



SPEAKING WITH TREVOR BROADBENT

Question: Trevor, the best part first – you won the Golden Face class at the Nationals in 2013 – did you know the bird was that good?

Trevor: No the bird was good as far as variety goes but not up to what we expect the budgerigar to be in quality these days.

Question: What did it feel like to have your first National win?

Trevor: Unbelievable actually. It sort of was a good feeling but also knowing it was a new variety in the competition but not that strong a budgerigar it was really a mixed feeling.

Question: So where did the family of this winning Golden Face originate from?

Trevor: The first Golden Faces I got was just after my heart bypass and I was down at Garry Gazzard's place and he had only just got some himself and he wanted some up here to spread the variety around and not lose them. I also got some from Timmy Swanson at Lismore and it was a combination of that and my birds and went from there.

Question: So have you mated that bird up yet?

Trevor: No I am just starting to pair up the Golden Faces now – after losing so many birds earlier last year the Golden Faces were not a priority as I really had to concentrate on the Normals and the other varieties before I spent time on them.

Question: So what are you pairing him up to?

Trevor: It is a bit of a mixture as we have to break the small cycle with this variety. We have just got to keep putting them back to Normals to keep improving the features and feather on them but unfortunately when you use the single factors you lose the variety. He will go back to another Single factor but he will also go back to some Normals to improve the features.

Question: You said you lost birds earlier, can I ask you what happened?

Trevor: It was just one of those things, we were away for a month overseas and it was when we had all that rain in March/April and I had two automatic feeders in the flights and with the rain, the automatic feeder to the keep cage clogged up, (it couldn't be the feeder in the young or the cull cages) so automatically we lost the birds.

Question: What size and construction is your aviary please?

Trevor: It is 12 metres by 4 metres with 1200 colour bond up the front with mouse proof wire above that. The walls are insulated and we have a drop ceiling so the air circulates across the top. So with the recent hot weather we have experienced lately it is cooler inside the aviary than it is the house. We have a tiled floor throughout – we have to remember it is a hobby and whatever we can do to make it easier for ourselves it is better – I will be tilling the walls at some time too.

I have all wire breeding cages and I normally run thirty two but at the moment I have thirty nine going. I have to do a bit of experimenting at the moment to see which blood lines work together but normally thirty two is enough. I have timber nest boxes which are a box inside a box which is ideal for convenience. I have my trolley in the aviary (which is my best friend), I just take the inner box out and do whatever I need to do to the chicks knowing the hen cannot get out. You can clean or change the chicks to a new inner box and put it in within five

minutes and there are no problems. I always put sawdust inside the nest box and sometimes the hens clean it all out. Those who don't I will always take it out so the eggs are always sitting inside the concave without too much sawdust in there.



Question: With your feeding programme, do you mix your own grain and what soft food etc. do you give?

Trevor: I buy 25 bags at a time through Allora. I have been using them for two and a half years now and I am really happy. They do a mix up of what you want so I get 50% canary, 30% Jap and the rest is white French. I order it and within two or three days I collect it from Springwood. The quality has been very good and that is why I keep my birds on it.

As soon as the birds go into the breeding box I feed soft food. I use a powder either Hi Pro, Budgie Starter or Chick Starter, I always put in parsley and beetroot, and then I put in Broccoli and carrot and normally a little silverbeet or Snow Pea (the last two is just to give them variety) and I actually use a food processor so it goes into a crumble. That mix dries out which is good. I have tried a few other things like Sweet Potato and Capsicum but always found that left the mix wet and I don't like that in our climate.



As soon as they go into a breeding cage they have a small dish of hulled oats, a small dish of sunflower and a small dish the soft food I just described and a finger drawer each of rape seed, shell grit and linseed. That gives them the three oil seeds which I keep there all the time.

Question: Do you find the birds eat the Rape and Linseed?

Trevor: Some do and some don't. I make sure I mix it up – I do a little treat every now and then with the Nestfeathers and young birds and they do eat it. It is the same with most foods, the Nestfeathers will eat anything. I also put in a Calcium and Charcoal and Iodine blocks. In the flights every now and then I put in some branches of Eucalyptus, bottle brush and grevillea. . I do not soak seed or greens or anything like that as I believe in the KISS method (keep it simple stupid) . I am going back 20 to 30 years ago when I had canaries and there would always be some incident or bungle with soaking and I don't see any benefit in it. There is enough other food available without taking risks with soaking seeds.



Question: How many birds would you have flying at the moment?

Trevor: Far too many! There is easily a few hundred which is far too many. When I lost the birds I spoke about earlier it was about forty five in number and they were the best of my cock birds so I have had to keep a lot of what would have been my cull birds to try to find what was going to work and what wasn't. We are in the process now of culling out some and there are a few good green ringers coming through which I am a little surprised about as I thought originally this was going to be hard work but quality is starting to come through and some black ringers are looking close to it to.

Question: How did you get into the budgies?

Trevor: My youngest son came home one day and said he would like a couple of budgies, I want to breed some, train them, take them to school and sell so some four hundred birds later here we are. I used to breed them when I was younger and I used to drop in to see Len Tucker on my way home from high school and that is when we had our first birds. When Toni and I married I was going through a canary stage – German Shepherds and Canaries.

Question: Is Toni as involved as you?

Trevor: Yes, If I have to travel or have a bowls tournament or whatever, Toni steps up. We have a list and she is quite competent of handling that and looking after them.

Question: Does Toni have any special variety she prefers?

Trevor: Yes, ME!! Not really a bird is a bird to Toni.

Question: What varieties are you flying at present?

Trevor: My favourite has got to be Dominant Pieds and I had some very strong Dominant Pieds, and over the past few days I have paired up the majority of cages with Pieds in them. I am just trying to get back to the quality I had and I am just seeing what is going to eventuate. I also have Normals, Cinnamons, Opalines and Spangles as well as the Golden Faces. I have only got two pairs of Recessive Pieds and two pairs of Lutinos paired up but only for fostering. If I have a problem in a cage I know I can foster to them. I also like having Lutinos and Albinos in the flights as it is very easy to pick up Mite, lice and things like that. It is worthwhile having an Albino in the flight even if you never use it as you can easily detect it on this colour than any other bird.



Question: You say you are going to put up your Australian Golden Faces later, how many would you have down there?

Trevor: I have got five males which are double factors and half a dozen single factor hens. Initially it was stated they were only going to have the Double Factor Golden Faces at the Nationals and I probably wasted eighteen months keeping single factors and trying to improve and

break that small gene cycle and then they let the singles onto the show bench. I don't really agree in having the single factors as it is a variety bird and you don't see the true beauty of the bird. To see a Golden Face Violet is magnificent with the striking colour. I think once we get the double factor colour with the exhibition features, they will be striking birds.

Question: What age do you like your birds to be when you cull them?

Trevor: I think some birds automatically cull themselves no matter how long you keep them whether it be six, seven, nine months whatever. A cull bird is a cull bird. Some birds are also later developers. I feel it is up to the individual and whatever works for them.

Question: I know you are breeding at present to try and get your numbers and quality up but when is your birds' normal breeding season?

Trevor: Honestly in my flight I could go twelve months of the year. When I got back from England after losing the birds I really didn't pair up until May/June and I have kept going and I probably won't stop until later in the year. The aviary is cool and the birds don't suffer.

Question: You don't find you need the break from it?

Trevor: Yes you do. Every now and then you do need that time out. I am fortunate that the birds are my relaxation. With work, lawn bowls and everything else, I can come into my bird room and relax so it is enjoyable for me. I really enjoy the breeding side of it. Plus the way I have things set up, it normally takes me only about an hour to do everything and days I don't want to be in there, I walk down and check they all have seed and water, check a few nest boxes and I am straight out of there but the next day I make sure I carry out a full procedure.

Question: What age do you like your birds to be before you pair them up?

Trevor: The birds tell you when they are ready. I have a nest box that I hang on the outside of the flights. You only have to look at the birds that are hanging off the wire trying to look into the nest box and you know they are ready. You only have to look at the cock birds that are chasing those hens to know that they are ready. We just have to be smart enough to look at them, watch them and realise and pick them at right time.

Question: I feel a lot of breeders' pair up their birds when they are ready and not necessarily when the birds are ready and then they blame the person they purchased the birds from for the infertility?

Trevor: Yes, as I said, the birds tell you when they are ready. Infertility is another issue. Personally my own thoughts are that there is no reason in nature for infertility in budgerigars even with in breeding, line breeding and things like that. More physical deformities and problems would occur before infertility. Once again, it is watching your pairs. With my breeding birds whenever I go into feed and the hen is getting close to laying or she has laid her first egg, the nest box comes off the cage and goes on the floor until I am ready to leave the aviary. Then I watch to see if the cock bird is trying to mate and more importantly to see if the hen bird is allowing the cock to mate. I really believe 99 times from 100 the hen will not allow the cock to mate or give him enough time to mate.

On occasions the cock bird doesn't mate properly, like he doesn't get underneath, he gets on top, or he is too timid for this to happen but most times the hen just needs that time to let the cock bird chat her up and mate etc. A lot of times the hen will come out of the nest box, the pair have a bit of a kiss and cuddle, she does her business, has a drink and then back into the nest box and the mating chance has gone. Once I know the eggs are turning I have no problems leaving the nest box on. But virtually every pair I do that with.

Question: If a pair has a clear round would you let them go again?

Trevor: No I never let them have a clear round as I will foster under them. By taking the eggs out and expecting them to get fertile eggs the second round when you haven't fixed the problem is of no advantage. If I do get clear rounds and in thirty two cabinets I would be unlucky to get two or three clear rounds but that pair will always foster chicks. If it is a hen that is a little overweight or out of condition I will put four chicks in there or if a pair that is in really good condition, they will only have two fostered chicks. That keeps them in cycle then when the chicks are ready to come out of the box the hen is outside more and the cock has more chance of mating. That is usually enough to fix the problem. Over the past two or three years with thirty two breeding cabinets I have bred over four hundred chicks using this method.

Question: When you first pair the birds up, do you close the nest box off to prevent entry?

Trevor: I open the nest box straight away. They both have to be inquisitive about it and sometimes the cock is more inquisitive than the hen and sometimes vice versa. What I have done a couple of times in the past is put cardboard over the hole and put a little hole in it so the hen has to chew her way through the cardboard and this allows the cock bird more time with the hen bird outside. I have had the odd hen that is reluctant to get into the nest box and then I do the opposite. I put the hen inside the nest box with cardboard over the hole. I put a little hole in it so she can see the cock bird through the hole and she has to chew her way back out. I don't say I will leave her there for two days but I make the hole a little bigger till she gets out. I then do it again until she is comfortable going in and out of the nest box. I also put Millet spray inside the nest box and that usually helps.

Question: We put millet sprays inside the nest box when the chicks have hatched, do you do this at all?

Trevor: Every now and again as it depends on the condition of the chicks. I would rather the hen bird feeds them as long as possible. If I feel the hen is getting strained or I cannot foster the chicks out, I will put some millet spray into the nest boxes to try to ease the pressure on the hen.

Question: What is your process of taking chicks out of the nest box and into the flights?

Trevor: When I take the nestfeathers out, I put them into holding cages made of Melamine about the size of a normal breeding cage and I hold about ten or twelve nesties in

that cage and they have a variety of food like my normal mix, a little sunflower, hulled oats, high-pro powder, millet sprays, soft food and various vegetables. I hold them in there for a while until I feel they are getting stronger. Because these cages are double cages, I take the divider out so the two cages mix so there are twenty four birds in there with more room to fly around. The floor has no wire on it so they can forage around. I think sometimes we go overboard with keeping things sterile. I believe they are like kids and you have to build up immunity. They have to go through hardships. Once they settle down in the double cages and they are strong enough I will put them into the flights. They go in with older birds and there are no stress levels. I have found that this stops the Nestfeathers from going light in condition.

In the flights I don't keep the birds separated – I fly the cocks and hens together. I separate them only for a couple of weeks prior to pairing up but until then they are together. I think it is important they learn to mix and socialise. The only time I did separate them was when we first moved out to where we are living now and I had all sorts of dramas. Cock birds did not know what to do with the hens etc. and we had hens who would not accept the cocks.

Question: Do you give any preventative medication at all?

Trevor: Not really. I never put anything in the seed. If I give anything at all, it goes direct or into the water. I read an article ages ago in which it stated birds seem to be in a moult all the time or birds take ages to come through the moult and this was from a chicken fancier and he was of the opinion that the medication that was going into the water was prolonging the moult because they weren't getting used to the same thing and he equated it to changing the seed and sending birds into moults. I am open to anything I read or hear and I make my own mind up on what I think – so at the moment for two days I will put a multi vitamin in the water and that is about it. The only time I use Megamix or anything along those lines is if the weather is humid or if it is rainy, I will use Megamix. I don't use Baycox or anything like that and I have never lost birds through Cocci. I think it is once again, common sense and observation and I realise things can creep up on you expectantly but your birds will tell you when things are not quite right.

Question: Do you feed your birds the same time every day?

Trevor: Most times the soft food and everything else gets done in the afternoons as I leave early in the mornings and even on a week end morning I may go out and have a look at them but still feed in the afternoon.

Question: You belong to the Wynnum club what sort of rapport does the club have with the fancy in general?

Trevor: I would like to think that as a club we are trying to help our members and improve the hobby across the board. We have in progress what we call "club birds" which is being used as a reward system. Members get points for turning up at meetings and shows, helping at the Strawberry Festival, etc. and the birds that we have a lucky draw for some club owned birds. They pick an envelope and if we have ten birds there and that cage number is the bird they get. Those birds remain the property of Wynnum, they can be passed on or swapped with another member and they are there for the benefit of the members. Ken Dunk has also generously donated a pair of birds for later in the year which will be for our table show reward and that is only for Novice and Intermediate members. We will use that for Nestfeather exhibits only and for young birds the club will donate a pair of birds. I would like to think that as a club we are trying to help the fancy move forward as I feel we should be trying to promote new members into the fancy.

Question: What do you think of this Future's Show that SQBBA is putting on for Novice and Intermediate members on March 16th?

Trevor: I think it is a great idea. The feedback that we have received from just our club alone is tremendous. I think it appeals to them that they are competing as Novice and Intermediate and there is a reward for them at the end of the day. I think it is possible we may have to look at our shows and maybe have a champion Novice and Champion Intermediate etc. I can't see any reason why we can't do that.

Question: Can you see any way we can entice new members to our fancy. I know it is very hard with smaller blocks and council regulations.

Trevor: I have had views on this for quite a while. I think we have to be realistic and say that in Inner Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast it is not going to happen. I feel we have to targeting places like Warwick, Stanthorpe and Gympie and places outside the Metropolitan area. Once again, we can talk about it but I would like to see a van or something done up so we can go out to Country shows and do a display. Most clubs have websites and people can view that and become a member but I feel we have to lay our grass roots and get out there as it is something the kids can do. The other area we should be looking at is that a number of schools have an Agricultural department and we are in the process of approaching Cleveland School about supplying them with some breeding cages and breeding pairs so that can be part of their programme. We don't know how we will go but that is the plan at the moment. Hopefully they will see birds breeding, hatching and learn a little of the genetics.

Question: Have you ever thought of going further and becoming a judge?

Trevor: I could possibly be interested. I don't think I am ready for it yet as I don't have enough knowledge about knowing the varieties inside and out. I have not had enough time to read books or go on the net to look into the different varieties etc. I think I would be interested down the track.

Question: Do you think there is enough communication between the judges and the fancy?

Trevor: That is a hard one. I don't think there is at shows etc. I would like to see more comment from the judges back to the people watching and I know judging is time based. Everybody is here to encourage and there is nothing worse than sitting there watching the birds being judged and you see a bird and you personally think I will put that bird in first placing and it runs in second or third and it would be nice to know why it was beaten. Often when you hear the explanation it is right and valid and it wouldn't take that long really for a judge to turn around and say "right, first, second and third and I put this one over that one because". It doesn't have to take long only a few moments and I feel it would be appreciated greatly by Novice and intermediate exhibitors and that would go a long way to bringing everybody closer to. Understanding why a bird was placed where it was would be beneficial to all.

Question: On a personal point of view, do you like engraved trophies or giftware as prizes?

Trevor: Being part of the committee of Wynnum I know that engraved trophies are getting very expensive. We tossed up a point about medallions or an honour board. Maybe have something you could hang your medallions on and could stay in the aviary. Engraved trophies are great for Novice breeders but would we be better off offering them birds, or supplements or stuff like that they could use.

Question: You have been to a few National shows now, you must enjoy them?

Trevor: I do, I enjoy the Nationals – it is my thing now as even the Lawn Bowls have to take a back seat to them. If the bowls state titles are on at the same time, I go to the Nationals and not the state titles. Just meeting and mixing with people from different states and meeting new people is great. Where the Nationals are going to go from here is another story.

Question: What do you think of all the different classes being put in the Nationals?

Trevor: You are dammed if you do and dammed if you don't. There are classes out there that people breed, they belong to the hobby, they are part of our clubs, and they enjoy it as much as we do so I feel we should cater for them at the Nationals. If that means that we have to do away with a social function or have another judging session than I believe that is what should happen rather than say "no we don't want that". I think classes should be of exhibition quality and reach a certain standard and that comes from the zones having exhibition classes first for the varieties and decisions coming from that. People should be encouraged no matter what they breed.

Question: What are your views on auctions?

Trevor: Once again there are fors and againsts for auctions. One of the benefits of auctions is that it gives the normal person a chance to obtain a bird from a breeder that they normally would not be able to obtain. Whether the prices are justified is another story, I think different auctions can cater for different members. I think there are some auctions where there is a high class of birds and some of those birds are going to go for a reasonable price and I believe that you are better buying a couple of those reasonable birds than buying a dozen pet shop birds if it is going to improve your birds.

The other thing you also have the auctions where you have lesser known breeders who have birds from the top breeders and you are going to get those birds at a lesser price. I think another thing we should do in South Queensland is encourage a couple more sales days and make that available to club members. Whether that should be run by SQBBA or individual clubs we should have some Having birds available from \$20 to \$100 and give the everyday person the chance of either selling or buying some. I know when I have my cull my birds range from \$20 to \$50. It cuts down to any auction anywhere. We went to a horse auction yesterday looking for a child's pony and the prices were ridiculously cheap because of the drought, cost of feed etc. there were horses there going for \$200 - \$300 that had to be worth \$3000 it was a buyers' market and that is what happens. You only have to have two people interested in buying the same bird, egos get in the way and prices can go overboard. I feel prices have settled down now to what they were two or three years ago and there is a lot more sensibility now and people are only prepared to pay what they want to pay. I feel some of the birds going in auction today are going under what they are really worth.

Question: Again another personal question so we know a bit more about you: What do you do for a living?

Trevor: I work in an agency at the Rocklea Fruit Markets so very early starts and an early finish. I have been doing that for more than thirty years.

Question: What is your favourite food?

Trevor: Most foods. You can't go past a good steak with pepper sauce.

Question: Favourite sport?

Trevor: Football (the proper football Carol where you use the feet), and when I finished playing football I took up Lawn Bowls. I love watching all sport on television especially Queensland and Australian teams and English football.

Question: Were you born in Queensland?

Trevor: I was born in Ipswich but don't hold that against me.

Question: Is there anything else you would like to comment on

Trevor: I think going back to what you said earlier on, we have to do more to encourage beginners to clubs. I think that is an area we have to spend a lot of time on. I think it would be very interesting if every club went through their records for the past seven or eight years and see how many members have dropped away within two years. I am of the belief that a lot of people say beginners have to concentrate on Normals etc. but they have joined the club because there was some bird that interested them. I don't care what it is I would encourage them to say, go for it. It doesn't take them long to realise the importance of the other birds but in the meantime we should be encouraging them along, helping them out with birds and looking after them. I know in my instance I found it very hard to obtain some good cock birds and I approached a couple of breeders and couldn't get anything so for beginners to get stock it would be very difficult. My biggest help came from Mal Lawn as he was not only a fellow breeder but also had budgerigars and then I got to meet Barry and Jeanette Jennings and found them to be very knowledgeable and spent a great deal of time with me. Clint Ault was a big help and through that I have met a lot of people in Victoria and New South Wales. Just being able to talk to people, listen and take in everything people have said with an open mind and decide what is going to work for you.

As a hobby we have to work together and all clubs have to encourage. All clubs will go through a lull and we have to remember that.