Mullan, Breeder, Exhibitor and International Judge.
Committee Member, National Pigeon Association UK.
NPA Master Breeder, EE European Champion Breeder.

Always Promoting Pigeons with Passion Enthusiasm and Great Pride.



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Left: James E. Mullan, judging at the VDT
2010 show in Erfurt (Germany).
Photo: Mick Bassett.

Aviculture Europe
digital magazine



Right: Moore first describes Tumblers as performing birds, and afterwards mentions the Almond or Ermine perform well. At the present date (this lines are written in 1887), though many breeders have never seen one of their birds tumble, a tumbling Short-face is still occasionally met with.

From left to right:
Mottled, Almond.
Baldhead and Beard.

From: The Practical PIGEON KEEPER
By LEWIS WRIGHT, third edition 1887.

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