

Inaugural Sydney Gold Ring Race

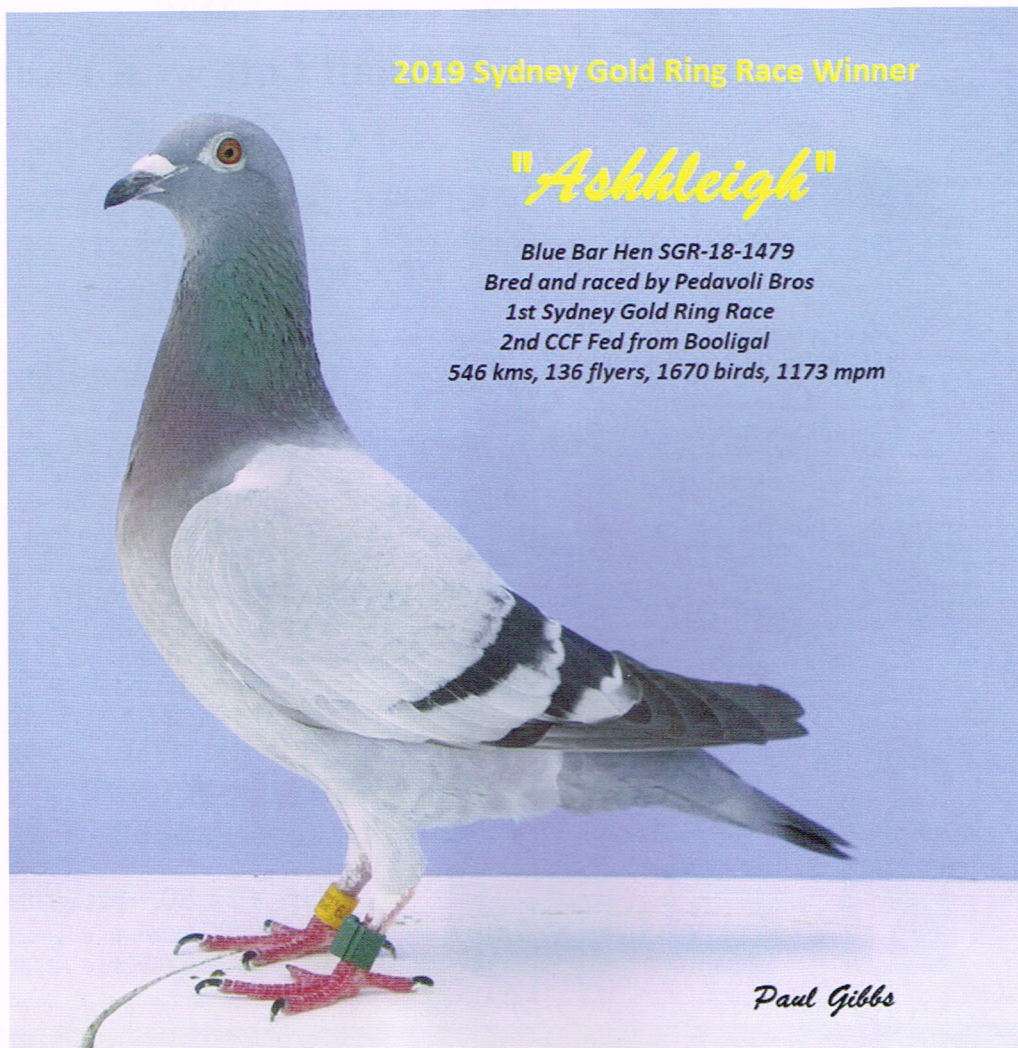
by Paul Gibbs

This race provided fanciers throughout Australia with a chance to enter their pigeons in what turned out to be a prestigious race, its type not seen before as it gives fanciers regardless of where they live the opportunity to compete against the best bred birds entered by some of the best fanciers from interstate and country regional areas although the birds must be raced by a fancier within the Central Cumberland Federation. For those not living within the boundary of the Federation there are many CCF fanciers that are willing to race their birds for them after negotiating how the prize money and Gold Ring will be split. The prize money not being a problem, but the ring maybe.

The arrangement I have with two CCF fanciers is that I pay \$100 for a number of rings and if one of my birds win we split the prize money 60 – 40 with the trainer/flyer taking the larger percentage and that I get to keep the Gold Ring. So there are many arrangements that can be negotiated that would satisfy most fanciers including overseas fanciers that may have friends here, paying for a few rings and having their friend breed and race birds on their behalf, it certainly would be an interest internationally and how good would it be for an overseas fancier to “show and tell” to all their friends at home should they win the Gold Ring. So to all you readers

not residing in Australia this could be a great opportunity to make new friends while fostering “International Relations”.

Anyway, the idea of conducting and promoting such an inclusive race for fanciers from all around the country was the result of many hours of discussion by Stephen Shears, Gary Young along with several other fellow fanciers as to how to best fill a void in the Australian pigeon racing calendar, a race that would be totally different to anything that was, and or has been available to fanciers before. A race that would attract fanciers to not only win cash, but a



prize that they could cherish for a life time and be able to hand down over the generations.

The idea of a specially crafted gold ring came about from Stephen after having watched a Premiership winning Rugby League team being awarded a "Premiership Gold Ring", something those that have been presented with one cherishing it, being able to wear it proudly both in the present and for years to come long after their football career has ended.

While this article includes a photo of the SGR it doesn't do it justice, and while I may never have the good fortune to win one (even though I entered four plus two spares birds last year), and have done so again this year, I must say I did have the pleasure of holding the ring on the day that it was presented to the winner and was surprised as to how heavy it was. Gold in general is fairly heavy and with this ring being solid gold I can understand why it is valued at \$2,500.

I was privileged to have been asked by Stephen if I could be present on the day that the winner, Vince Pedavoli, was to be presented with the ring and to take photos of the presentation and that of the winning pigeon that are included along with this article. I must say that the winning pigeon, a blue bar hen rung SGR-18-1479 is truly a lovely bird with a wonderful eye, very calm in the hand and would rate her as being small to medium in size with a wonderful wing, a pleasure to photograph as she stood proudly without any fuss when placed within my photo box.

Her background and breeding is impeccable with her sire being a direct import from the lofts of Jos Vercammen, a blue bar rung Belg-10-6052491 originally imported by the late Tom Wills and is a full brother to Vercammen's Champion racer 'Alladin', winner of 1st National Bourges. 6052491 has gone on to produce 10 top Federation prize winners paired to four different hens. His best early results came from being paired to a Herman's hen (Lot 28) in the MV Lofts Sale.

Apparently, this hen had a propensity to put on a lot of weight, and in their first year together produced two outstanding race hens. One was a large robust hen, the other smaller and leaner. Why you may ask am I telling you this? Well there is a theme to what I am about to disclose. The winner of the Sydney Gold Ring Race has been named 'Ashleigh' after the Australian Tennis Champion Ash Barty, with the two hens mentioned above being named "Serena" and 'Venus' the reason why I will leave up to you. Vince also

has another Champion bird that he has called 'Roger' named after another World Champion tennis player, that won 7th Federation YBD. I told you Vince had a theme, they are all named after champion tennis players. The dam of the SGR winner ('Ashleigh') is a Gaby Vandabeele known as the '504 Hen' down off Vince's direct Gaby pair, 'Zeus' and 'Pandora', with 'Zeus' being a direct son of the world famous 'Rudy'. This hen being responsible for many prize winners including 2nd Federation 564km and 5th Federation 613km. As can be seen the win by 'Ashleigh' was no fluke, bred in the purple from a long line of winners.

The following text was provided by Stephen Shears and provides readers with a brief overview of his thoughts on the sport along with the hopes that this innovative race may create increased interest from fanciers from not only around Australia, but maybe overseas fanciers as well. If you

don't live within the CCF boundary, but know of someone who does, then you can negotiate with them to race some birds on your behalf. (It would be great to have some overseas interest. Adding an International flavour).

Stephen is of the opinion that for the last 15 years or so, that Sydney pigeon racing has been treading water with little to no progress. The declining numbers in membership have reflected this opinion, although over this period of time fanciers have been prepared to pay record prices for breeding stock

with there being no growth in general for race prize money and/or for the inclusion of more prestigious races.

The Sydney Gold Ring Race was developed to provide a resurgence in competition within Sydney. A \$100 ring race from approximately 550 km with all birds being liberated with the Central Cumberland Racing Pigeon Federation providing for a good spread of prizes across the Sydney region. As many would know the Central Cumberland Federation is the largest pigeon racing organisation in Australia with 255 flying members with an average bird liberation of approximately 6,000 birds each week.

The inaugural race attracted fanciers from many locations within Australia contributing to the sale of 275 rings. For every two rings purchased a spare ring was provided. The spare rings were to cover losses during training and/or early races, with the proviso being that only the number of rings that were purchased could be entered into the race by the individual fliers.

The symbolic trophy for first prize is a championship gold





ring valued at \$2,500 rather than a trophy that would probably only gather dust on the shelf. It was thought that a gold ring would provide a world unique prize in recognition to the winner of the Sydney Gold Ring race.

Wrap Up and Race Highlights

- The inaugural 2019 race was held from Booligal approximate distance of 550km on the 31st August 2019.
- This race point being directly west of Sydney. This race turned out to be the slowest winning velocity of the Federation for the year. The O/A winner of the CCF federation on the day was Pat Arcella & Family flying a velocity of 1177mpm.
- The winner of the Sydney Gold Ring race, Vince Pedavoli, came 2nd in the Federation flying 1173mpm.
- In total only 99 of the 138 flyers competing on the day timed in on the day of liberation.
- The Sydney Gold Ring race has 30 prizes with a good spread of prizemoney and rings for the next year throughout the 30 prizes to encourage participation.
- Organisers did not want the lion's share of prize money to go to the top couple of birds only.
- Out of the 275 rings sold an additional 137 spare rings were distributed for the race with only 117 birds being basketed on the night.
- Due to the tough day's racing only 13 of the 30 prizes in the Sydney Gold Ring were filled on the day.
- Highlights included that only 34 of the 117 birds entered on the day were timed in in race time.
- A BBQ was held at Hills District club to distribute prize money and special certificates for prize winners.
- 10% of entering the race goes towards the future development of Hills District Pigeon Club as a new railway station has been built at the Castle Hill show ground where the Hills District club is currently located, having been informed that in the near future we will have to fit out a new club house to be located in the new show ground development.



- Two owners in the prize money L Atkins and J Gonzo no longer compete in racing but had the opportunity to compete in the Sydney Gold Ring race.
- Western Australian flyers K Wilson and M Mak received a prize with their red chequer cock one of two sent from Perth in Western Australia.
- The Vescos & Marshall bird 1220 that came 3rd in the Sydney Gold Ring race also picked up 2nd in the Federation Young Bird Derby from Goolgowi.
- The good news is that the Sydney Gold Ring race 2020 has sold out with all 500 rings sold by late January. Prize money will be close to double the previous year.
- The 2020 Sydney Gold Ring race will be held from Byrock this race season on the North West line for Central Cumberland Federation.
- Leading Sydney race horse trainer, Golden Slipper winner and pigeon racer, Gary Portelli, purchased 30 rings (plus spares) this year which he has syndicated out to various horse trainers for him to race. Gary mentioned the pigeons are providing more interest amongst the trainers than the horses.
- Rings are now available for the 2021 Sydney Gold Ring race to be held off the North Coastline approximately 550km.
- The broad interest in this race having attracted fanciers as far away as Perth in WA, Toowoomba in Qld, Melbourne in VIC, Adelaide in SA, Wollongong in NSW, and Canberra in the ACT along with several regional areas across the country.

Those interested in entering birds for the 2021 season should contact Stephen Shears 0419 695 407 or Jeff Jones 0411 322 598 to purchase Sydney Gold Rings for 2021. Cost \$100 per ring, receive three rings for every two rings purchased.

Interested overseas fanciers can contact Stephen Shears by email at swshears@gmail.com