

The Mookke

What you should pay attention to

Not just for beginners!!

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On Friday, March 18, 2011 I visited Werner Hellmich, the Chairman of the SV Mookke Club founded in 1975. For this I gladly travelled a distance of about 150 kilometres from the Netherlands to Osnabrück in Germany. I am interested in pigeons, although I no longer keep any. As a breeder and former judge of 'English' budgerigars, I am very interested in the (show) behaviour of birds, and also interested in the selection for mating. Similar to the Mookke, the show budgerigar is a 'typey' bird and from time to time a 'sidestep' motivates me to remain critical as budgerigar breeder.



*Left and above:
The five sections pigeon loft,
behind the church in
Osnabrück (D).*

So what could be better than sharing experiences with such an experienced and enthusiastic pigeon breeder as Werner Hellmich. His pigeons loft consists of 5 sections and is located behind a beautifully renovated church. On this ground, owned by the church, everything is arranged so that his hobby which he shares together with his wife Margit can be carried out effectively.

Profile: Werner Hellmich

Photos right:
Werner Hellmich with his many certificates, trophies and other prizes.

During his life Werner has kept several pigeon breeds but his favourite for a long time now have been the Mookee. He has been faithful to this attractive breed for many years and promotes it wherever he can. Germany is now the Mecca of the Mookee ever since the founding of the special club SV Mookee club in Osnabruck in 1975. After his retirement he became a very active breeder. When he was still working in the bakery and pastry shop, he couldn't find the time to take a judges training course but nevertheless his knowledge of heredity, the Mookee standard, care and feeding is expansive and he could also teach you many a lesson on the quality differences in bread! With his boundless energy and perseverance it is no surprise that he has won so a great many prizes with his birds. Every breeder should know how to strictly (from an early age) select his birds so there are not too many young in the loft. For this, he also has to know about the inheritance of his pigeons. A good memory will come handy, but it is better to properly take notes on the offspring. Werner notes all characteristics and breeding results, which allows him to controll his breeding to some extent.

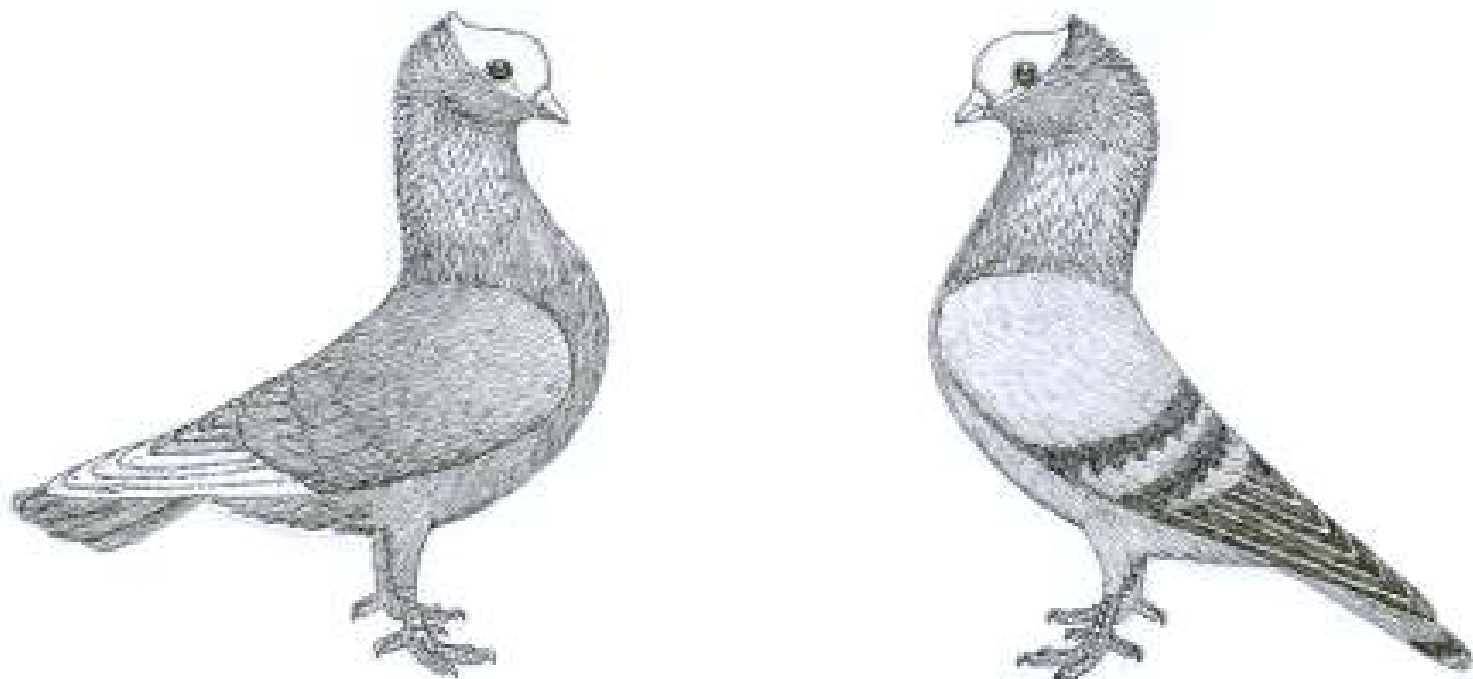
The Mookee

The Mookee is a pigeon for both beginners and breeders with experience. It is not very difficult to breed, they are excellent parents and 3 or 4 nests are not a problem, so an ideal bird for beginners. For experienced breeders with the ambition to take part in exhibitions the breed gives more than enough challenges. The combination of the correct type, good colour, well defined head marking and a full 'mane' with peak crest, give enough difficulties and challenges for anyone. Of 20-30 young sometimes only five may have the desired show quality. Although the rest cannot be exhibited, some of them can be used as stock bird. There can be diversity in the offspring, as for example the number of white flights varies. A pair of pigeons with 2 x 2 white flights does not automatically pass the same number of white flights to their offspring. Another characteristic of the Mookee is the trembling or shaking of the neck; no movement or excessive shaking is wrong.



What characteristics should a beginner keep an eye on?

Number one priority in the Mookkee is the Type:



Faults in the above drawings:

Left: too flat, tail too broad and too many white flights.

Right: too narrow chest, too long and no white flights.

When observing and judging a collection of Mookkee pigeons, one will notice that the type of the cockbirds differs from the hens. The cock is usually slightly larger, with a longer neck and he therefore optically has a less broad chest. The hens are a little smaller with a slightly shorter neck, the chest and head shape look more compact and appear as more harmonious.

We assess the type of the pigeon as a whole and from the side profile. The correct proportions give the Mookkee its desired balance. The type is very important, giving this breed its elegance and presence.

Photo 1 (right): Good S-shape.

The red hen in photo 1 shows a slightly elevated breast in proportion to the body. The chest should be wide enough, as the pigeon should also be judged from the front.

The wing butt should not be visible. Also the neck length affects the type and is a not a minor feature. Pigeons that carry their neck less curved should have somewhat longer legs, and then the neck carriage and balance of the bird as a whole looks more elegant.





Photo 2 (left):
Slightly sloping stance.

Another characteristic of this breed is the beautiful 'S' shaped neck, showing action (shaking) when the judge interacts with the bird. The neck shaking should never be as pronounced as with the Stargard Shaker breed.

The stance is judged at the moment that the bird presents itself 'in action', standing on tip toes. The height and length should be about the same, on a vertical line from head to foot and sloping from the chest to the tail end. The legs should be in a straight line with the eyes (The red hen on Photo 1 is a good example).



Photo 3 (left),
Beak on the breast.

The yellow hen in photo 3 gives a blocky impression and has not a free leg stance, she should stand more elevated. The picture is not in her favour; this bird has come straight from the breeding pen and is not trained and rather unsettled. (Photo used for this article as an example; the hens should not get too massive, they do need sufficient body length.)

Number two: The Head of the Mookee.

The head must not be too large in proportion to the body but should preferably show a certain amount of head width and length and an oval curve. Ideally, the peak crest should overlap the top of the rear of the skull slightly. Pigeons with best heads stand out at the exhibition, while the pigeons with flat heads will not be among the winners. The eye ceres of the Mookee should be bright, pale coloured and not too broad and coarse.



Male with oval curve and unwanted beard.



This head is too flat.



The eye ceres should not be broader.



Better eye ceres with bright colour.



A black spot/line is sufficient.



Missing black under-beak.

An important point is the neck feathers, which should fit closely and form a curved 'mane' at the back of the neck, ending in a well formed peak crest. This mane should be an unbroken curve of closed feathered without any 'breaks'. At Werner's, maybe the odd bird is perhaps somewhat loose feathered in the mane, but most are of excellent quality.



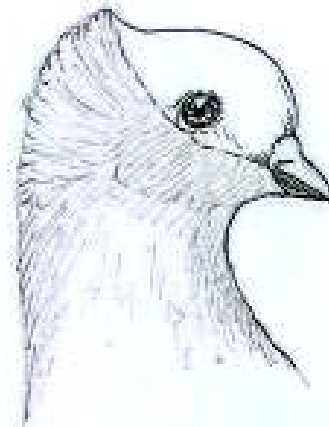
Close feathered mane.



Too small crest and unwanted beard.



Early showing wrong neck feather structure.



A fault: too little mane feathers in the hind-neck.



Some gaping.



Clear fault by the break in the mane.

Number three: the flights.



The allowed number of white flights is: 1/1 - 1/2 - 2/2 - 2/3 - 3/3.

Some lines in Germany are prone to an increase in the number of white wings; excessive white colour might also show in the head region, and sometimes even on the back. When purchasing a cockbird or hen, a beginner should ask the breeder for advice. A Mookiee without white flights can be useful in the breeding pen; you are looking for balance and the right combination of the breeding pair. The attention to detail and a keen eye makes the successful breeder and produces the pigeons of correct qualities. Werner fully possesses these qualities of observation and patience.

Number four: colour and sheen.



According to the Standard, the judging of colour and marking should be the least priority in evaluation; however, an even and rich colour is much more appealing. Werner doesn't neglect this feature in his pigeons. His shiny black pigeons immediately catch the eye of judges as well as visitors. The beak in Blacks, a small black line on the lower mandible is

sufficient, (the upper is flesh colour), excessive black may result in a black upper mandible. Young that already have a black lower mandible will often have a black beak cere at the age of 2 or 3 years. Of course, an even colour is important. White feathers at the end of the back or under the tail are not allowed.



Three shiny black pigeons.



Light coloured wing.



***Oil gland.
(white feathers not wanted)***

In conclusion

My thanks to Werner Hellmich for participating in this article; he is the best advertising and promotion for the breeding of Mookee's. He was happy to cooperate not just to do me a favour, but more especially for the education of novice breeders. I was fully encouraged to take pictures of pigeons with 'faults' as demonstration pictures. My compliments for the Chairman of the SV Mookee Club 75, he sets an excellent example for the hobby. I learned that the Mookee breeders operate at many levels of perfection, in the same way as the budgerigar breeders, but perhaps the Mookee breeders follow the standard description closer than the budgie breeders do. They have the seal of maintaining and improving the quality of this breed without resorting to any extreme features. Werner believes a pigeon should have free vision, so that it can see where it flies and easily find the feed. They must be able to reproduce and feed the offspring themselves. The birds have that right. So many thanks for all the shared information and a very educational day. I have seen beautiful, well-kept pigeons in excellent quality. It was well worth the trip.

Sources and acknowledges:

Avicultura-Fokkersbelangen Magazine:

Mookee, het eenvoudige duifje uit Indië, by W.Halsema/Jan de Jong (Drawings)

Small pigeon paintings: Ralf Schmid, Germany