

English Pouter and Pigmy Pouter

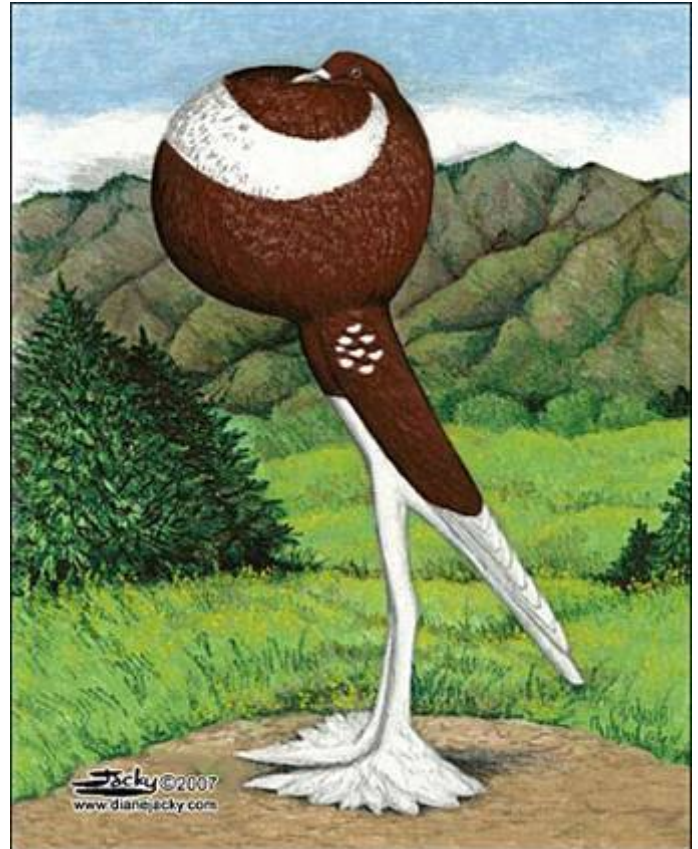
Text: Harrie Kruise

Photos: D.J. Hamer

Drawings: Jan de Jong and Diane Jacky

The English Pouter

The English Cropper can boast on a long and glorious past. This breed was described as early as 1735. It is said to have originated from a cross between a Horseman Pouter and a Dutch Cropper. The breed has evolved over time across the world, but its cradle is, as the name suggests, in England. With several very keen breeders in England, and also on the mainland of Europe, many keen fanciers have made also it their life's work to improve the standard of the English Pouter in developing the breed and approaching the image that they envisioned for this breed. They have aimed for 5 main points. These key points were - and actually still are - in order of importance: 1st the size , 2nd the length of the legs and third in the order of the key points is the purity of the balloon. Another very important point was the slimness of the body, also called the waist. This point came in 4th place. As 5th and final point listed was the colour and the marking with the purity of the latter. The size is important because you want to see a bird with long legs, a long narrow body and a long neck with a big balloon.



Left: English Pouter, black pied.
Below, right: English Pouter, silver pied.



These demands call for a bird of considerable size. The type of bird, as it has been envisioned at that time, actually still holds as a breeding guide by the present breeders of this beautiful breed. Herewith, the proportions are of the utmost importance. The English Cropper, as already mentioned, has found its way all over the world.

Right: English Pouter, white.

In the Netherlands, the number of keen fanciers that have kept and bred English Pouter as a main variety for many years, has always been limited. In my idea this has to do with personal taste. Once you are taken with this beautiful breed, the spell cannot be broken and you will not likely choose any another breed again.

They are not easy to breed. They ask a lot of attention but they are able to hatch their own eggs and rearing the young by themselves this is not a problem, once they are born.

However, since there are such high demands to the length of the legs and a narrow body, it is therefore obvious that they are clumsy in handling the eggs. Sometimes they will work the eggs out of the nest or next to their body when they are breeding. Therefore it is important for the breeder to pay some extra attention to the nest and the breeding. If one wants to have enough offspring then foster pigeons are often an outcome, with very good results.



A beautiful English Pouter, if properly trained, will often impress the judges during the exhibition. As a result, these birds often compete for the very best prizes. And also apart from this, these birds are also so great they give such pleasure for the breeder.

Left: English Pouter, red pied.

**Below: English Pouter, black pied.
Painting by Joh. Lentink.**



Right: English Pouter, black pied.



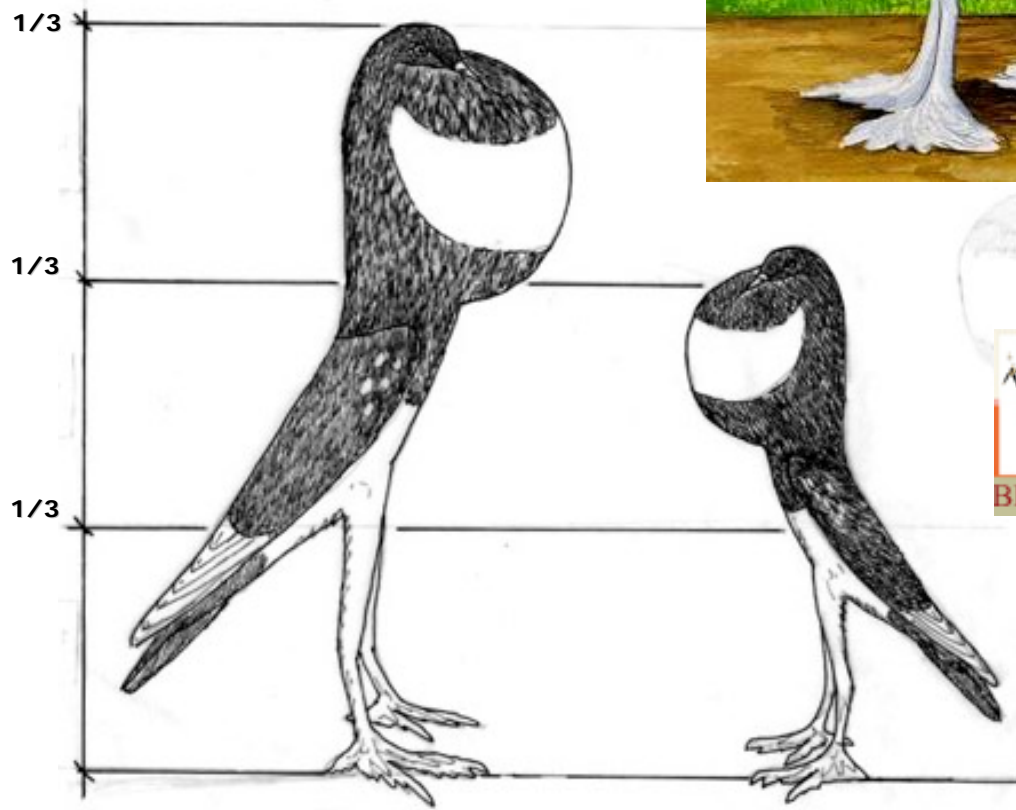
Left: Blue pied English Pouters.



Right: Three English Pouters, by the known pigeon illustrator Diane Jacky (USA).



Below, left:
This drawing shows the ratio between the 'large' and the 'dwarf' English Pouter and will help you visualize the difference.



Drawing: Jan de Jong.



Left: Pigmy Pouter, by the known pigeon illustrator Diane Jacky (USA).

The Pigmy Pouter

Around the 1920's it was decided that the English Cropper also had to have a Dwarf version. The demands for this dwarf breed were set to correspond to the demands made for its big brother, the King of Pouters.



Right:
Pigmy Pouter, red pied.

Below, left and right:
Aviary with a beautiful collection of
Pigmy Pouters, at Gré Sanders and
Herbert Vleeming in Zevenaar, the
Netherlands.



It is assumed that the English Pouter, the Brunner Pouter, the Norwich and the Saxon Pouter to a greater or lesser extent, have contributed to the emergence of the Pigmy Pouter. In this context, the 'Uploper' is also often mentioned. To what extent the contribution of each breed has been, it will never be possible to trace, but it is clear that **in** reaching the final result, as we see it today in the show pens, surely could not have been an easy task.



The inbred varieties all have their own body type. This strange blood will assert themselves during many generations, resulting in deviations from the image that one had set eyes on, namely that of a minimized English Pouter. I think it only right to have a lot of admiration for the perseverance of those fanciers who undoubtedly have worked for years to establish the breed. The Pigmy Pouter has made its way around the world too.

Such a pretty Pigmy Pouters we have now, and in so many colours!

Left: Pigmy Pouter, ash yellow barred pied.

**Right:
Pigmy Pouter, black pied.**

In the Netherlands, the number of breeders of the Pigmy Pouters has always been greater than the number of breeders of the large English Pouter. I think this has to do with the fact that they demand less loft space, but also with the fact that they are just a little bit easier in reproduction.

Provided you do not want to start breeding too early in the cold spring, virtually all couples breed by themselves and rear their young. Only if you want more youngsters from one pair, you can make use of a pair of foster pigeons.

However, it is not necessary. A quiet and sheltered nesting place is recommended.



For both the English Pouters as for the Pigmy Pouters, the caging of the birds a good week before an exhibition is highly recommended. It will make them relaxed and affectionate. In particular the hens will show much better. The latter is applicable to most Cropper breeds.

Left: English Pigmy Pouter, white.



Right: Pigmy Pouter, ash yellow barred pied.



Below, right: Pigmy Pouter, black pied.

Below, left: Pigmy Pouter, yellow pied.



Concise Standard description of the English Pouter & Pigmy Pouter, "in proportion" holding for both breeds.

Head: Small, dove-shaped, smooth on top.

Globe: Large, globular in form, forward in position and rising without over inflation. Coming out from the waist with a sudden sweep, showing a slight fullness at the back of the neck, which should be proportionally long.

Waist: Slim, tight and well defined.
Back: narrow, short and hollow, tapering to the tail.

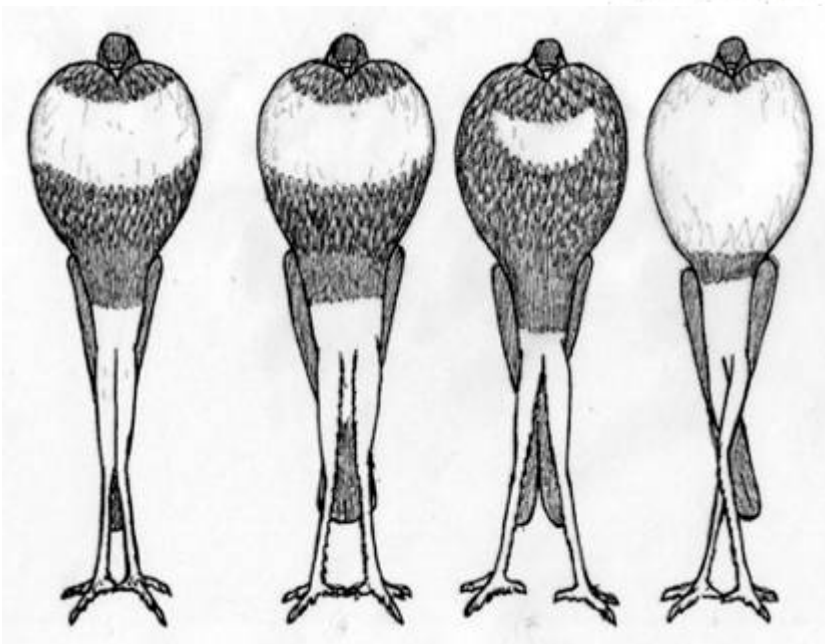
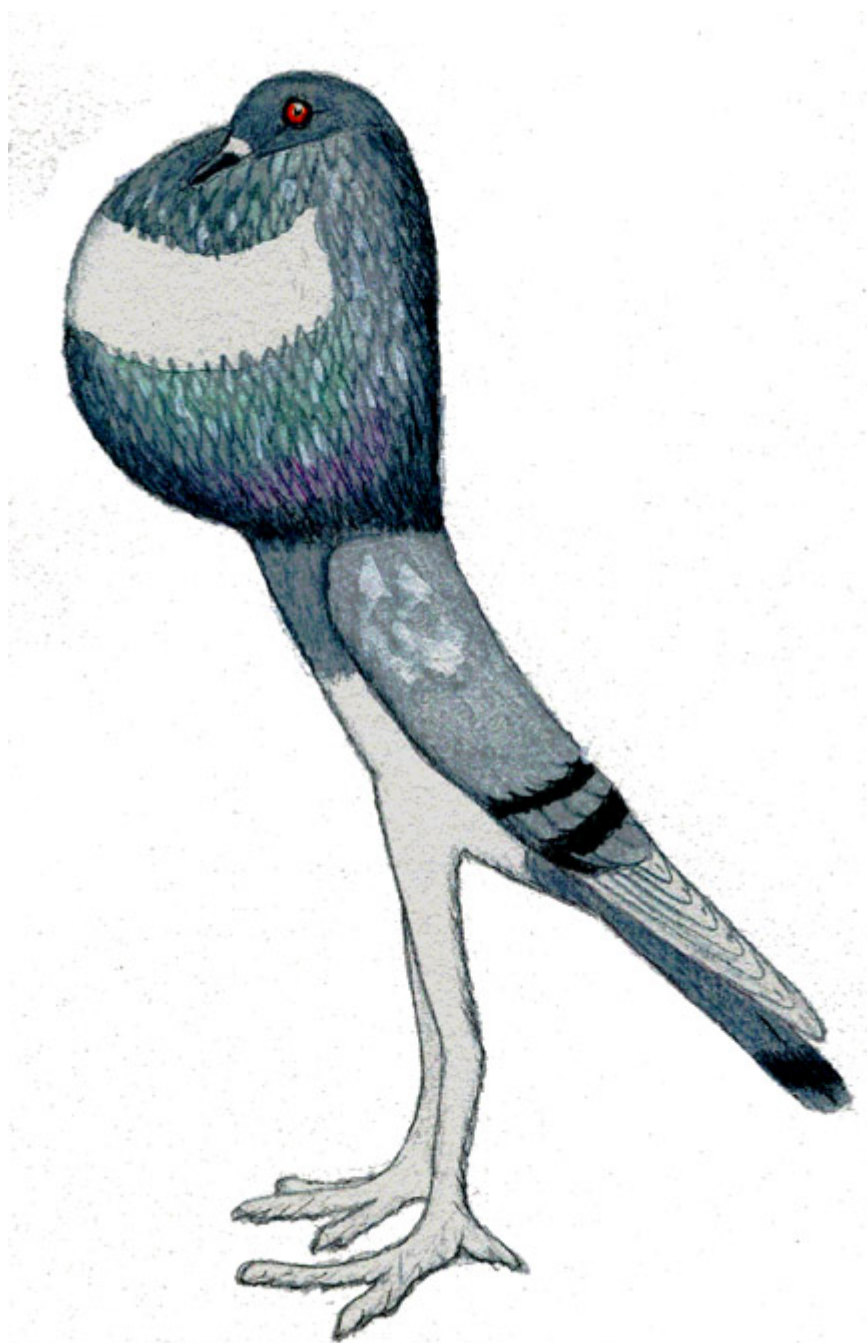
Front: Narrow, long, showing very little keel.

Wings: Narrow and carried high and tight against the body, resting on the tail and ideally not cross.

Limbs: Long, fine in bone and placed well back from waist, insertion close. The entire limb feathered closely and evenly, presenting a stocking-like appearance.

Tail: Short, narrow, in straight line with the back.

Some faults:



Left to Right:

Correct limbs.

Too coarse, and wide limbed.

Straddling (throwing feet out sideways, inability to gather limbs underneath body) and split tail.

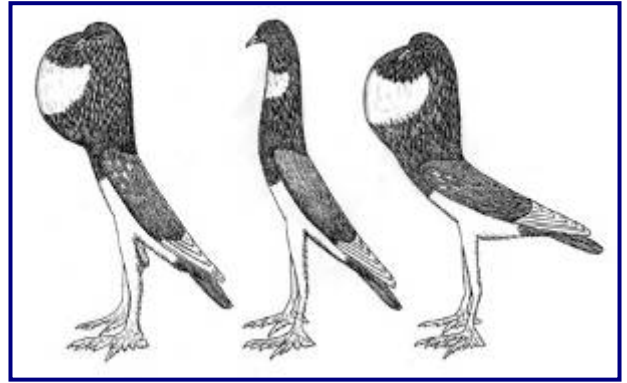
Rickett legged (knees together in centre and free apart at bottom) and wry tail (tail carried to one side).

Left to Right:

Too long foot feathering, so-called "ruff".

Globe not inflated.

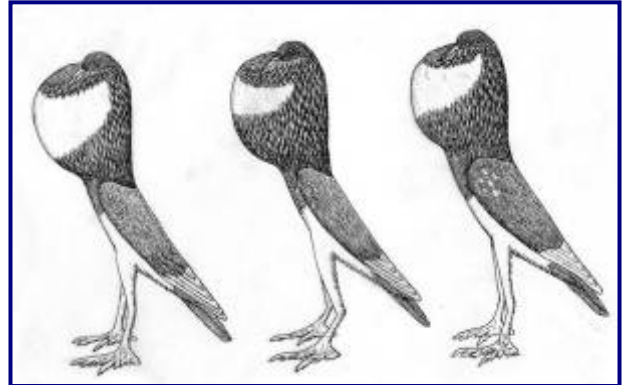
Too horizontal stance.



Insufficient leg length.

Cow-hocked, bent too much at the knee.

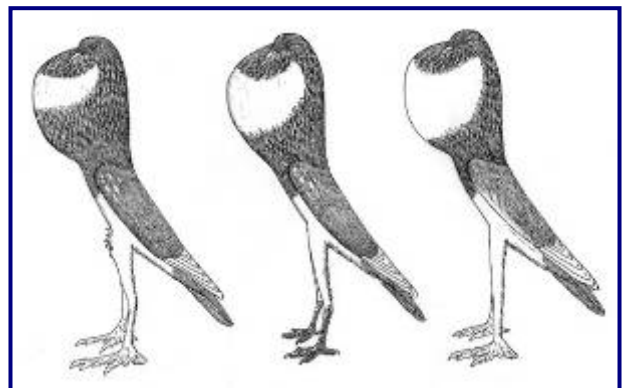
Too course. The smaller and slender the bird, the better.



Buckling (knee joints bending too much forward).

Unfeathered legs.

Stiff legs.



For more information, please contact:

English & Pigmy Pouter Club. E-mail; graham.bates@hotmail.co.uk

Website links in the UK: www.dookit forum and www.fancypigeonchatter.

USA: [National English Pouter Association](http://NationalEnglishPouterAssociation)

[American Pigmy Pouter Club](http://AmericanPigmyPouterClub)

The Dutch Specialty Club has about 25 active members. The Club has no website.

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Illustration of a woman in a straw hat holding a blue and white pouter pigeon.

With our thanks to the Specialty Club, the author, photographer and illustrators.

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