

IRISH NATIONAL FLYING CLUB YOUNG BIRD NATIONAL PENZANCE

The Irish National Flying Club Young Bird National was held on Wednesday 3rd September with the birds liberated in Penzance at 9.15 in a light south-easterly wind. The race was sponsored by Frazer's Animal Feeds and Veterinary Services for Birds. The entry was down on last year with 401 members from across Ireland sending 2,332 birds (last year 466 members sent 2,652) and members were racing for total pools and prizemoney of £17,558.

The south easterly wind should have helped the birds across the Irish Sea but it would appear that many crossed into the Cork in the very south of Ireland. The first two pigeons in the result are both in the Cork Federation and I don't recall an Irish National Flying Club race being won in Cork before. At the end of the day there were 93 birds recorded and the prize list was completed early on the second day.

Please note at the time of going to Press this is a Provisional result.

1st South Section, 1st Open Billy McCarthy Cork , Vel 1318, Flying 178 miles, winning £773 and the J.M.K McGugan Perpetual Cup.

The clear winner of the Young Bird National this year is Billy McCarthy, Cork Fed. This was a great result for Billy who timed his blue hen at 1.15 for the 178 mile fly for a velocity of 1318, and this was out of an entry of only 2 birds. Billy is no stranger to success in major races having been 1st Cork City Fed, 2nd North Road National from Sterling in 2008, 2nd National from Sennen Cove in 2009, 3rd National from Sennen Cove in 2012 and 1st Cork City Fed from Malin Head (245 miles) Old Birds this year. The pigeon timed here was raced on the darkness and was sent to this race 10 days on eggs. She had 6 races before the National from Arklow, Mullingar and Monaghan and was 5th club, 5th Fed from Monaghan (176 miles). She was rested the week before Penzance. The breeding is from Gary Inkley, Hillingdon in England through Wall Bros, Cork who are actually Billy's cousins. This young hen is down from 'Shannon Lass', a hen that flew from Scotland seven times, including Girvan (330 miles), Perth (385 miles) and Thurso (501 miles).

Billy rears about 80 young birds as he races in two different clubs, one on Saturdays and one on Sundays. His loft was obviously in form as he was 1st and 3rd club from Arklow on the Sunday after the Penzance race. Billy likes to work his young birds hard and they are trained every day, Monday to Thursday from 35 miles. Feeding is Champion Supreme throughout the racing season. In closing Billy asked me to thank all the Cork fanciers for their messages of congratulations and for their help and support.

2nd South Section, 2nd Open Hegarty Bros Cork, Vel 1244, Flying 177 miles, winning £290

We stay in Cork for the pigeon taking 2nd South section, 2nd Open for the lofts of Hegarty Bros who timed at 1.25pm and had another one at 3.35 to take 95th Open. This partnership consists of brothers Mark and Paul but due to other commitments it is just Mark now. They started racing in 2002 so are relative newcomers to the sport. Both pigeons timed are blue hens which were paired but just racing to the nest. The pigeon taking second Open flew the programme as far as Monaghan (171 miles) and was always there or thereabouts, taking a couple of minor prizes.

The sire is off a pair of Busschaerts from Ali Bros of South Shields, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne while the dam is on loan from good friend Billy Wallace, Cork and also includes the Ali Bros lines. Training is with Billy McCarthy up to 40 miles up to the first race and then they are just raced and flown around the house. They were given a complete rest for the week and a half before the Penzance race. Feeding is Merrimans and Champion Supreme. Mark rears between 70 and 80 young birds and had 10 in this race.

1st North section, 3rd Open N Black & Son Dromara, Vel 1209, Flying 296 miles, winning £300 and the William Erwin Memorial Cup for the section winner not winning the Open.

1st North section, 3rd Open are previous King's Cup winners and the only back to back National Champions, N Black 7 Son, Dromara who timed a blue cheq cock called 'The Manager'. He was sent to this race feeding a day old youngster. Hatched on 3rd February he had four races up to Fermoy plus 2/3 40 miles tosses per week. The Blacks have been racing the same family of pigeons for 40 years, a blend of Jim Moreland, Russell Bros, John McMullan, and George Casement, all local distance families of pigeons. His sire is a half brother to the loft's 'Rocky', 5th and 8th King's Cup and 'Andy's Hen', a Triple Award winner from the Friendship National. His dam is a daughter of 'Big Darren', the loft's Gold Medal winner, when paired to the '44' hen, 6th and 61st King's Cup. The partnership was racing 45 darkness youngsters and sent 20 to Penzance. They had 5 in the result (3rd, 69th, 94th, 140th, 161st Open) and 15 of the 20 home. The feeding is all Frazer's (Young Bird and Frazer Petit) plus all their oils and supplements.

2nd North Section, 4th Open J McGreevy Crossgar, Vel 1196, Flying 299 miles, winning £371

2nd North section, 4th Open is Joe McGreevy, Crossgar in Co Down. Joe was another fancier who timed two on the night with his second pigeon taking 48th Open. Joe's fancied pigeon for the race was actually the nestmate of the bird timed at 4th Open but it was feeding two big young ones and Joe thought he was a bit light so he changed to the bird timed. This one was paired and calling his hen to the nest. The pigeon timed is a blue cock that had most of the inland races. Both parents were bred by clubmates S & K Duke. The sire is a son of Sam's 2011 Triple Crown winner (75th YB Penzance, 83rd Yearling National and 94th Open King's Cup), when paired to a son of Tommy Moorehouse's King's Cup winner. The dam is out of a pair from Burns Bros, Comber and was timed twice in the King's Cup. Due to work commitments Joe's birds weren't out for 3/4 days before this race. Training is with James Bunting but only up to the fourth race. Incidentally Joe bred the pigeon that was 10th North section in this race for S & K Duke.

3rd North Section 5th Open V Thom Cookstown, Vel 1193, Flying 316 miles, winning £420

The Cookstown lofts of Vernon Thom are 3rd North section, 5th Open here with a pencil blue pied cock flying to the perch. This pigeon was 1st club, 6th section A, 64th Open NIPA from Talbenny on the day before basketing for the National. Breeding is Catrysse and one the same way bred was 55th Open in this race last year having also flown Talbenny just a few days before that race. The dam was 35th Open St Malo for Vernon's son Ernest who races in Muckamore and he was back in the result the following year as well. The cock timed here was raced every week and when I was talking to Vernon he said he would go to Rosscarbery with the NIPA and possibly to the Skibbereen National the following week. Vernon doesn't train a lot but they are given an odd toss on the transporter and are raced every week to keep them fit. Vernon only reared 30 young birds and two of these were given to charity sales. He got 10 out of 12 from Talbenny and 6 out of 10 here with 5 of them in the result (5th, 30th, 74th, 135th, 138th Open). Feeding is Beattie's Champion Supreme.

3rd South section, 6th Open M Maguire & Son Sallynoggin, Vel 1189, Flying 220 miles, winning £321

We go the Sallynoggin club in Dublin for 3rd South section, 6th Open to the loft of Mick Maguire and Son Paul. Mick has been racing pigeons for over 60 years and this is one of his best results in all that time,

although they were 3rd East Coast Fed from this race in 2011 so Penzance obviously suits their young birds. They timed their blue cock at 2.55pm for the 220 miles fly. He was sent to the race flying to the perch and had flown the full young bird programme with the East Coast Fed, with the exception of Talbenny. This young cock had always been a steady racer without picking up any prize cards. The breeding is Janssen x Van Hee from a pair he had on loan from Ray Matthews, Sallynoggin. Mick and Paul like to train their youngsters as often as possible so they get a toss from Arklow most days, weather permitting with Billy Murphy. Feeding is Frazer's Supreme Champion and the partnership is also keen on adding Frazer's Ultragrit and Frazer's Cider Vinegar.

4th North section, 7th Open, S Hughes Coalisland, Vel 1181, Flying 309 miles, winning £354

We go to Coalisland for our 7th Open pigeon to the lofts of Sean Hughes, another fancier who had a good race here. Sean timed a second pigeon an hour after his first one and was amazed that this bird had made home at all as the side was torn out of her. This bird was 32nd Open and Sean timed another at 7.42am on the second day to take 116th Open. The pigeon at 7th Open is a blue cheq hen flying to the perch. The sire of this one is a Busschaert from his good friend Oliver Toal Armagh, while the dam is from McCartney Bros Moira. This young chequer hen had been a steady racer and had raced every week including Roscrea the day before basketing for the National. Sean likes to train the birds 2/3 times a week and trains with both Aaron Murtagh and Stanley West. Feeding is either from Henry McLaughlin or Beatties through Aaron Murtagh. Sean is only back racing four years and it's a great achievement to reach this level in National racing after such a short time.

5th North section, 8th Open J Greenaway Dromore, Vel 1180, flying 297 miles, winning £95

Jeff Greenaway Dromore is 5th North section and is the likely winner of the De-Scheemaecker Trophy for the best two bird average, with his second bird taking 18th Open. Jeff had a further two birds in the result at 139th and 180th Open. The pigeon timed is a cheq hen sent sitting 10 days on eggs. A small hen, her half sister was timed in this race last year and in the young bird Talbenny. This year that hen went on to fly Talbenny, the Yearling National, Bude and Penzance. Jeff's first two pigeons here are nest mates and both were timed from Talbenny on the day before basketing. The breeding on the sire's side is ½ Soontjens and ½ Mark Gilbert. The dam is 'The Scotch' hen from John Bell, Tranent. Her dam was 15th section, 45th Open Reims 2008, 1st Fed, 2nd section, 2nd Open Andrazel 2009 and 1st Fed, 1st section, 1st Open Tours in 2010. Jeff's young birds had every race and are trained privately 3/4 days a week. All birds are fed on Versele Laga from Beatties.

6th North Section, 9th Open Mr & Mrs C Hayes Ballyclare, Vel 1166, Flying 320 miles, winning £440

9th Open in the Young Bird National goes to the Ballyclare partnership of Mr & Mrs Colin Hayes who were 2nd Open in this race last year. Colin and Pat have had another great year racing but will again be particularly pleased with this result as they target the National races. Their second bird in the race was 19th Open but having won the De Scheemaecker Trophy for the best two bird average last year, they just narrowly miss out this year. Colin and Pat take a holiday in July and the young birds are trained up before they go. They are then locked up for two weeks while they are away and training only resumes 4/5 days after they return.

This young bird was raced on the darkness and had all the young bird races after the third race up to Fermoy. It's a blue cheq cock paired with this race in mind and was sent sitting 11 days on eggs. Breeding is ¾ Nevin Bros, Coleraine and 1/4 Battenburg Jan Arden x Van de Meyer. This cross has been

successful for the Hayes before. Training is twice weekly with the local transporter and feeding is Natural Young Bird mix.

7th North Section, 10th Open S & J McCullough Beach Park, Vel 1165, Flying 301 miles, winning £70

We move to the Beach Park club for our 10th Open bird to the husband and wife partnership of Shirley and Joe McCullough. After a break from the sport Shirley and Joe returned to pigeon racing in 2000 and had seen many changes since they had previously raced. They had a good race here with 4 birds in the clock and 3 in the result with the other two taking 97th and 154th Open. The pigeon timed is a blue cheq hen racing natural and with only 2 flights to go. She is small in size and was flying to the perch. This was only her third race including Roscrea the day before basketing for this race. Shirley and Joe only started their birds in the third race and as they separate the young birds they race the cocks and hens on alternate weeks. Breeding is from pigeons obtained from Tom Gilbertson from Carlisle and they have been impressed with the Gilbertson pigeons. Training is all personal training twice a week from Newry up until three weeks before the National. Feeding is from both Tom Marshall and Cyril Beattie who are both good friends of Joes.

Robin Duddy Challenge.

The winners of the Robin Duddy Challenge this year are N Grant & Son, Balbriggan. I hope to do a full report on this over the next few weeks.

Thanks again to our race sponsors Frazers Animal Feeds, and Veterinary Services for Birds. I'd also like to thank all those who helped with photographs.

Brendan McLoughlin

Irish National Flying Club Press Officer