

IRISH NATIONAL FLYING CLUB

YEARLING NATIONAL FROM SENNEN COVE 2015

The Irish National Flying Club's Yearling National was held on Wednesday 10th June this year. Once again there was a huge entry for this very popular race in the racing calendar. I must say that it was one of the busiest afternoons that I have seen at the marking station in Lisburn with long queues for all the electronic systems.

In the end the overall entry was 852 members sending 5188 birds to compete for £35,530 in pools and prizes. This was much the same as the 2014 entry which saw 5243 birds entered. The birds were liberated in Sennen Cove at 7.45am in a light north easterly wind. While the clear winner of the race was Martin Shell in Mallow, followed up by David Nagle in Cork the majority of the early birds were in the North section with Mr. & Mrs. Colin Hayes of Ballyclare putting up another strong performance to finish 1st North section 3rd Open. The race was sponsored by Bucktons Quality Racing Pigeon Foods and we are very grateful to them for their continued sponsorship of the race.

1st South section, 1st Open Martin Sheill Mallow, Vel 1167, flying 196 miles, winning £1487 and the Nelson Corry Trophy

The winner of the Yearling National sponsored by Bucktons this year is Mallow's Martin Shiells from an entry of just two birds. This is the first time that an Irish National Flying Club has been won in Mallow and is a great achievement for Martin. Unfortunately Martin missed the big occasion due to work commitments but his partner Joan was at hand to time the National winner. Martin is a chef and owns a mobile diner "Green Café" which is based on the Killarney Road. Martin only started to race pigeons just over 5 years ago, although he comes from a pigeon background as his father raced in Dublin in the 1950's. When Martin joined the Mallow club they had only five members but Martin and the others have made a great effort to encourage new members to the extent that the club now boasts a membership of 16 and they now have their own clubrooms. Martin is also a dog man and enters his springers in trial competitions. Martin believes that his background with the dogs was a good foundation for the pigeons and many of the concepts are the same.

While this is only Martin's fifth year racing he was 1st and 2nd club from Hamilton (355miles) last year. The pigeon timed here to win this year's Yearling National is a chequer cock sent to the race sitting on a 10 day old youngster. The bird was obviously in form as it had been first club the previous week from Monaghan (165 miles). Unraced as a young bird the chequer cock has had only four races this year. Martin races some young birds but others are just trained from 30 miles regularly. The bird was actually a gift from clubmate Dan Rice and the breeding is Jan Arden x Delbar. Martin asked me to thank the officials at the clock station for being so helpful to Joan on the day of the race, Sheldon Leonard, Sid Collins and all those he met at Sheldon's on Sunday for the photos and of course his partner Joan for all her help.

2nd South section, 2nd Open D Nagle Cork Southern, Vel 1038, flying 175miles, winning £542

2nd Open goes to David Nagle from the Cork Southern Pigeon Club. David's father had pigeons in Mallow some 50 years ago. David later moved to Mitchelstown but as there was no club there he still kept some pigeons (mainly tumblers) as pets. However in 1989 having moved to Cork he decided to join a club there. David has previously been second Open in an Irish Homing Union National so it's another near miss for him. David's bird is a blue cheq hen of Boxford Busschaert lines with both parents being inbred to 'Dark Dan' and 'Dark Princess'. These birds were bought from Louella Pigeon World. The cheq hen was sent to this race sitting on a three day old youngster, her first one ever. As a young bird she had just one race from Portlaw (50 miles). This year she had just three races, Rosslare (96 miles), Arklow (125 miles) and her last race prior to the National was Dundalk (171 miles), when she only returned on the second morning but Dave noticed that she was still quite fresh so set about preparing her for this race. Dave likes to train on the Federation transporter prior to racing and would usually have six tosses up to 50 miles, and then one toss from 40 miles, midweek when the racing starts.

1st North section, 3rd Open Mr & Mrs C Hayes Ballyclare, Vel 1027, flying 323 miles, winning £1462 and the James McGrugan Memorial Cup

1st North sect 3rd Open goes to the lofts of Mr & Mrs Colin Hayes of Ballyclare. Colin and Pat are established names within the Irish National Flying Club having taken some top positions in recent years; including 2nd Open Young Bird National Penzance in 2013 and 9th Open in the same race in 2014. The pigeon timed is a Blue cock which was one of 16 spare cocks at the beginning of the year. He was 5th club Talbenny while still unpaired but by this stage Colin had his eye on him and he was given a hen the next day for 5 minutes and for 5 minutes every day following that until the day of basketing for the Yearling National. On this day another cock was put in the nest with the hen to help motivate this bird and it certainly worked. He wasn't trained as a young bird but was trained to Moira, a distance of 20 miles. This year he had every race through to Talbenny with the exception of the third race. The breeding of this cock is Nevin Bros x Battenburg and is from Colin and Pat's number one stock pair. Ronnie Nevin is a great friend of Colins and bred the sire as a gift for him. Feeding is Versele Laga super widowhood and training is as often as they can on the transporter as the birds are raced natural.

2nd North section, 4th Open R & A Gore Lagan Valley, Vel 1025, flying 306 miles, winning £433

2nd North section, 4th Open goes to the Lisburn lofts of Robert Gore and his father Ashley who race in the Lagan Valley club. The Gores first came to prominence in 2009 when they were 1st Open Ulster Federation Talbenny Young Bird Derby. They had a tremendous year in 2013 when they won six old bird races in a row and ended up winning nine out of ten races in a very competitive club. The pigeon timed here, a grizzle hen flown on the roundabout is from a pair of pigeons on loan from T & K Mawhinney, Donaghcloney. The dam is responsible for numerous winners including Mark Johnston's Ulster Federation winner from Penzance. The birds are given two tosses before racing commences and then they are flown at home for an hour morning and evening. The grizzle hen known as 'Champagne Fever' had the first four races with the NIPA and Talbenny with the Ulster Fed. Following that she had 2 tosses from Castlebellingham with John Abernethy. From these two tosses she was let back into her cock for

about ten minutes and then shown her cock for half an hour before basketing for the Yearling National. Robert and Ashley were second club in the 3 races before the National from Skibbereen and Talbenny (twice) and followed up their 2nd North section here with another 2nd club from Rosscarbery.

3rd South section, 5th Open Jerry Walsh Cork South Rd, Vel 1020, flying 175 miles, winning £211

We go back to Cork for 3rd South section, 8th Open to the lofts of Jerry Walsh of the Cork South Road club, a club with 50 members so it's very hard to get in to the results. Jerry is a relative newcomer to the sport having just taken up the sport in 2012 when he was made redundant. Jerry had pigeons when he was younger but his father's interests lay with small birds and Jerry followed him into that and he showed canaries all over Ireland. In 2012 he decided he wanted a new challenge and took up pigeon racing. He very quickly got the hang of pigeon racing and won five races in the club last year. The pigeon timed here is a black Busschaert hen that has always been a consistent racer. She was just given a few races this year with this race in mind. Again she was consistent without taking any prizes. When Jerry was starting up his friend Paul Weems from Chippenham sent him over some Busschaerts and they have done very well for him. Jerry trains hard, maybe three or four times a week from 40/50 miles. Jerry likes to mix his own feeding and buys a couple of different brands to which he likes to add some Homoform. Jerry is grateful to his son Gerard for all his help with the pigeons.

3rd North section 6th Open M Robinson Bondhill, Vel 1009, flying 303 miles, winning £777

We go back North to the established National loft of Malcolm Robinson, Bondhill. Malcolm won a Hall of Fame in 2013 with a hen that was twice 62nd Open King's Cup with a 27th Open in between. Malcolm has had numerous other prizes in National races particularly from the French races. Malcolm had a great race here with three other birds in the result at 39th, 172nd and 280th Open. The pigeon at 6th Open is a blue pied cock from pigeons obtained from Davy Strain, Ballyclare in 2011. The sire is pure Brugermann while the dam is a Brugermann x Kuyper Vanroys cross. These pigeons have bred good birds for Malcolm every year. Incidentally Malcolm's second pigeon is a granddaughter of the Hall of Fame bird and also a grandson of John Greenaway's Gold medal winner – breeding doesn't come much better than that. The 6th Open bird was a Natural Young Bird and had just three or four races. This year he was again raced on a Natural system and was sent sitting 12 days. He had all races up to Talbenny this year. The birds are flown an hour morning and evening as they aren't tossed during the week. Feeding is Bucktons Irish mix.

4th North section, 7th Open N Black & Son Dromara, vel 1007, flying 299 miles, winning £384

7th Open goes to N Black & Son Dromara. This loft needs no introduction as they have been leading the way in National races over the past few years, as previous King's Cup winners, double National Champions, Gold Medal winners, 3 x Hall of Fames, and 17 times in the top ten of the King's Cup. Last year saw them take 10th Open in the King's Cup and 1st North section, 3rd Open Young Bird Penzance. The pigeon timed is a blue cheq cock sent sitting on a one day old youngster. This is the exact same nesting condition that their bird that was 10th Open in last year's King's Cup. Raced on the darkness as a

young bird he had only four inland races last year. This year he again had four inland races plus Talbenny. His sire is a son of 'Rocky', 5th and 8th Open King's Cup, while his dam is a daughter of 'Big Darren' their Gold Medal winner, when he was paired to 'Andy's Hen', a Triple Award winner for three titles in the Open result from the Friendship National.

5th North section, 8th Open M Hughes Edgarstown, vel 1002, flying 302 miles, winning £139

8th Open goes to Mark Hughes of the Edgarstown club, just outside Portadown. Mark is another prolific national racer and among his best results was winning the Henry Beattie & Son Trophy for the best two bird average in the Friendship National in 2008. He had a great hen 'Lady Endurance' who was 31st Open Yearling National, 15th Open NIPA St Malo and 7th Open National from Picauville. The pigeon timed here is a black hen racing roundabout. The sire is a violet eyed cock P & C Swindell, Newry City and has bred nine pigeons to fly France. The dam is a lovely golden eyed hen from Jeff Greenaway, Dromore. Mark pays close attention to the pigeon's eyes for breeding purposes and it was the match of the eyes that led to this pairing. This black hen was unraced as a young bird but had eleven tosses from Balbriggan with Ronnie Williamson. This year she had three Inland races and was in Talbenny prior to the Yearling National. Mark said that as she was in such good form when she arrived from Sennen Cove that she is now being prepared for the King's Cup. Mark feeds Frazers mixed grain until they reach Talbenny then they are given Beattie's Champion Supreme with a high energy mix in the evenings. Mark asked me to thank Ronnie Williamson for his help with training the birds as without this he just could not manage.

6th North section, 9th Open Reid Bros & H McCloy Cullybackey, vel 989, flying 335 miles, winning £129

9th Open are Reid Bros and H McCloy of Cullybackey and what a bitter sweet week this turned out for Harry as three nights after this race he had his lofts broken into and 50 of his best birds stolen. Obviously devastated by the theft of his birds Harry was considering packing the sport in altogether but has been so heartened by the wealth of telephone calls and messages of support from right across the country that he has thankfully reconsidered his position.

While Reid Bros are now deceased Harry decided to retain the name of the partnership. The pigeon timed here is a blue pied cock racing Natural and sent sitting 14 days. The sire is from the old Reid Bros stock and has bred many prizewinners. The dam is a hen that Geoff Kirkland presented to the Doagh Moot two years ago. As a young bird this blue pied cock was Harry's first bird home from Talbenny. This year he had most races including Talbenny. Harry trains the birds up to the first race and then they are given an open hole 24 hours a day. Feeding is Van Pilburgs Breeding Duo from Henry McLoughlin. Harry had a great race here with 4 other birds in the result at 18th, 232nd, 263rd and 322nd Open and is the likely winner of the Sam Buckley Memorial Cup for the best two bird average in this race.

7th North section, 10th Open G & R Lawrie Ballyclare, vel 987, flying 323 miles, winning £256 and the Charles Ingle Memorial Trophy for 10th Open Yearling National

We go back to the Ballyclare club for 7th North section, 10th Open to the lofts of George and Richard Lawrie. George and Richard were 6th in this race ten years ago and it's good to see them back in the top ten and winning a coveted trophy in an Irish National Flying Club race. The pigeon timed here is a blue cock racing roundabout. All their pigeons are from Wayne Doonan's 'Cock Crow Breeding Lofts'. Wayne of course, was a winner of the Yearling National himself in 1994. The breeding of this one is Van Loon with the sire being 'The Patriot' who is the father of the Lawrie's loft. The blue cock was raced to Skibbereen as a young bird but this was his first time in the result. This year he had every race up to Roscarberry and 1st Talbenny. His cousin was 10th Open Talbenny NIPA Young Birds last year. All birds have four or five tosses before the first race and are then flown at home for an hour mornings and evenings. Feeding is super widowhood with barley added at the start of the week.

I would like to thank Neil Crean for his help with the Cork pigeons and everybody who helped with photographs for this report and to all the fanciers who give me an insight to their birds and racing methods

Brendan McLoughlin

INFC Press Officer