I have undertaken this task to place on permanent record for posterity how the late Frans Putterie formed the famous “Putterie” strain. Many fables and tales are already in circulation about the birds and their breeding, but these birds have had such an influence on pigeon racing, not only in the Transvaal, but throughout South Africa, that I am sure it will be of great interest to all fanciers.

As I am in possession of all the records and stock books from 1937 to 1945 and a lot of the facts about the late and great Frans Putterie, I feel duty bound to place on record in our magazine, for future reference by coming generations of fanciers, all the information at my disposal before it is lost in the mists of time.

Frans Putterie was born in Belgium on October 28, 1880, and died in Johannesburg on May 25, 1958. He became a fancier as a very young man and lived and raced in that cradle of our sport, Antwerp, until 1928. He was a member of the “Scaldis” Club of the Noordebond and also of the club “Verbroedering” in the Union of Antwerp. In 1911 he won the “Laurel” Sash as a champion in the Verbroedering Club. These were two famous clubs. He continued racing in Belgium until he came to South Africa in 1929. He stayed about a year in Cape Town and then returned to Belgium. But South Africa called and back he came in 1932.

We pause here, just to think what his return has meant to the pigeon racing sport in our country.

He was an expert diamond cutter by trade but was also an expert cigar manufacturer. He went to Kimberley later and opened a cigar shop and factory. Mrs. Putterie, whose family were in the cigar and tobacco trade, sent him out his stock of tobacco for the factory.

MOVED TO JOHANNESBURG

In 1937 Mrs. Putterie shipped the birds, which he had purchased, to him in Kimberley. She followed later. He stayed in Kimberley until 1939. On the advice of Jack Waddington he came to Johannesburg early in 1940. He wet to reside in Saxonwold, a northern suburb of Johannesburg, in July, 1940. He raced in the Northern District Club in 1942, and then moved to 52 Ursula Street, Observatory, Johannesburg, on March 13, 1943, and became a member of the famous Rand Central Club of the Transvaal Racing Pigeon Federation.

During 1937 he purchased, in Antwerp, 12 birds which arrived in South Africa on September 10, 1937. The ring numbers and strains of these 12 pigeons are as follows:

- 6509032-37 - Blue chequer pied cock from the lofts of Frans Cools, strain, Vincent Marien.
- 6526785-37 - Blue chequer white speckled hen from the lofts of Frans Cools, strain, August Remael.
- 6512546-36 - Blue cock from lofts and strain Alphons van Engela.
- 6512523-36 - Blue hen from lofts and strain Alphons van Engela.
- 6514024-37 - Blue chequer cock from the lofts and strain Alphonse Lambrechts.
- 6509014-34 - Blue chequer hen from the lofts and strain Alphonse Lambrechts.
- 6500212-36 - Dark chequer hen from lofts and strain Alphonse Lambrechts.
- 6509008-37 - Blue chequer cock from lofts and strain Frans Cools.
- 6509034-37 - Blue chequer hen from lofts and strain Frans Cools.

Of the above birds, the first 11 played a big part in the formation of the Putterie strain. The hen 6509034 (strain Cools) does not appear at all in Mr. Putterie’s breeding records, so apparently she must have disappeared or died on arrival in Kimberley.

The cost of these birds was:
- 4 birds from Lambrechts - 2000 francs
- 4 birds from Cools - 1,800 francs
- 4 birds from van Engela - 1,800 francs
- Shipping charges - 1,600 francs

Total 7,200 francs

In sterling this amounted to £51, rate of exchange at the time being about 140 francs to our £.

After all these years to look back at the original cost of the birds and think that for £51 a strain was formed that has won a fortune to date just seems impossible.

I don’t know of any strain that was formed, anywhere, during the past 50 years that cost such a small sum of money.

A rough sketch of the fanciers whose names appear as the originators of the imported birds is given below. This information was given to the writer by Mr. Putterie.

VINCENT MARIEN was one of Belgium's greatest fanciers when racing, and formed a strain that appears extensively in most great Belgian strains today. His strain can be classed with anything produced before
or since, and they could race and win over all distances. His name was, and is, greatly respected throughout Belgium.

AUGUST REMAEL was a personal friend of Mr. Putterie, and lived quite close to him in Antwerp. Mr. Putterie said that Remael did not keep a big loft but had superb birds. They won a lot of money for Remael, who was a poor man in the beginning but eventually became a very prosperous man through money that his pigeons won. He was a master fancier in every respect and Mr. Putterie said he was indebted to Remael for the knowledge he assimilated in this great fancier’s company.

ALPHONSE LAMBRECHTS was a very famous name in Antwerp. He died only a few years ago and his strain is also used extensively in Belgium.

ALPHONS VAN ENGELA had a strain of pre-eminently long distance birds. He did not often compete in short-distance racing and concentrated on the long-distance races from 300 to 700 miles. He was an old man when the war broke out in 1939. His children persuaded him to leave his lofts, and house, in the care of others while he was accommodated out in the country during the hostilities. Unfortunately, from what I gathered from Mr. Putterie, a bomb exploded on his property and wiped out his famous loft. If this is true, it certainly was a great tragedy for the pigeon sport, as his birds in Mr. Putterie’s lofts were outstanding.

FRANS COOLS is still alive, and was a friend of Mr. Putterie. At one stage of his life he was loft manager for August Remael and, when he went on his own, he used Remael birds to found his colony. He is also a rich man today.

The foregoing gives a brief outline of the great names that are attached to the birds that were the making of the famous Putterie strain and one notes with interest that all the imported birds came from Antwerp.

I think we all agree that a new strain is formed when a fancier gathers together various birds of different strains, and after a period of time, by judicious matings, blends these into a family which is not dominated by any particular strain of the original stock. An example of what we would not call a new strain in any fancier’s loft would be if this loft contained only the old established strains of, say, only Gits, or Hansenne, or Stassart or Bricoux or Wegge.

Obviously these particular strains, if kept without an outcross, would retain their dominant characteristics and could never be called anything else than Gits, Hansenne, Stassart, Bricoux or Wegge, however long they may remain in a particular fancier’s loft, though in time we may prefix the owner’s name to these birds, and say Jones’ Stassarts, or Van Zyl’s Bricoux. This would not denote that these fanciers had produced a new strain.

Should the fancier concerned introduce a new strain into his loft to cross with these strains, then over a period of years he would be forming a new strain with characteristics peculiar to the new blending of other blood with the old.

**BY TRIAL AND ERROR**

The formation of a new strain usually takes a long time as in most instances pigeons with diverse characteristics and breeding are used, and only after a protracted period of trial and error, and discarding of subjects that neither race nor breed good birds, do we ultimately find that we are left with a few pairs that seem to have a dominating influence in the birds we race and breed from in our lofts.

Very few strains are formed, and for a simple reason: Most fanciers have lofts of birds containing various strains and crossed strains with very little affinity as to blood lines. They are continually adding to their collection to cross with the inmates of their own lofts and can never hope to form their own strain through this continual addition of new blood.

I have written the foregoing in very broad outlines, and not as a treatise as to how to go about forming a strain, but as a guide to follow as to why we now call certain families of pigeons from Belgium, that were brought together in South Africa by one fancier to form a basis, the famous “Putterie” strain.

A lot of luck is necessary in the formation of a strain and I have no doubt luck has played a large part in the formation of most strains. Of course, fanciers who formed strains which carry their names were men with vast knowledge of the racing pigeon and who knew a good bird when they saw it. They knew what their goal was and nothing stopped them if they wanted a particular bird or birds to use with their own stock.

But luck has played its part. The great N. Barker, who was an Englishman who lived in Belgium, trapped a stray bird that he named Marcia. This hen had a dominating influence on this loft of very great champions. He did not know the owner but surmised it was the great Geo Gits, who at that time allowed nobody to get possession of any of his birds.

Luck has also played a very great part in the formation of the Putterie strain, and of which I will tell you as we delve into the breeding and mating of his original birds.

I spent a lot of time with the late Mr. Putterie and, when we discussed the subject of importing pigeons, he was most emphatic that a fancier would not, in any circumstances, use birds from different areas in Belgium as
The reader will note, as we go along in this historical survey, that Mr. Putterie used imported Belgian rings on many of his birds. I think this was mostly because of a sentimental attitude towards his long racing career in his homeland, and also because the Belgian ring was bigger than our English type. There was absolutely no ulterior motive, as he was one of the most honest and straightforward men that it would be possible to meet.

Never at any time did he sell one of these rung birds as an imported bird. Unscrupulous purchasers of his birds did make use of this sometimes. The writer once brought this to his notice and he immediately stopped the practice as he would never allow his name to be associated with any fraudulent practice.

After these 17 youngsters were hatched, a great tragedy happened. Or was it a tragedy? We shall look into this as we go along.

2) On February 18, 1938, the imported Blue Chequer Lambrechts hen 650-14.34 disappeared.
3) On April 13, 1938 (lucky or unlucky thirteenth, as you may decide) the imported Van Engela hen 6512513/36, the imported Van Engela hen 6512523/36 and the imported dark Lambrechts hen 6500212/35 all disappeared.

MYSTERY SOLVED

The disappearance of these five hens puzzled Mr. Putterie, until one day a next-door neighbour asked him if he allowed schoolboys into his lofts during the daytime. Apparently these youngsters used to remove a sheet of galvanized iron on the street side.
of his lofts and then enter. The hens, being off their eggs or youngsters, flew out of the opening and the mystery was solved. Where did these hens go? They were never traced. I am sure that many of our fanciers would have paid a record price to get hold of any of those original hens.

Now, was it a tragedy? Yes and No is my answer. Very ambiguous, you will say.

My “yes” stems from the fact that there is no doubt that these hens would have continued to pay a great part in our pigeon history, as their first progeny have contributed a fantastic heritage to our present-day racing pigeon.

My answer “no” is bound up in what, in my opinion, is the crux of the whole Putterie story, and my considered opinion is that the loss of these five original hens was the lucky beginning of the famous Putterie strain, and hastened the process of forming a strain by years.

Early on in these articles I said luck seems always to play a part in pigeon racing, especially in forming a strain. I don't have to recapitulate any stories about luck in our sport. They are legion in all our lofts, whether racing or breeding.

I don't think Mr. Putterie thought of it in that light. In all my talks with him he never realized, up to the day he passed away, that he had created a strain that, one can say without a shadow of doubt, was, and is, simply fantastic.

Now, how was this strain produced? Luck played its part in the loss of the five imported hens, and Mr. Putterie was forced to mate the young hens reared from the different pairs to the five imported cocks early in life. The young cocks and hens were mates as soon as they were old enough.

Obvious and easy enough, the reader will say. This same position has arisen in a large number of lofts, but did the results of these accidents in other lofts produce the same results?

I say no with confidence, as I do not know of any fancier in pigeon history who had five original pairs of pigeons for a start and, within, three years, through force of circumstances, crossing and recrossing the various strains, formed a racing strain that has no peer in any part of the world.

One factor must be borne in mind when discussing the word luck. I say that luck played its part in forcing Mr. Putterie's hand to re-mate these birds after the loss of the five imported hens.

Now the factor which I cannot stress too strongly is the one wherein we all agree; namely, that Mr. Putterie was a great master of the art of mating different birds to produce champions.

This is a skill which very few fanciers possess. We who knew him well can vouch for the fact that it was it was no hit-and-miss affair with him when he mated his birds. He knew exactly what birds he wanted mated, and results throughout his racing career proved that he was a master of this aspect of the pigeon game which is doubtlessly the most important.

That, in my opinion, is the hallmark of a great fancier and I place Mr. Putterie on a par with any of the great champions of this or any other age, and of any country where racing pigeons are bred and raced. His was the master breeder's hand, and only super fanciers reach this goal. Any person can take up racing pigeons and, using other fanciers' birds and knowledge, become quite successful in winning races. But, the master hand shows only when the person knows how to mate different pigeons so that a family will be produced that can and will race and breed for the owner, and thereafter will not disgrace other fanciers' lofts who may be luck or unlucky enough in the purchase of birds from these lofts.

There are so few fanciers who know how and what to look for when mating pigeons. This knowledge cannot be learned the easy way. It takes a lot of study and experience to achieve this pinnacle of the racing pigeon game.

Very few fanciers are successful in this, the most difficult art of our sport, and invariable a lot of good stock is ruined by stupidity or a lack of knowledge. Fortunately for us fanciers, Mr. Putterie was a super crack when it came to mating birds of different strains, and gave us a legacy of his fountain of knowledge that stands today as a monument to his memory. A most amazing fact is that any purebred Putterie pigeon mated to any other strain in our country will produce out-standing racing birds. When I say “purebred Putterie” birds, then I mean birds that contain only the blood of the originals which appear in this history. There is no such thing as a pure breed in any strain; to many pigeons are used in any strain ever to be called pure. By purebred is simply meant that no out-cross has been used with the progeny of the originals.

These original birds, in any other fancier's hands, might not have produced the quality that were the outcome of his matings, so the credit is entirely his. I want to say right here, and now, that I do not think that crossing the original Putterie birds with all these other strains by different fanciers, even though winners are being produced, will help to form a new strain. Unless the fancier knows what he is doing and understands the basic principles, he will eventually lose the Putterie blood by injudicious crossing.

The hereditary laws as outlined by
the great scientist Mendel come into force sooner or later. One must use birds with an affinity in blood lines to continue to propagate offspring as great as or greater than the originals.

The fact was expressed by Mr. Putterie who was most emphatic in his view that a loft must be founded on blood lines that are long established in their particular area. The Putterie strain has certainly done just that in Johannesburg and the Reef and has dominated pigeon racing here, either raced purebred or crossed, for the past 20 years. I am perturbed at the tendency of most fanciers to cross the Putterie birds with various types and strains of local and imported birds. They are certainly producing winners, but what will the end result be?

I know of once great lofts and their owners who kept only pure Putteries, and who had records in racing that were outstanding, that are now not the force they once were, due to that one great cardinal sin in breeding: making use of stock that has no close relationship to their own birds either in looks or pedigree.

PART 3

The Putterie birds had certain characteristics of their own. Their eyes were of outstanding quality – and I do NOT mean in eye-sign, but in general appearance. These eyes certainly made a great impression on every fancier who ever handled a Putterie bird, including overseas fanciers.

You have the Marien type eye that is a pearl colour with a reddish-pink colouring in the iris. The “Buffel” Lambrechts was also a pearl but totally different to the Marien type. In this eye one found a very mauve tint throughout the eye.

These pearl eyes, as we call them for want of a better classification, are totally different in colouring to any others I have ever seen. The eyes of the Van Engela strain are something that is hard to describe, as the colouring was a dark texture when one casually looked at these birds, but on closer examination you found a fantastic colouration of the iris.

The Dark Lambrechts had a brownish colouring in the iris but this colouring was broken into segments right around the pupil.

The Remael type was also a rich dark colouring and also a type of its own.

The writer had seen and handled a very large number of pigeons in his career of more than 40 years, and in no instance can he ever remember seeing birds with the type of colouration that appears in the Putterie bird’s eyes. In fact, it is so different that it is the trademark of this strain, and any fancier who is a Putterie student can tell at a glance whether a particular bird is of the Putterie strain. These birds also had a magnificent eye cere, mostly a pinkish white. As they grew older this dominating eye cere gave these birds an appearance of racing aristocrats.

SUPERB FEATHERING

The feathering of this strain was superb.

As youngsters in the nest, the down on the squeakers was their outstanding feature. As their feathers developed, this down remained with long after weaning. It is always a sign of wonderful feathering when this down is also prominent, and in the writer’s experience no other strain could match the Putterie birds for the quantity and quality of feathering.

Their keel bones were curved from the breast and tapered right up to the vent bones. Vent bones were of super quality and very tight together and were set close to end of the keel. Backs were very strong and these birds had great quality in the pectoral muscles.

Wings had a short-looking appearance and in no instance, to the writer’s knowledge, did the flights extend to beyond the dark colour at the end of the tail. Invariably the flights ended well short of this black marking. This characteristic of the wing was in marked contrast to the English strains.

The seventh, eighth and ninth primary flights had a very pronounced curve in them, also very unlike other strains. The combination of eyes, feathering, bone structure and wing formation has no doubt given these birds the great flying ability that has made them the dominant racing pigeons that they have been and still are today.

An outstanding trait of the Putteries was the speed of flight when working as a kit around one’s lofts. While the writer was building up his team of Putteries, he had about 30 mixed strains working around the loft. He timed these birds quite often on their various circles around the loft and house, and it used to take them 14 to 15 seconds. When he put his first kit of Putterie birds in the air, they covered the same journey in eight to nine seconds. This ability to work fast was noted by all fanciers with a pure Putterie team of birds.

They normally would race around the lofts for 20 to 25 minutes at a terrific pace, and it was never necessary to work them for long periods like we used to do with the old English strains. Short spells of exercise or tosses were all that was necessary to get them in super condition.

NO WING CLAPS

Another thing I noticed with my Putterie birds was their total inability to go out for a jaunt in the air and clap, clap their wings like the old strains were happy to do.
When they tried this little exercise it seemed they lost height quickly and could not keep themselves in the air. So they had to use their wings continually in quick strokes and keep a steady rhythm of movement.

When a kit of Putteries came in to land after exercise, they came down with a lot of speed, and it frightened me sometimes to see them land in the lofts.

Another very great characteristic is the intense love of their mates, eggs and youngsters. In all the years that I have had Putterie birds I have never had a youngster scalped if it wandered into a strange nest. In fact I have often seen a pair of these birds, sitting on eggs, have a many as eight to 12 youngsters from other pairs sitting quite contentedly with them.

The Putterie birds always raced and put up their best performances when mated and flying to eggs or youngsters of any age. They seldom would race well unmated. In fact, they were liable to get lost easily in a race if sent unmated. Both hens are cocks were champion race birds.

Most of the Putterie birds would race and win over any distance from 100 miles to 700 miles. Whatever weather conditions prevailed on race day, be it raining, head winds, tail winds or perfect days, it did not hinder these birds from winning.

I will qualify my statement about the birds that could win over any distance, by saying that in my research work I find that where the Van Engela and Dark Chequer Lambrechts strains were very evident in the breeding, then these birds were the ones that won over any distance, be it short or long.

During the latter part of 1939, Mr. Putterie sent all his birds from Kimberley to Mr. Jack Waddington in Johannesburg, owing to the outbreak of the Second World War. There were between 30 and 36 birds. Jack was asked by Mr. Putterie to sell them for the sum of £30 for the whole team, including the original imported cocks.

**NOT INTERESTED**

A large number of local fanciers went to view these birds, and no one was interested in purchasing any of them.

I think all fanciers had fixed ideas of the old English type of bird in their minds when viewing this team of Belgian pigeons. These Belgians were something totally different in appearance to anything in South Africa. As some Cape fanciers, when viewing my loft of Putteries, very aptly put it, the cocks look like hens and the hens like turtle doves.

The late George Sole - a very good fancier - was one of the men who went to see them, and he told me that he remarked at the time, that he would not pay 30 for the lot.

When he recounted this story in 1950, he chuckled at the thought of what a bad judge he had been. But he was in good company with all the others who thought likewise at the time.

I asked Jack Waddington what he thought of them and he said that the imported Vincent Marien Cock was the finest pigeon he had ever seen or handled.

But if he had to choose one bird out of this collection, then his No. 1 choice would have been 6517311, the son of the imported Van Engela pair, who became known in later life as Putterie's old No. 11. This little cock became very famous in the Putterie birds, so Jack Waddington was a pretty good judge.

Jack mated these birds in January, 1940, and 15 youngsters were reared. Some of these youngsters later also became famous in the Putterie strain.

When Mr. Putterie came to reside in Johannesburg, Jack Waddington handed over to him all the birds, and they were taken to Saxonwold. Mr. Putterie mated the birds in late October, 1940, and reared a round of youngsters during November and December.

During 1941 he reared another set of youngsters from July to November. In 1942 he started to race in the Northern Districts Club of the T.R.P.F.

**FANTASTIC RESULT**

Following is the fantastic result of the first season’s racing by the Putterie birds in this big organization:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Federation</th>
<th>Bird Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Westleigh 100 miles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Westleigh</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennemar</td>
<td>2 &amp; 2</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunen</td>
<td>1, 3, 4, 2, 7, 12</td>
<td>45.41, 605643.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Thunen</td>
<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gles 720 miles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Gles</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1c, 1f</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfontein</td>
<td>1 &amp; 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Springfontein</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nauwpoort 400 miles</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>222.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nauwpoort</td>
<td>1 &amp; 7</td>
<td>1105.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Bird Limit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gles 220 miles</td>
<td>1 &amp; 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hutchison champions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result of club races: 12x1st, 7x2nd, 3x3rd, 2x4th. Federation: 4x1st, 6x2nd, 4x4th. This was great racing by any standard.

All the foregoing birds appear in the
pedigree of winners after 1942. One of them becomes immortal - namely, “Lady Dudley”. The reader will notice that three birds bred from Ref. B, the Van Engela pair, all produced winners in 1942.

This result did not shake the conservative members of the other clubs in the federation. Only a handful of members in Mr. Putterie’s club - Northern Districts - and the Mayfair Club, bothered to introduce this stock into their lofts. Two of them were Mr. C. Kerstens, also a Belgian fancier and a great friend of Mr. Putterie, and Monty van den Berg, Shiney van Rensburg, Lew Holbert and Fred Parsons. The rest of the Federation could not see the writing on the wall, except one.

This was Andrew van Jaarsveld, of the Rand Central Homing Society. He very reluctantly accompanied to Mr. Putterie’s lofts an uncle of his, Mr. Rogge, who incidentally, also was a famous Belgian fancier who settled in Johannesburg in 1910 and made great pigeon history here with his famous Rogge-Gits pigeons.

**MADE TO BUY**

Mr. Roggs made Andrew van Jaarsveld purchase 10 youngsters for 15 from Mr. Putterie. Andrew told me he hated the sight of these youngsters with their long legs and long necks. This, of course, is a characteristic of Putterie pigeons after they are weaned. But as they grow older they develop into a lovely type. Van Jaarsveld tried everything in his power to lose these untrained youngsters by jumping them big distances with his local strain of well-trained babies.

But lose them he could not. When the old-bird races came along, these Putterie birds were yearlings, and they simply toyed with his old strain when it came to training and racing. Result was that he eliminated every other pigeon in his loft except these 10 Putterie birds.

Unfortunately for the sport, Andrew van Jaarsveld retired from pigeon racing after about six years of very successful racing with the Putterie strain. Among the 10 birds - and each one was a champion in its own sphere of either racing or stock - the one best known to our fanciers was P.171, who was a Marien, Ramael, Van Engela.

Three of the others warrant special mention:

- **2639/42** whose sire was 6510050/37 “Baby” - (Ref. A) and Dam 6517310/38 (Ref. B) - Van Engela. “2639” won a Nauwpoort Federation in 1943 and became a great stock bird. He was a full brother of the “Skrik”.
- **6344/42** - Sire 6514024/37 (Ref. D) - “Buffel” - Lambrechts. Dam 6520294/37 (Ref. A) - Marien-Ramael. “6344” was a great stock birds, became sire of Van Jaarsveld’s two great Federation winners 1151 & 1152.
- **6343/42** - Sister to 6344. This hen became the mate of 2639, to be known as the “Perfect Pair”.

**PART 4**

**Andrew Van Jaarsveld was the most fanatical supporter of the Putterie birds that I have ever met. I have to thank him and Mike Rissi for introducing me to this great strain and making me, only second to them, such an ardent disciple of the great Putterie cult. Chris Scott had a similar experience to Andrew van Jaarsveld, when he purchased his first seven Putterie birds. These seven Putteries used to finish at least 20 minutes ahead of his local strain in training and racing.**

He then eliminated every other bird in his loft and went on to become one of the greatest fanciers in the T.R.P.F. with his famous loft of Putteries. I shall just mention a few of his great Putteries which were used as stock birds.

- **6349/45** was the dam of his great Matjesfontein Cock. This cock was 1st Club and 1st Federation from Matjesfontein (700 miles) and the following year 1st Club and 2nd Federation from the same race, beaten by one minute after allowing 30 miles overfly to a fancier in Pretoria who was the winner.

Sire of the Matjesfontein cock was 5291/44 Buffel Lambrechts, Marien-Ramael, Van Engela.

- **Dam 6349 was Dark Chequer** Hen. Her sire was Churchill's nest mate brother 6520280 who was son of “Baby” and “Lady Dudley”.

- **Dam of 6349 was 6505305 who was a daughter of the imported Marien cock** (Ref. A), when mated to a hen from the “Boer” 6509008/37. Strain (Cools) and 6520281 (Ref. D), Lambrechts (Buffel).

Another of Scott’s great family can be mentioned, 6347/45 Blue Chequer Cock. His sire was “Churchill”. His dam 2019 whose sire was the “Boer” 6509908. Strain (Frans Cools) and 221.

- Also 1184 Blue Chequer, sire 2020/43 whose sire was 6514032 Dark Lambrechts - (Ref. E) when mated to the famous 222. Dam of 1184 was 2019 - the “Theunissen” hen, from the “Boer” and 222.

The four youngsters bred from Ref. A (Marien-Ramael) all played a part in the formation of the new strain. Particularly 610050, who was named “Baby”.

**THE SKRIK**

He was first mated to 6517310 a daughter of (Ref. B) Van Engela and one of this pair’s first progeny was the great racer 736/40 “De Skrik”, who
won a Federation race from Glen, 220 miles by 20 minutes. This bird was very aptly named as not only did he SKRIK Mr. Putterie but the Federation members as well. This cock was on of Mr. Putterie's first Federation winners.

The other three youngsters bred off the above pair 735, 4397 and 4398 also appeared in the building up of the strain.

The Skrik became the sire when mated to the great racing hen 222 of P174 whose progeny have won many races.

Season 1942 saw the birth of a very famous stock cock, 2639, whose sire was “Baby” (Ref. A) and the Van Engela hen 6517310 (Ref. B.) 2639 when mated to 6343/42 became known as the “Perfect Pair”. Jack Laidlaw purchased this pair of birds and they finished their days in another famous fancier's loft, namely, D. Feldman.

The “Perfect Pair” were the parents of so many great race and stock birds that I shall not try to enumerate them.

Another two youngsters bred in 1942 from “Baby” and his hen were R170 and 3406, who also appear in the pedigrees of many of the great Putterie birds.

In 1943, 6517310 the Van Engela hen died - (Ref. B).

“Baby” was then mated to a little Dark Chequer hen 1105/41 named “Lady Dudley”.

From this mating two cocks were born who were both champion stock cocks and I mean champion in every sense of the word. The one was rung 6517310/38. This ring was from the Van Engela hen which had died, the other 6520280/37. This ring came from the first youngster off (Ref. B), Van Engela which had also died.

6517310/38 was named “Churchill” and is one of the most famous names in the Putterie strain. The winners that descend from Churchill are legion.

A.G. Lamb purchased Churchill and the “Theunissen” hen 2019/43 from Mr. Putterie. A daughter of this pair, 1694, won two Glen 220-mile races in successive years. She became the dam of 10 club winners and some of these birds also won Federation races. Nine of these winners were for A.G. Lambe and one for Cliff Walter.

Another daughter of Churchill was the grand dam of the Blue Hen, 15666/54, that won three Federation races for Koot le Grange of the Alberton Club. This hen won a Hanover Road (400 miles) and a Hutchinson (500 miles) race within one month in 1956 in the Federation. In 1957 she won again from Hutchinson. This hen was a Stassart-Putterie and was without a doubt a champion by winning three Federation races. Another daughter of Churchill became a famous stock hen in W. Zachau’s loft.

6520280 became the sire of Mr. Putterie’s famous “Boxer” family.

6520280 like his nest mate “Churchill” became a great stock cock, and a lot of winners descend from him.

6520294 a sister to “Baby” (Ref. A) appears in a large number of the greatest winning Putteries. She was known as the “Remael” hen.

PHENOMENAL HEN

Ref. B pair - Van Engela. One youngster of this pair was 6520280. When mated to the imported Marien Cock 6509032 produced the phenomenal racing hen 222/41. This hen, 222, is a by-word amongst fanciers. She was one of Mr. Putterie’s most famous hens. Other great birds of this mating were 235, 236, 242, 243, all 1941.

6417310 another youngster of Ref. B. when mated to “Baby” 6510050 produced a long line of great stock and race birds.

6517311, nest mate brother to 6517340 (Ref. B), became one of the greatest influences in the Putterie strain in my summing up, through his great daughter “Lady Dudley” 1105/41 and the “Groote” Cock 465/41.

This cock was known by all as Putterie’s famous “No. 11”. He was a small blue cock with the most amazing colouring in his eye that I or any one else has ever seen. It is simply impossible to describe it.

We destroyed the old chap three years ago when he was 21 years old, owing to blindness.

It was a sad day when I had to call in Bill Morkel to destroy such a champion. He was one of Mr. Putterie’s favourites.

His greatest claim to fame is as the sire of the immortal hen “Lady Dudley”.

The dam of Lady Dudley was 657455, a daughter of (Ref. E), the dark Lambrechts pair. Lady Dudley was a small dark chequer hen that was one of Mr. Putterie’s great racing hens. She won two races in 1942.

NAMED AFTER HOME

She was named after a famous nursing home in Johannesburg where Mr. Putterie was recuperating after an illness. When he came home he had to place a ring on a youngster and so promptly named it Lady Dudley.

But she became the most famous stock hen in his lofts. When mated to “Baby” she produced the great “Churchill” and his nest mate brother. When she was mated to 6517319, who was a son of the imported
Marien cock 6509032 (Ref. A), and 6520282, the “Queen”, who was daughter of (Ref. D pair) the light chequer Lambrechts pair, the Buffel and his hen. They produced 475/43, the famous stock cock in my lofts whom we all know as the “Lady Dudley Cock”.

The direct progeny of 475, either sons or daughters or grandchildren, won nine important Federation races in one season for various fanciers. The progeny of 475 have been winning Federation races and Combines over all distances from 1947 to the present day. He is the foundation stock cock of my great winning family. He is still alive at the age of 18 years.

Another son of old No. 11 and a full brother to “Lady Dudley” and hatched the same season was 465/41 who was a Club and Federation winner in 1942, and named the “Groote” Cock. He is just as famous a stock cock as his sister, and his progeny are equally as good as his famous sister.

I purchased him when he was 11 years old to mate to a granddaughter of “Lady Dudley”, number 5309/51, whose sire was Lady Dudley’s son, 475.

Five hens were produced from this mating and they have all produced big winners including an Old Bird Federation Championship and three combine winners.

The “Groote” cock’s progeny won Federations for Mike Rissi and Maurice Adler. His stock also appeared in Ted O’Connor’s famous family.

Another great hen, No. 351/43, was a daughter of Lady Dudley. She was a full sister of my famous cock 475/43. 351 became the foundation Putterie bird of Monty van den Berg’s loft.

Monty loaned her to Ronnie Lobley and Ronnie Croxford and her progeny are the birds that started these two great fanciers on the road to fame.

Ref. C, the one youngster of this pair, 6527457, when paired to 6344/42 who was a brother to 6343, hen of the “Perfect Pair”, had a great influence on the strain through such notable birds as 1151, 1152, 136 and 6886. All four of these birds became famous as race and stock birds. They came from the lofts of Andrew van Jaarsveld.

Ref. D: Lambrechts “The Buffel” and his hen. The two birds of this mating played a big part in the strain. The “Buffel” himself became one of Mr. Putterie’s foundation stock cocks and it is only necessary to add that his progeny, when he was mated to different hens, were great race and stock birds.

His best known offspring are birds that were bred when he was mated 6520294 (Ref. A), and known as the “Remael” hen though she was Marien-Remael. The progeny of this pair were known as the “Buffel-Remaels”. The first youngster of this mating were P.173, 2653, 2654, 6343 and 6344 all 1942. All these birds became famous.

The “Buffel” was one of the only imported birds that I had the pleasure of handling. He died in 1951 in Monty van den Berg’s loft. He was a magnificent cock in every way, a fine upstanding light chequer with marvellous, mauve-coloured eyes. But the greatest impression he made on me was the width of his wing butts. I have never seen anything like them. When viewed from the front of the bird they looked immense.

One of his sons was named the “Vechter” and was one of Mr. C. Kersten’s great pigeons. Another of Mr. Kersten’s great Putterie birds was “Madametje”. She had Buffel, Marien and van Engela blood in her pedigree.

One of her daughters became a foundation stock hen of Chris Scott’s great Putterie birds. She was also named “Madametje”, her ring No. 3026/44.

A son of the Buffel-Remael, 2653/42, was purchased by the late George Sole from Mr. Putterie and became the greatest race bird he ever owned. He sold this cock to the writer, and one of his daughters - 1281 - when mated to 475/43 (son of Lady Dudley) became one of the foundation stock pairs of my lofts.

The one hen bred from the (Ref. D) pair, 6520282/37, was named the “Queen”. She was the dam of 259, 260, 251, 252, all bred in 1941, who played their part in the formation of the Putterie strain. Their sire was KHS410/37 (Ref. A). When she was mated to the imported Marien Cock (Ref. A), she produced 6517319, the sire of 475, 473, and 351.

652281/37, the other youngster of (Ref. D) pair, became the dam of 729 and 730 and also 4376, 4377 - all 1940.

This pair exerts a tremendous influence on the formation of the strain through their daughter 6527455/37. If this hen did nothing else than produce Lady Dudley, 1105/41 and the “Groote” cock 465/41, then she has done enough to go down in pigeon history. But she also appears in quite a number of other birds’ pedigrees.

Her two sisters, 6517312/38 and 6517313/38, also appear in the building up of the Putterie strain, a daughter of 6517312, when mated to “Baby” 6510050/37 (Ref. A), produced 5408/44, a very good stock hen.
A very great stock hen that produced innumerable winners was Silas Willis’ famous 2622/42. Her sire was 268/41 whose sire was 6514032 (Ref. D) Lambrechts, mated to a daughter of the “Boer” and a van Engela hen.

Dam of 2622 was 4398/40 whose sire was “Baby” 6510050 (Ref. A), and dam 6517310 van Engela (Ref. B).

Ted O’Connor started his famous climb to fame when he received one Putterie bird as a present from Andrew van Jaarsveld. Ted had a large number of various strains in his loft when this one “Putterie” was introduced. It won the first race it competed in and simply toyed with his other birds. Andrew van Jaarsveld gave Ted another Putterie bird which did likewise.

Ted then concentrated on Putterie birds only and became a famous fancier when he was racing. In one season his birds won six club races in a row in Rand Central Club and three Federations.

Maurice Adler and Mike Rissi were two other staunch Putterie fans when they started in the sport. Maurice Adler, as a schoolboy, became Mr. Putterie’s assistant. When he grew older he went into partnership with Mike Rissi. Two of their famous Putterie winners were 6333/45, winner of five club races and two Federations. A champion hen who later became dam of the writer’s Federation National winner from Fraserburg Road 600 miles in a big smash in 1952.

6333 was a daughter of Churchill 6517310/39, and 2019/43, the “Theunissen” hen. Another very good bird and a Federation winner for the partnership was 6344/45, whose sire was 465/40 the “Groote” Cock (brother of Lady Dudley) and Dam 173/42 whose sire was the “Buffel” 6514024/37 (Ref. D) when mated to 6520294/37 (Ref. A) Marien-Remael.

A number of brothers and sisters of 6344 became famous in various lofts.

I want to close my reminiscences of great pigeons that have the Putterie strain as one of the bases in their pedigree by referring to Bob Bouwer’s two great racing hens. They are full sisters. The one he has won the last two Federation Old Bird Championship races in successive years. The other one has won a 450-mile Federation this past season.

Their dam is a pure Putterie. Her sire was 751, a yearling National Federation winner. His dam was one of Mr. Putterie’s great racing hens, 731, whose sire was a son of the Marien Cock 6509032/37 (Ref. A) and 6520282/38, a daughter of the “Buffel” (Ref. D). The dam of this hen that produced Bouwer’s two great hens was 863, whose sire was van Jaarsveld’s famous P.171 and dam 6527457/37 “The Queen”, Van Engels (Ref. C).

**SUMMING UP**

In my final summing up, which no doubt readers will expect of me, I would say that the Vincent–Marien Cock and the Remael hen (Ref. A) pair have great influence in the strain through their son “Baby” 6510050/37 when mated to 651710/38 (Ref. B) van Engela whose son 6239/42 is the cock of the famous “Perfect Pair”. When Baby was mated to Lady Dudley he produced the great cock Churchill.

A sister of Baby 6520294/37, known as the “Remael” hen has a tremendous influence in the strain through her progeny when mated to the “Buffel” Lambrechts (Ref. D).

Two of these were the great 6344/42, a great racer and stock cock and his famous sister 6343, who became the hen of the “Perfect Pair”.

2653/42 and 2654/42 are another two of this famous pair’s great race and stock birds that have a great influence on the strain.

When, 6520294/37 was mated to the imported Dark Lambrechts cock (Ref. E) she produced two famous sons, 6517326/38, hatched December ‘38, and 6506319/39, hatched April ’39. These two cocks appear in the breeding of his first great pigeons.

Thus we have two youngsters bred off (Ref. A) pair which exerted a big influence early on in the production of the strain.

**REF. B PAIR - VAN ENGELA**

This pair have a dominant part in the formation of the strain through 6520280/37, dam of the famous 222 and 235. A sister, 6517310.38, became the famous stock hen when mated to “Baby” to produce the great racer the “Skrik” 736/40 and his nest mate 735, and 2639/41 and also P.170 and 3406, 1942.

Now we have the greatest of them all, 6517311/38, the sire of “Lady Dudley” and the “Groote” cock. Through these two birds old No. 11 attains the highest pinnacle any stock cock could ever reach. No. 11’s influence on the strain is tremendous.

**REF. C PAIR - VAN ENGELA**

A daughter of this pair, 6527457/37, when mated to the Marien cock, (Ref. A), becomes the dam of 2644 and 2645 and P.176 and P.177 - All bred in 1942. These birds play their part in the early stages.

6527457 became known as the Queen after the death of the original Queen bred from the “Buffel” Lambrechts pair. She was purchased by Andrew van Jaarsveld and later sold to Dr. Kritzinger, and one of her daughters, 863, becomes the granddam of Bob Bouwer’s two famous hens.
The one youngster of this pair - 6520282/37, the first Queen - when mated to the Marien cock (Ref. A), becomes the dam of a long list of birds that were used in the formation of the strain.

The Marien cock and 6520282 produced nine youngsters the first season they were mated. The first two youngsters, 6517318/38 and 6517319/38, were used in 1941 and produced very good birds. 6517319 becomes the sire of 475, 474 and 351, who all have a great influence on the strain.

Incidentally, my personal opinion is that 475 is one of the greatest stock cocks ever hatched.

The “Buffel”, of course, became a great producer with other hens that he was mated to after the loss of his first mate. His blood was used very extensively in the strain.

GREATEST EVER

So it is not with tongue in cheek that I write boldly and place on record my opinion, that the Putterie birds are without doubt the greatest pigeons that were ever raced or used a stock birds in this or any other country.

We have to thank the luck that came our way when Mr. Putterie returned to South Africa and then imported the birds that have made his name the most famous of all in our country since pigeon racing started around the year 1900.

There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that all the superlatives that one can heap on the Putterie strain are fully justified, and no one can gainsay the fact that this was, and is, the strain par excellence in either racing or used as stock. No Putterie bird has disgraced any loft into which it was or is introduced.

They can only improve one’s stock, and this cannot be said for most strains. Some of the finest birds from different strains have been introduced from time to time in various lofts and proven utter failures. Not so with the Putterie birds.

Now there is a saying among T.R.P. Federation members that if you don’t have Putteries in your loft and race basket, you can’t shape in winning prizes.

I can vouch for this as it was very obvious that in clubs like Northern Districts and Mayfair and Rand Central, the members were first to realize the deadly racing ability of the Putterie strain. Owners of Putteries dominated their clubs and the Federation.

The result is that I say, without fear of contradiction, that today I do not know of one loft in this big T.R.P.F. that does not have some Putterie birds.

I want to remark on another outstanding factor common to Putteries: it is the number of great birds, either winners or stock birds, that come from a pair of eggs.

During my research work in writing this story, I was amazed at the number of times this fact cropped up. Time after time I came across numerous nest mates that were both champions either as racers or as producers or both. It is simply incredible. Another fact most forcibly in evidence was the number of birds bred off any particular pair that all turned out to be either great racers or stock birds or both.

The number of pigeons bred from this strain that turned out useless is so small that it would not seem true unless supported the evidence. In fact, some fanciers say there are no bad Putterie birds. If they don’t race then they will produce winners.

The facts prove that this strain produced more great pigeons than any other in history.

I think, had I written this story earlier, many fanciers would have realized the implications involved, and would have saved their great Putterie strain, as they will never see its equal again.

Fanciers by and large are losing their strain of Putterie birds and the day is fast coming - if not already here - when fanciers will have to scratch around for winners. Many thought that this strain could go on for ever. It might have, had the fanciers whose lofts originally contained only Putterie birds concentrated on their preservation.

There are a few of us who have always realized the importance of guarding this great heritage handed over to us by the late, great Frans Putterie.

The history of the Putterie strain is just one great success after another. It did not matter, be the fancier novice or old hand, these birds would win for them. What other strain in the whole world of pigeon racing can show results that compare with the Putterie strain? I say, no one.

PRIZE MONEY

I have taken out a rough estimate of the amount of money won by birds with the Putterie blood in them. The figure is just over R200,000 and is based on prize money etc., in the clubs and the T.R.P.F. only. What the amount is when taking other organizations into account would add appreciably to this sum.

There have been approximately 400 Federation races in the T.R.P.F. since the Putterie birds started racing in 1942. I don’t think any fancier will dispute my estimate if I say that 340 of these Federation races were won by
birds containing the Putterie strain in their pedigrees.

When the writer was purchasing pure Putterie birds in 1950 to form the basis of his stock he had stock birds which had won 36 Federation and 52 club races in the lofts. What other strain in the history of pigeon racing produced such results? The more one thinks about it the greater becomes one’s admiration.

I want to mention a fact that might give many of us here - and overseas - something to think about. The original birds of this strain came from lofts in Belgium where the widowhood system was not used at the time and the fanciers whose names these birds carry were racing on the natural system. This might be a factor of paramount importance to any present fancier who wishes to form a great strain that will not only race but carry on as great stock birds.

Another point that crops us, and one that I am sure the late, Mr. Putterie would wish me to stress, is the use of clean water and good food. I hear too much about many of today’s fanciers who say our birds must be given tonics and all kinds of preparations to be able to fly the modern way.

I hope to live long enough to see any one of these so-called “modern flying” fanciers leave us a legacy of great racing and producing stock to carry on their names in other lofts, like the old masters, including Mr. Putterie.

Mr. Putterie was a fanatical believer in good food and clean water. The word “drug” would send the old man into a state of fury. He was amply backed up by the great Louis Vermeijen, a famous fancier and writer in the Belgian pigeon world. No drugs or tonics for their birds. Sick or ailing birds to be destroyed.

Is this a reason, perhaps, why these two great fanciers’ birds do so well in our lofts and give the “modern” fancier such pleasure?

The writer believes in the same principle, and in no circumstances will drugs or medicines be allowed in his lofts.

I want to be emphatic on one point: to make it quite clear that, when we refer to the Putterie strain, then we recognise only birds that descend on both sides of their pedigree from the originals listed in this story.

From the year 1949, and after that, Mr. Putterie started importing birds from various fanciers in Belgium. With these birds he did not attempt to form a family such as bears his name today. So if any fancier has birds from the new importations, he does not possess the recognized “Putterie” strain.

Before I end this history I would like to mention another fancier who knew the Putterie birds intimately while the strain was being formed. This fancier was Dave Stirling, who was in on the ground floor when Mr. Putterie was breeding and racing, and he knew and handled most of the birds that I have written about.

I dedicate this little history to Mrs. Putterie who is still happily with us in this year of grace 1961, and her son, Marcel.

May the name of our great friend and fancier, the late Frans Putterie, live long and be an inspiration to us all to try to do the things he did, the way he did them, and withal remain a true sportsman and a great gentleman until the day he died.