



Talking with: Rikus Hagenauw from Peize, (The Netherlands)

Successful breeder of Voorburg Shield Croppers

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In 1970, my father, a Flemish Giant rabbit breeder for many years, bought me a Cinnamon rabbit(!) and that was the start of my hobby. In those years my brother Hendrik was already breeding Danish Tumblers and I soon understood that keeping pigeons was less time-consuming than keeping rabbits. Moreover, the straw and manure had a bad effect on my health so I switched to pigeons, and in 1973 I began breeding the Steiger Cropper. A wonderful active breed, with glossy colours. I had them in black and in the sun they were a beautiful sight. But when I accidentally ran into a Voorburg Shield Cropper, it was love at first sight.



***Right: Voorburg Shield Cropper,
blue black-barred hen,
Club Champion 2015, 97 points.
Owner: Bert Vreeman.***

This was the breed that really appealed to me. That was in 1977 and the breed is still the main variety in my loft today. Of all pigeons the Cropper group is the most attractive to me, mainly because of the action that they show and the contact you have with them. So when in 1993 I passed the exam for Pigeon Judge in the Cropper Class, I immediately promised myself never to judge any other breed but Croppers. And so it has remained. I did once do a theoretical test for other breeds, but the thought that I would have to judge them has kept me on the straight "Cropper path".

Due to my penchant for Croppers and judging them, various Cropper breeds have been in my loft to keep the Voorburg Shield Croppers company. The Saxon Pouter and Pigmy Pouter are keepers. So I have a good representation of breed characteristics in my loft and now also know the difficulties of breeds with foot feathering.



Left: Voorburg Shield Cropper, dark barred silver hen, was also awarded 97 points at the 2015 Club Show. Owner: Cees van Belzen.

The Voorburg Shield Cropper is central to my life with pigeons. As a breeder, judge, secretary and breed warden of the National Voorburg Shield Cropper club I put in a lot of time (which I like!). This takes a certain energy, but my contacts in the Netherlands and in recent years in Germany, give a lot of energy in return.

The breed is an achievement of Mr. C.S.Th. van Gink. He started with a sketchy outline that he hung above his desk and then started crossing various Cropper and shield-marked

breeds to achieve his goal. The breed was recognized in 1938. Now almost 80 years later, the breed is at a high level. The base is wide, according to Dutch notions, (we are happy with two breeders of one colour variety). In Germany, the base is wider; a 'Hauptsonderschau' (National Breed Show) will often have 500 entries of Voorburg Shield Croppers. Over the years the breed has undergone an evolution; away from short legs and a large balloon, the type changing into an elegant bird, with longish legs and neck, an almost round balloon with some blowing in the neck as a bonus. Birds with lots of action and a balloon like this are of great value for breeding and showing.

The breed is known for its special nature: active, affectionate and very lively. Van Gink wanted to fix these features as breed characteristics.

Right: Voorburg Shield Cropper, black hen, scored 97 points as a young hen in 2012. In later shows always scored 96. Owner: Rikus Hagenauw. The crop could have a little more defined 'waist' and the line of the upper thighs could be smoother.

Today the markings, coloured wing shields, and friendly nature are still unique breed characteristics which not only fascinate me but many other breeders! The White is often the dominant feature in inheritance, so in order to keep the marking, it is wise to always keep a few over-marked birds for breeding. Of the various breeds used in the creation of the Voorburg Shield, now, 80 years later, some features still appear as sports in the offspring. For instance, young with foot and toe feathering, betraying the influence of the Pigmy Pouter. Or red eye ceres – a serious fault – which we see as the influence of Steiger Cropper and colour pigeon genes. We also have seen young Voorburg Shield Croppers with a jabot, a heritage of Smerles and Owl breeds used in its creation.





The Voorburg Shield Cropper has a fantastic nature, breeds very well and rears its own young; characteristics that make the breed suitable for novice and experienced fancier alike. Annually, district shows for the Voorburg Shield are held in conjunction with various shows, and there is also a Club show attracting about 100 entries. Breeding the Voorburg Shield Cropper has few problems, or should not. At around 10 days, they feed the young slightly less well, but a few days later it goes like a rocket again.

Left: Voorburg Shield Cropper, ash red barred (mealy) hen, scored 96 points as a young hen; elegant and beautiful bird in good proportion. Owner: Bert Vreeman.

Although I scrape my loft floor daily, it a challenge to keep the pigeons clean. Cocks in action sweep the floor with their tail, so be sure to keep them clean!

Right: Voorburg Shield Cropper, blue black-barred cock, scored 96 points several times; line of the upper thighs could be smoother. Owner: Rikus Hagenauw.

In addition to this daily job I provide them with bathwater once a week, summer and winter. I also put apple cider vinegar in the drinking water twice a week. Beginning about 10 years ago, I add a dash of humus tea to the drinking water once a week, and since that time have had no more problems with canker.



Only the youngsters are vaccinated against Paramyxovirus, and that has gone well for years. Last year I drastically redesigned my loft and breeding this year was better than expected.

Left: Voorburg Shield Cropper, yellow hen. Elegant and easy blowing hen, the crop could show a little more defined 'waist'. Owner: Thei Eumelen.



After mating in March, all 20 pairs simultaneously laid eggs – and all turned out to be fertile! Seventy youngsters was a unique score for me.

The front of the new loft is 80 per cent open and overhung by a one-metre canopy. In the aviaries (3m deep and 13m long in total) are metal grids 15cm above the ground. Besides having a good breeding season, I profited by having little trouble with dust and the like, thanks to the open front.

Right: Voorburg Shield Cropper, ash red barred (mealy) cock, Best Cock at the 2015 Club show, 96 points. Owner: Rikus Hagenauw.



The charm of our hobby I think is in that it keeps you busy all year long. When the breeding season is over, the show season is about to begin. And before you know it, the birds are back in the breeding compartments.



The Club show is a fixture on my calendar, as is the Federal Show (Champion Show), the Noordshow and of course the SNN in Drachten. The latter is certainly holds promise for the future. The basis for this show are the three northern pigeon clubs. Under the motto not against, but with each other, one big pigeon show can be organized, instead of three smaller ones.

Left: Voorburg Shield Cropper, brown-barred hen, achieved 97 and 96 points several times; showing an excellent balloon. Owner: Bert Vreeman.

As secretary of the Groningen Pigeon Club I try to do my bit for the hobby in the north of our country. As secretary of the National Voorburg Shield Cropper Club I try to represent the

interests of the breed, the members, and the club. As a judge of the Cropper breeds, I'm dedicating myself to the preservation and development of the Cropper breeds.



Right: Voorburg Shield Cropper, blue white-barred cock, an outstanding bird in this colour class. Owner: Thei Eumelen.

The development of our hobby is difficult to control, but the interaction between judges, breeders and specialty clubs I see as an important pillar of our hobby. I believe in the power of mutually reinforcing and not in the power of lecturing each other. This goal is perhaps sometimes under-emphasised. The next generation is not strongly represented in the fancy, the more reason to seek cooperation – possibly across the border?



Above: My new loft in 2015.

In our family, pigeons have always been a part of life, yet this does not lead to successors *per se*. When we are away on holidays, the care of the birds is always very well arranged; all our children and their partners (eight in total) know how it works and a schedule is easily prepared. Our grandson likes to help me with cleaning the loft and feeding, and our granddaughter – almost one year old – shows she has been paying attention when she says: "Grandpa...Oowa, Oowa." Maybe there is still hope after all?



Concise Standard description

Voorburg Shield Cropper

Drawing by: Jean Louis Frindel (F)

Entente code SBI: NL / 327

Country of origin: The Netherlands.

Origen:

Created in the Netherlands in the 1930's by Mr. C.S.Th. van Gink from crosses between the Norwich, Brunner and Steiger Croppers and the Franconian Shield marked Colour Pigeon from which it inherits its lustrous feathering. Officially recognised in 1938 in The Netherlands but not introduced in to the UK until late 1960.

Overall Impression:

A barely medium-sized Cropper with the proportions of 3/5 fore-parts to 2/5 hind-parts (from the top of the thigh). Smaller than a Norwich Cropper but not as fine as a Brunner or Pigmy.

Possesses a nearly ball-shaped crop. An elegant, lively temperament, upright carriage and a friendly and tame disposition. It is a good flyer when given liberty. Most entirely White ground colour with only the Wing shields being coloured.

Head: Long, evenly rounded with the forehead being lightly curved.

Eye: Dark. The eye cere to be small, fine and as pale in colour as possible.

Beak: Medium length, straight and strong. Pale in colour. Wattle smooth, fine and white powdered.

Neck and Crop: Long and when the Crop is inflated, slightly curving to the rear. The Crop is near ball-shaped, springing from the breast thus maintaining an impression of girth.

Shoulders: Attached rather high to the body, not too broad and carried well closed to the body.

Breast: Long and appearing narrow. The breast bone should not be visible.

Back: Slightly concave between the shoulders, not too broad, well covered by the wings, sloping steeply towards the tail.

Wings: Fairly long in proportion to the body, narrow and held tightly so that part of the sides of the body and also the upper part of the thighs can be seen. The shoulders are high set and the primary wing tips are carried on the tail. Flight tips may cross but only vary slightly.

Tail: Small. Well closed, in the line with the body. Not touching the floor.

Legs: Unfeathered, rather longish in length, placed well back, vertical from the body, well spread. Lower thigh easily visible. Thigh feathering smooth and tight.

Feathers: Smooth and tight to the body, also to the thighs.

Colours:

Self in: Black, Dun, Blue with black bars of barless, Silver with dark bars or barless, Dilute Brown, Brown, Red, Yellow, Mealy and Cream.

Chequered in: Blue, Dilute Blue, Dilute Brown, Mealy and Cream.

White-Laced in: Black, Blue, Brown, Red and Yellow.

White Bar in: Black, Blue, Dilute Blue, Brown, Red, Yellow, and Isabel.

'Seamed' (as in Oriental Frills) in Black, Blue, Brown, Red and Yellow.

Colour and Markings:

Completely White ground colour with wingshields only coloured. 7 to 12 Primary feathers to be white. The intensive colours to be rich and with good sheen. The delicate colours to be clean and even. Bars narrow, separate and long. Chequered markings as even and distinct as possible.

With the Blue, White Bar and White-Laced, a black/dark edge to the bars and lacing is desired with pale wingshield ground colour for contrast.

With Reds and Yellows, the ends of the secondaries and primary feathers are paler. Although odd coloured feather in the thighs may be accepted, colour on the body under the wings is not.

Faults:

Too large, small or too weak in stature. Poor 'horizontal' posture. Legs too short or implant too wide. Uneven or insufficient Crop development including a long Crop or indistinct 'waist'. Thigh 'bowed' or angled. Thigh feather not sleek and tight. Small feather quills on the legs and feet. Less than 7 or more than 12 white flights. Slipped flighting. Less than twelve tail feathers. Three or more white flighted difference between sides. Shield pattern not oval. Visible coloured feathers in the white ground colour. Very dull or uneven colour. The Bars, Lacing or Chequering unclean or indistinct. Beak pigmented. Broad ore coloured eye cere. Too much crossing of the flight ends. Too many pigmentation spots.

Order of Importance:

Breed type and balance - Body size - Body shape and posture/stance – Crop - Posture/performance – Markings and colour.

Ring size B

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