

# ***An international Owl Pigeon festival in Belgium!***

**The European Frill Club at its best in Houthalen.**

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On 5 and 6 November 2016, in the Belgian city of Houthalen, the annual European Frill Club (EMC) show was held in conjunction with that of the Royal Limburg Pigeon Breeder Club "The Rasduif of 1949". This European Show was arranged to be held in Belgium by the President of the European Frill Club, Luc Kerkhofs, in cooperation with the Flemish Frill Club and its President Lars Droogenbroeck. It resulted in 774 Owl pigeons entered among a total of 1331 entries. Incidentally, the Belgian German Modena Club show was held here.



*Left: Judge Christiansen from Denmark (right), in consultation with a fellow judge.*

The EMC president was very pleased with this large number of Owl pigeons in 21 breeds and was rightly proud that 13 countries had participated in the show.

As an indication of the international popularity and tradition of the Owl pigeons, at the grand awards ceremony and banquet on the Saturday it was said that fanciers from 17 countries participated in or visited the show. I must say, everything looked neat and well cared for, with very welcoming men and women

behind the scenes of this Owl Pigeon Festival. A tasty pastry with your coffee was also not to be missed. And no entry fee! In hindsight, the organizers were very lucky to have escaped the introduction of bird-flu measures, which were in place shortly afterwards, with all their consequences. A ban would have been very unfortunate for all.

*Right: A Polish Owl, yellow, adult cock, 96 points. Owner: R. Darek, Eersel. (B).*

The entries consisted mainly of short-beaked Owl pigeon breeds from the European Frill Club on the one hand, and other Owl pigeon breeds on the other, including several "Belgian pralines" that you don't get to see every day: 19 Antwerp Smerles (sturdy pigeons, horizontal attitude, long head), 16 Flanders Smerles (with beautiful heads and tip caps), 16 Ghent Owls (they come only in white), 6 Luttich Owls (shield marked and without crest) and no less than 33 Luttich Barbettes (short, sturdy pigeons in several colour varieties).



**Right:**  
*Judge Juul Lauwers checking the number of white flights while assessing a Flanders Smerle.*



**Left:**  
*The mirrors in the tails of Blondinettes should also be present. (Judge Rafael Franco).*

Also shown were exhibited two white Old Dutch Turbits (from Germany), 58 Italian Owls (nice ice-colour birds), 24 Aachen Luster Shields (a real surprise), 31 Old German Owls, five Valencian Frills (Figurita) and 61 Old Oriental Owls in two varieties (Blondinettes and Satinettes). The number of this last variety once again shows, how beloved these perky pigeons have become in a short time. Pity was that the four French Owls were absent; we obviously would have liked to compare them with the Aachen and Luttich Owls. The assessment of the Belgian Owl breeds was of course in the hands of the judges from Belgium.



**Left: Martin Treffers (NL) judging the Oriental Frills.**

A wonderful diversity of short-beaked Owl pigeon breeds was paraded - in the truest sense of the word, literally, for the best short-beaked Owl selection of each judge was presented on stage in the Champions' Row.



**Right: Lars van Droogenbroeck (B) assessing an Old Oriental Frill.**

From these beautiful exhibits the best pigeon of the EMC show was chosen by the judges (an international collective) and that was a beautiful Oriental Frill in the not-so-easy colour variety Blondinette blue-white spangled. It came from Bulgaria with its breeder, Dragolav Penev. The delegation from Bulgaria had the longest way to travel with their pigeons, so this was a fine crowning of their efforts in attending Houthalen.



**Left: Jean-Louis Frindel judged the Turbits and discussed his views on the breed with Peter Harvey, an Owl pigeon breeder from Australia.**

Beautiful Owl pigeons don't only come from western Europe, but are now found in a top quality throughout the continent. That is a great achievement of the European Owl pigeon Club, which, incidentally, was founded in the Netherlands in 1975!



**Right: German colourtail Owl, a black adult cock, 97 points. Owner H. Kamp, Schüttorf (D).**



**Left: Domino Frill, a black adult hen, 95 points. Owner: D. Kimmel, Binnig (F).**



The EMC official language is German, something that is also the most sensible between "East and West". The yearbooks of the Europäische Mövchen-Club are also in German. The bilingualism in Belgium turned out to be very useful at the exhibition and especially during the presentation of the trophies and pennants by 'EMC chief' Luc Kerkhofs and Lars Droogenbroeck (both from Belgium) on this well attended Saturday night.



**Rechts:**  
**Head study of an English Owl, blue, old cock, 97 points. Owner R. Becker, Buchelberg (D).**

Outstanding Owl pigeons are present all over Europe, from North to South and from East to West, and rightly so. France was also well represented in Houthalen. Seizing the opportunity the show offered offered, many brought birds that had been requested by their fellow members, some for sale, others as gifts.



**Left: Luc Kerkhofs, President of the EMC, with an outstanding black laced Satinette.**

What was there to admire in the short-beaked Owls? Twelve Polish Owls (often as a 'guest' at the shows, but unfortunately this coquettish breed hasn't yet made a real breakthrough); a beautiful group of 45 African Owls; eleven English Owls (English

Owls, we do not often see); two Anatolian Owls and three rare Domino Frills. The latter is a stand-alone breed and not just an "Oriental Frill"; they have their own marking and are clean-legged.



**Above: Theo Rijks (NL) didn't have to travel far to Houthalen and judged, among others, the Red laced Blondinettes.**

**Left:**  
**Turbit, a blue adult hen, awarded 97 points and European Champion. Owner: P. E. Helweg, Grenaa (DK).**





**Right:**  
***Always something special: Oriental Frill, Blondinette, in sulphur spangled (Sulfuret), 95 points.***  
***Owner: T. Schwarzer, Schüctern (D).***



German Shield Owls (8) usually remain a matter for German breeders. That was also the case with the excellent group of five German Colourtail Owls (one from this group won Second Best of all Owl pigeons).

17 Turbits came exclusively from the known breeding line of Poul Erik Helweg of Denmark with very fine Blues and Blacks. The same was true of the nine Turbiteens from France; it always seems a miracle, to be able to present such a collection with that typical head marking (a snip and coloured cheeks).



**Left:**  
***Oriental Frill, Blondinette black laced, adult cock, 97 points and European Champion.***  
***Owner: L. Kerkhofs, Riemst (B).***

The largest group were again the Oriental Frills with 386 entered. It is the most bred short-beaked Owl worldwide. Here you could admire all colour varieties and names of breeders, who are currently at the top in Europe - and from several countries. In the Blondinettes we saw a good blocky type with the ideal upright posture and not too long in the hind parts. Perky stockings (foot feathering) and a jabot complete the overall picture.

**Right:**  
***Antwerp Smerle, red, young cock, 95 points.***  
***Owner: R. Van Den Bogaert, Kessel (B).***

The laced marking was very nice in the majority of birds. It is only the Reds, especially the Yellow laced, that struggle to achieve the high scores.

Always special, I think, are the Sulphur spangled (Sulfurettes). Presented here were four birds from three countries.





**Left:**  
**African Owl, black, adult cock,**  
**97 points and European Champion.**  
**Owner: H. O. Christiansen, Naestveld (DK).**

Also currently an eye catcher in the Blondinettes is the lavender laced; a delicate colour, though I was wondering, if a clear lace in a Blondinette should not have more weight; also one should pay attention to a closed and not-too-long tail.

**Below: Turbiteen, blue, adult hen,**  
**97 points.**  
**Owner: Franco/Wurtz, Beinheim (F).**

The Satinettes are always a feast for the eyes, the white barred (Bluettes and Silverettes) on the one hand and the spangled and laced on the other.

Here again, beautiful short and sturdy pigeons, as with the Blondinettes, with firm, broad heads and the beaks well set, solid and closed. Eventually, a beautiful black Blondinette, Luc Kerkhofs from Belgium, and a beautiful Satinette hen in blue white barred (Bluette), Willi Hohenauer from Austria, were placed in the Champions' Row. Finally, also in the Champions' Row and worthy of mentioning, a yellow white barred Blondinette (certainly not commonly seen!) bred by Otto Stein from Hungary. So, the prizes went to many breeders from many countries, who all share the same passion, namely beautiful Owl pigeons.



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