

# **Royal Pigeon Racing Association find their own way to remember the Duke of Edinburgh**

**Today at noon, members of the Royal Pigeon Racing Association (RPRA), will be liberating 10 pigeons from cathedral cities across the UK, including Edinburgh, to commemorate the life of the Duke of Edinburgh.**

The 10 liberated pigeons will represent each decade of the Duke's life and will be released simultaneously across the UK. They will then find their way back home as usual.

The Royal Family began to keep pigeons in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the tradition has been maintained by Queen Elizabeth II. The Royal Lofts are well established at Sandringham under the supervision of a loft manager. What was once known as the National Homing Union, the association received Royal patronage and became the Royal National Homing Union which has now become known as the Royal Pigeon Racing Association. Queen Elizabeth is patron of the RPRA and would regularly visit the lofts with the Duke when visiting Sandringham.

Pigeons from the Royal Loft played a vital role in both the First and Second World Wars as they were used as carrier pigeons. Following on from the war, the pigeons returned to racing, winning both national and international titles for the

Queen.

To honour this history and the continued support from the Royal Family, the RPRA has decided to liberate pigeons across the UK in memory of the Duke.

Ian Evans, CEO of the RPRA says: "We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh and we want to commemorate his life and show our support for the Royal Family. The RPRA and the Royal Family both share a rich history together as the family has had a close affinity with the sport for over 100 years, so we wanted to celebrate this by liberating pigeons across the UK.

"When accompanying the Queen to the Sandringham Estate, the Duke always showed an interest in the royal pigeons and we feel that this would be a fitting tribute."