

The Scandaroon

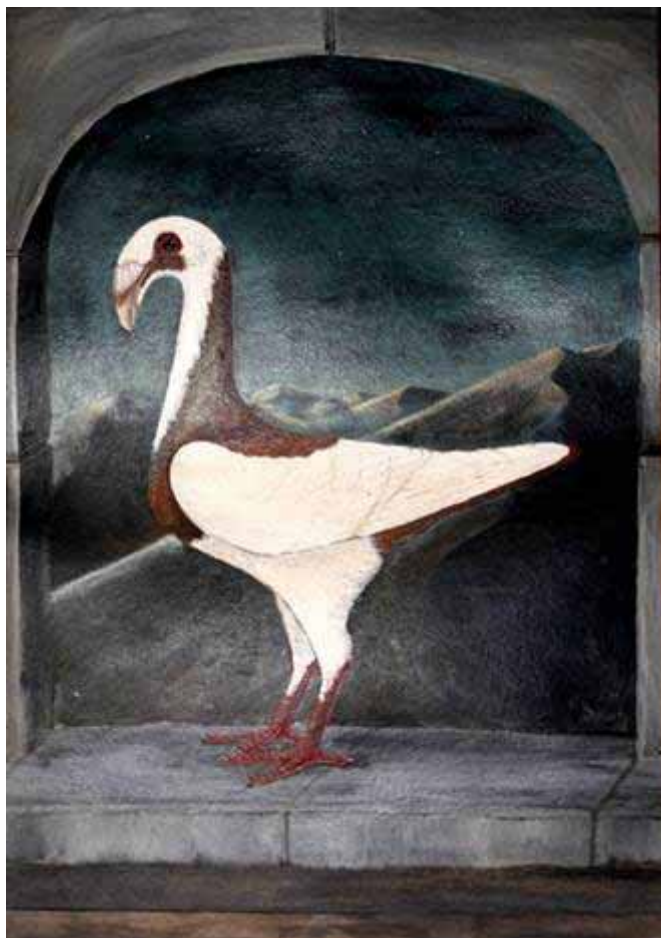
*One of the eldest pigeon breeds
in the world, at
Kees Verkolf and Marleen Brouwer
in Wijster (Drente, Holland)*

Text and photos: Aviculture Europe

For Kees Verkolf it is more than a aim of live, an almost mystic Journey, a dedication and mission: breeding the perfect Scandaroon - or Neurenberger Bagadet, as we say in Holland. For many years he has tried to foster and maintain this rare breed.

Right: This painting is made by Marleen, his talented partner. Marleen is not only a very gifted painter and sculptor, but also experienced in four-inhand driving their carriage with ponies.

The last few years Kees is a pensioner and in 2006 he took the chance to move from Hilversum to a beautifully located farmhouse in Wijster, there is enough land to house and graze the Ponies, Zwartbles Sheep, the Goat and their beloved horse, there is also a spacious yard where the dogs and Welsummer chickens can range free. But the most important was that here he could create a perfect place for his pigeons.



Left:
One of the very spacious aviaries in the Barn. Here the Scandaroons are housed and through the swing-windows behind the breeding compartments they can fly into the outside aviaries. The litter is a thick layer of chaff.

Right:
Here Kees Verkolf is showing the large breeding compartments of his Scandaroons, this also proves his birds are not at all shy. The pigeon contentedly sitting on the nest despite the intrusion.

Below: This is the bird that was sitting on the nest; a cock.



Right: A sculpture of the Scandaroon, made by Marleen, perfect in every detail.

Below: A bronze sculpture of a Bokhara Trumpeter, made by Marleen, for the occasion of the International Bokhara Trumpeter Show in The Hague.



Kees was born in the Hague and his grandfather kept thief pouters, so it is no wonder that Kees himself already had his first pigeons when he was 6 or 7 years old, also thief pouters. Later he changed to racing pigeons and he flew his birds with some success for a number of years.



At the front of the Farmhouse is spacious living accommodation with plenty of windows. The back of the House was used for putting up the tractors and storing hay. Kees and Marleen divided this space in separate rooms for their extensive library and painter's atelier. In the top, adjoining the back-front they created a loft which houses a number of gold blue wing Archangels. It is made so that the pigeons can go to the outside aviary through the Pop-holes in the door.

Below you see them going outside.



Left: The aviaries with Scandarooms.
Photo: Kees Verkolf.

Below: There are three dogs; two are cross Labrador x Rothweiler and the other one is a Fox Terrier. They watch over the yard and the pigeons.



Right: Detail of the head of a Scandaroon from 2002. When aging the eye ceres will become less red, but by rubbing them with a little (baby)oil the powder layer comes off and the local blood vessels are stimulated, which will make them fiery red again. This cock is mis-marked in a way that cannot be corrected by plucking some feathers. Above this bird also has a too broad underbeak. But this is a very good breeding cock.

Left: Kees and Marleen are art lovers and everywhere in the farm house you find pieces of art. This statue of William I, Prince of Orange, also known as William the Silent, is standing in a corner of the Living Room.

In the years that he kept racing pigeons he read the book of C.A.M. Spruijt, "De postduif van A-Z" (The Racing pigeon from A to Z) and there he read something about

the Scandaroon. He was fascinated by what he read and immediately knew: One day I will keep this Breed!

He started to volunteer as a helper with the well known Den Hague Pigeon judges and went with them whenever He could whenever they had to go and judge Scandaroons somewhere in the Country. In those days there were only one or two breeders, Kees remembers the birds of Jaap Blom from Amsterdam, also those of H.D. Nab from Blerick –

THE Fancier of Scandaroons in those days – and he always dreamt of one day being as famous and known for his Scandaroons as Nab was.

Knowing of his many International contacts and successes with the Breed, we can say 'He made it'!

However, many years had to pass before having his first Scandaroons, years in which he was at the top with his Valenciana Croppers; his Black Valencianas were very famous then. Meanwhile he kept searching for Scandaroons, which were then not available in Holland.



Left: Another painting by Marleen, with four Scandaroons. A splendid painting with birds that you simply cannot help falling in love with.

The only possibility was to look for them in Germany, but you must have 'contacts' there and the prices were high...



Zwartbles Sheep, a wonderful breed for a hobby farmer



Zwartbles sheep:

Above left: The Ram.

Above right:
Ewe with her lamb.

Left: A flock of ewes
and lambs.

Right and Below: Marleen's
black Shetland Ponies, with
which she practises four-
in-hand driving.
Photo below by Kees
Verkolf.



Below right: A pair of Stock
doves landed in the biologic
kitchen garden and started
eating the seedlings.



Right: A quartet of perfectly marked black pied Scandaroons in the aviary.



Left: A blue pied hen, with excellent head, neck and leg length. The Khaki hen is showing her 'Gedeckt' side, she is Khaki barred at her other side.

At the End of the 80-ties he was informed by Dick Hamer about a splendid collection of Scandaroons at De Boer in Nijverdal. In those years De Boer was a pigeon merchant and according to Dick Hamer these birds were every one show Quality, even good enough for the

highest grading at a Dutch Show. They turned out to have come from the German fancier Spitzenphell who had lived at Michelau (near Nurnberg) who had passed away. He was one of the last of a famous generation of Scandaroon Fanciers and for some reason (they?) didn't want these birds to stay in Germany. Unfortunately Kees didn't have first choice, He was asked to come back in a few days and by then more than half the birds had gone. In the End, He only purchased a few birds, but with help of Jaap Blom from Amsterdam –the then Secretary of the Wattle Pigeons and Hen Pigeons Breeders' Club – Kees was able to make up a nice collection.

The following breeding season he used a lot of foster pigeons, aiming in breeding as many young as possible, but that worked out different than expected due to serious Salmonella problems. He tried to deal with it by using broad spectrum antibiotics, but the real help came form Harald Paulus, chairman of the German Scandaroon Club, who gave him a new start with good advice and top birds.

Over the years he learned that harmony, peace and quiet in the pigeon colony are the most effective means against high threat of infections, and in combination with optimal care you can built up resistance in your birds. Selection is always well though-out. He has not been using foster parents for a long time, as all his Scandaroons are perfectly capable in raising their own young.

Today Kees is at a very high level with his Scandaroons, but there certainly was no royal road to success! The road to the top was long. Patience, the necessary resilience and much insight finally brought him there.

From the first contacts with Harold Paulus grew a close friendship. Harold still is chairman of the German Scandaroon Club – a function that he took over from his father. According to Kees this is – for German point of view – not a very large Club; they have 30 to 40 members, not a lot and the true 'hard core' of breeders consists of only 4 breeders, who often come to Kees when looking for birds to 'improve' their stock. This is a proof that nowadays fanciers have to be internationally minded; within Europe there still are enough possibilities as long as you give it a try. However, Kees is looking farther than Europe and mentions Steve Ball and John Heppner, both famous Scandaroon breeders from California (US).

Kees has no favourite colour in Scandaroons. They come in pied (Magpie), 'Gedeckt' (which is Magpie marked with the Wing Shield fully coloured and 10 to 14 Flight Feathers White) and self. But he mainly aims for the pied marking, which also spontaneously gives the Gedeckt marked ones. In these varieties he has almost all colours, including the chequered ones. To his own surprise he found out lately that he has little to no Yellows left. As it happens, North African fanciers who come to him to buy pigeons, always want yellow ones. Coincidentally he found himself a new yellow Scandaroon; when he brought several Scandaroons from Germany for Harold Paulus and the Club's Secretary Meijer, Harold offered to him his old yellow sire. So next season Kees will again have the Yellows in his breeding programme.

It has now been 17 years that Kees is Chairman of the Dutch Specialty Club of Wattle Pigeons and Hen Pigeons. He does Lectures at many Clubs all over the Country, hoping to create more interest in this special breed.

He enters his pigeons at the local Club of Wijster, but also at the Keistad Show in Amersfoort, Avicorni in Utrecht (where the Club Show is held) and at the annual meeting/young birds Show of the German Scandaroon Club.

Breeding and Caring

At the moment he has some 200 Scandaroons and last year after breeding season and after selectioning he had 144 young Scandaroons. His pigeons always have food at their disposal, being a special mixture to which minerals are added. It is based on 'normal' food for racing pigeons, mixed with linseed oil. Also various sorts of grits are added. It is completed with a Solution – a Garvo mixture - and IC pellets from Versela Laga. Apart from the Hoppers with this mixture, there is a separate Hopper with pure barley also permanently available and it is eaten by the pigeons with the same appetite as the other feed.

Choosing the breeding pairs

To Kees, this is a serious task. It is his philosophy to mate pigeons that strengthen and Balance each other in their strong points. Simply said: mating long legs to long legs.

Females must be elegant, with good head and beak length. Males must be large and powerful. To reach this, he has crossed with European Runts, French Bagadet and Show Homer. In the first place these are all breeds that once were improved by means of the Scandaroon, so this is a way to get back what been gone lost in the Scandaroon. In diverse pigeon magazines and books you can be read that he is not the only one doing this; there are more Scandaroon breeders who did the same and with success.

For more informations you can always contact:

Nederlandse Wrat- en Kipduiven Speciaalclub

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tel.: 0033 (0) 2584598

Voorzitter en redactie: C. Verkolf

Amelangen 10, 9418 TG Wijster (NL)

tel.: 0031 (0) 593-565314.

Right: The Yearbook of the Special Club, 80 pages thick!

Sonderverein Nürnberger Bagdetten (gegr. 1895)

President: Harald Paulus

Walter-Flex-Str. 3, 91088 Bubenreuth (D)

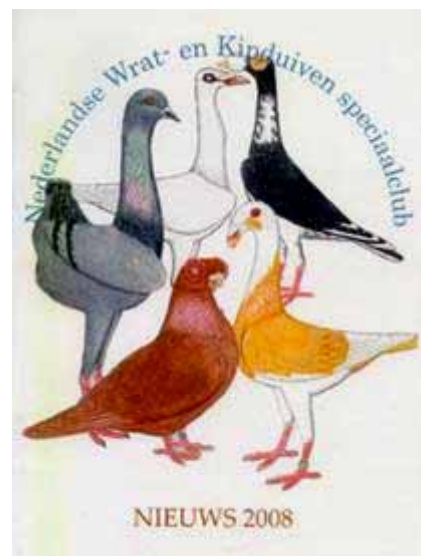
tel.: 0049 (0) 91 31 / 20 40 43.

Barb, Carrier & Scandaroon Club

Pres. Mr. D. White (UK)

tel.: 0044 (0) 1494 882582

Right:



The farm of Kees and Marleen, photo taken in Spring with the flowering trees.

Photo: Kees Verkolf.

Postscript by Kees Verkolf

As an extra explanation concerning the photos and captions, I would like to add the following:

"What you see here is a given number of Scandaroons from my 'factory'. In short it boils down to this: you will notice that many of the birds in the aviaries more or less lack marking, head lining, stance and other characteristics for the breed. But the most important is that the 'factory' produces! a good product! - even a somewhat minor bird can be very much valued in the selection of the pigeons for the breeding pen, which you consider the quality of young it can produce. The combination of characteristics of both parents must create the new generation and no problem if the parents are short in one of the characteristics, that is clear. Vitalist and production have – as said – my highest priority.



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Left: This photo shows one of Kees' Scandaroons: a black pied female with the wanted aura. Eye catching are the powerful beak substance, the length in the face, the elevated and proud stance and well balanced body. The line of the forehead should be a bit more arched.

Photo: Kyle Christensen, Salt Lake City Utah USA. Taken at the 2007 Nuremberg Show.

With our thanks to the Verkolf Family for the open house. We will remember with pleasure the hours we spend with you.

Right: Marleen enjoying the animals and the piece and quiet of the Drents country side.

In one of the following issues of Aviculture Europe we will do a breed special of the Scandaroon.

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