

# TIPPLERS

by  
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Before commencing the article on Tipplers, which the Editor so kindly invited me to contribute, I should like to express my appreciation to some of the fanciers who have helped me in the past

The late J. W. Morton, of Crooks, let me have a few pairs of his famous stud about 1929; he also gave me much encouragement and advice after I had struggled with very little success from about 1920.

The first time I was able to fly a kit of young birds, which I bred from his stock, they flew 15 hours 48 minutes on August Monday, 1931.

Birds of the same strain also flew 13 hours 25 minutes, 16 hours 20 minutes, 16 hours 18 minutes on August Monday, 1934, 1935, and 1938 respectively, twice winning the A.E. and National.

Three other prominent fanciers, all great friends of mine, have also helped with advice. They are Sam Billingham, Joe Davies and Alf Chamberlain, and we have often exchanged birds if we have been short

Many are the happy hours I have spent with them all, talking about our beloved birds. It is difficult to describe which of the fanciers I most admire. I am no stranger to Sheffield and I have always admired these great-hearted sportsmen. On the other hand, the South Wales fanciers have that pest the hawk always with them; they also command our admiration for their pluck in keeping going year after year.

After all the help I have received I feel in duty bound to do all I can for the novice, and if this short article helps a few of the struggling fanciers up the first step of the ladder of success, I shall feel amply repaid for the time and trouble I have spent

As this article is mainly for novices, I will first of all deal with the type of Tippler. I propose to give details of training.

My birds are the Sheffield type, blues, blacks and reds, and I would at this stage impress upon my readers that the methods I shall describe are an honest attempt to put some of the younger men on the road to success with this type of Tippler.

First of all you must choose what type would suit your district, as position has a great deal of bearing on the times your birds will fly.

As an example, most of the winds prevailing in this country are west and south-west with quite a number of south winds during the short flying

season. This suits many people, especially those who were fortunate enough to be able to choose their house with a view to flying birds there.

If the surrounding country is flat, it does not matter much, but if you live in hilly country, a bad wind will take all your birds' energy and take hours off their flying time. By the same token uphill winds will enable your birds to finish stronger even after 18 hours in the air.

But to fly the daylight out, you must have the birds from a proven strain and they must be well trained.

We will suppose a fancier wishes to make a start. I advise him to approach a well-known fancier and buy a couple or three pairs of stock birds, and stick to the one strain. There is nothing I detest so much as watching birds fly from different strains.

When one of the kit wants to fly high, the others want to rake, and if you happen to be the unfortunate referee your job is made much more difficult, and it is no satisfaction to the owner to watch birds flying at different heights all day.

This is most important, so much so that I dislike having a kit unless they are all one family. The three birds I flew 18 hours 25 minutes in June, 1944, to win the All-England long day fly are of two brother cocks, black and red, and a cousin to them, another black.

The ideal, of course, is three brother cocks. I know this cannot always be attained, but do try to fly birds of one blood at least.

When I have my young birds nicely settled, I place them in a compartment away from the other birds, and train them on alternate nights, feeding when they have finished their fly, giving them one drink after feeding, and taking the fountain away.

For the first few weeks I also keep a white fantail hen with the kit they get used to her, and when they show signs of tiring in the first flight or two, I throw the fantail in the flight or away, and keep her moving till all the youngsters are settled on the loft.

I get them straight in and after about half an hour feed them on barley, about half, and fill up with wheat. I think that all barley feeding is too severe for youngsters and do not recommend it.

After about three weeks at this alternate night flying, we will suppose the young kit are about 8 to 9 weeks old. They should be flying at least four hours, hungry and thirsty, gradually increasing their time, until they are flying the last five hours of daylight always dropping them at dusk.

They will soon find what is required of them. If they should drop before the droppers are out just frighten them, and put out the droppers and call them down.

This should be kept up until one week before the competition, and providing competition day is on Monday, I give the birds a half teaspoonful of Epsom Salts to a pint of water the Monday proceeding - that is, seven days before the fly. Keep the birds in Tuesday, fly Wednesday about 4 hours. Keep them in Thursday and at night give them half a crop of canary seed and fill up with Barley. Fly Friday, the last seven hours of daylight and when they come in feed on a teaspoonful of rape-canary and half crop of tares; on Saturday night about three-quarters crop of maple peas. Sunday morning, about 10 o'clock, a teaspoonful of each of rape, niger and canary seed and two dozen maple peas each bird. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, a tonic drink: 10 drops of Phospherine in a pint of water.

On the morning of the competition about half a crop of canary seed about 3.1/2 hours before liberation and a drink of clean water.

To ensure that each bird has the right amount of seed and com at each feed, I place them in compartment boxes of their own about a month before the fly. These kit boxes are about 2 ft x 2 ft x 18 ins. high with dowel fronts, and although all fanciers do not box young birds, I don't think adult cocks could be flown successfully without

Before closing this chapter on young birds, I would like to point out one or two pitfalls the novice is likely to fall into. Try always to fly your kit at the same time at night, so that they always finish their fly at dusk. This is the only commonsense way of training, and the only way you will fly a kit from dawn to dusk.

Always try and keep them in the same bodily condition, neither too low nor too well, as if you fly them too well in training you cannot expect to get them much better for a competition, and always teach the youngsters to pick up the different seeds and com you will give them the last week before the fly, as it is no use expecting young birds to eat strange seeds or com they have not been used to. Any night when they come in hungry you can give them, say a bit of canary or a bit of niger seed or rape; not too much, just enough for them to try it out.

You will see that they like one seed better than another. In the feeding the week before the fly give them the seeds they like the least first; you will soon notice which they will prefer.

Gain your birds' confidence by talking to them and whistling in the loft when you are feeding, otherwise when you try to get them in at dusk with whistling and calling and the dropper they will not respond.

The difference between competition flying and flying for a hobby is that you must have the birds trained to fly when you want them to, not when they feel like it therefore they must be under your control both in and out of

the loft If these instructions are followed with birds of a good strain, I cannot see how anybody can fail. Patience and common sense must be used, and I think the first time a man's birds fly the clock round he feels that it is worth all the trouble he has taken. It is difficult to describe the thrill the owner feels when his birds have done well, or the despondent feeling a fancier feels when his birds have not done so well as he expected them to. He must often lay the blame on himself for something he has done wrong or neglected for the birds' welfare.

