

## IRISH NATIONAL FLYING CLUB

### Kings Cup – Saint Allouestre

The 2016 King's Cup from St Allouestre was originally scheduled for Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July but due to adverse weather conditions the basketing was postponed from Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June to Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June for a possible race on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July as weather reports indicated an improvement in the weather from the Sunday. However the improvement didn't materialize and the update on Sunday morning showed that the birds had been held over due to drizzle and low cloud at the racepoint with no improvement expected before midday. Monday morning brought news of a further holdover due to fog on the English Channel and in the south west region of England. It was early on Tuesday morning that we were informed that the pigeons had been liberated in St Allouestre at 6am in a light west-northwest wind. We knew that this would be a difficult race but it was disappointing that no birds were recorded on the day in the blue ribband event. However we didn't have long to wait on the second morning as word filtered through of pigeons in the Dublin area before 5.30am and then in the north shortly after 8am.

712 members had entered a total of 2,970 pigeons to compete for the most coveted prize in pigeon racing in Ireland – the King George V Challenge Cup. They were also competing for a total of £30,172 in pools and prizemoney. When the results were announced it was Mr & Mrs Roy Magill from Muckamore who were the winners with Art Kelly of Skerries 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Harkness Rose Bowl for the best two bird average was won by E Murtagh & Son from Armagh who had two in the top ten at 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Open. There was only one Hall of fame winner this year – E Murtagh and Son's second pigeon (see below) with this bird also taking the Joe Doheny Cup for the Single Bird Challenge. The race was sponsored by Frazer Animal Feeds and we are very grateful to them for their continued sponsorship of this race.

**1st North Section, 1<sup>st</sup> Open Mr & Mrs Magill Muckamore, Vel 723, Flying 497 miles, Winning £1150, King George V Challenge Cup, and NIPA Cup for 1<sup>st</sup> NIPA member**

The winners of the King's Cup this year are Mr & Mrs Roy Magill of the Muckamore club in Co Antrim. Roy and Catherine have a tremendous record at National level going back many years. They were National Champions in 1988, a year that saw them take 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> in the Yearling National. The following year they were 1st, 5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Open Friendship National. The pigeon that was 7<sup>th</sup> Open Friendship National in 1988 had been 35<sup>th</sup> Open Yearling National in the same year and went on to win 1<sup>st</sup> Open Friendship National in 1989, a race in which her dam was 12<sup>th</sup> Open and her sire 31<sup>st</sup> Open.

The pigeon timed here to win the King's Cup is a two-year-old blue cheq hen sent sitting on a six day old youngster. The breeding is 7/8 Jan Arden which Roy said are suited to long slow races. The other 1/8 is from Liam McCall, Wicklow's Hall of Fame winner, 'Red Laddie'. The sire is a stock cock  $\frac{3}{4}$  Jan Arden, off a cock that flew France four times when paired to a daughter of a son of 'Red Laddie', when it was paired to a hen that flew the King's Cup three times, including 11<sup>th</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup> Open. The dam is also at stock and is a daughter of the hen that flew the King's Cup three times (as above), when paired to their Merit Award winner. As a young bird the King's Cup winner was trained to Newry (40 miles), as a

yearling she again had no racing but was trained to Balbriggan three times with Tommy Cairns. This year she had three inland races, then 2<sup>nd</sup> Talbenny and 2<sup>nd</sup> Fermoy comeback race, leaving the King's Cup only her 6<sup>th</sup> race. Her first race was the 2<sup>nd</sup> inland race this year. At the beginning of the year cocks and hens are raced on alternate weeks on the roundabout and paired on the Sunday after 2<sup>nd</sup> Talbenny. Roy and Catherine timed a second pigeon to take 28<sup>th</sup> Open and this one is a full sister of the winner. When paired they are given an open trap and a full hopper. In the week before the race Roy and Catherine increased the fatty food with no training as they were flying well at home. Roy asked me to point out that Catherine is not just a silent partner as she herself comes from a pigeon background (her uncle Hugh Boyd was 11<sup>th</sup> Open in this race). They asked me to thank Anthony McNeill, Randalstown for the gift of the son of 'Red Laddie'.

**1<sup>st</sup> South section, 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Art Kelly Skerries, Vel 703, Flying 412 miles, winning £1408 and the Gilliland Cup for 1<sup>st</sup> IHU member after winner in King's Cup, and the Joe Cullan Memorial Cup for 1<sup>st</sup> East Coast Fed member in King's Cup race.**

In 1<sup>st</sup> South section, 2<sup>nd</sup> Open is Art Kelly of Skerries, another fancier with a wonderful National record. Art was 1<sup>st</sup> Open Yearling National in 1997 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Friendship National in 2012 plus a host of other top positions in National racing. I handled Art's pigeons at the marking station and thought they were among the best I had put through that day. Art's pigeon is inbred to 'Rainbow Warrior', a Gold Medal winner for W Catherwood & Son Ballynahinch, having been 26<sup>th</sup> Open King's Cup in 1988, 133<sup>rd</sup> Open in 1989, 7<sup>th</sup> Open in 1991 and 48<sup>th</sup> Open in 1992. 'Rainbow Warrior's sire was a son of Catherwood's Miller Gold Cup winner of 1981, while the dam was a daughter of their Old Bird Derby winner of 1978. The sire of the pigeon timed here for Art is off 'Mr Messac' who is a grandson of 'Rainbow Warrior'. The dam of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Open bird also contains the Kenyon bloodlines of Billy McClelland Ballymena from whom Art received a pair. He preferred the hen and paired her to a son of 'Rainbow Warrior'. The pigeon at 2<sup>nd</sup> Open is a three-year-old hen sent sitting 10 days on eggs. Like the winner Art's pigeon was unraced as a young bird but Art likes all his yearlings to have two channel races. As a two year old this bird had all the inland races and Bude. She was prepared for France but Art just wasn't happy with her form and she wasn't sent. This year she had all the inland races but no channel races. Prior to racing the pigeons have two tosses, one from Wicklow (30 miles) and one from Arklow (60 miles), and when racing starts the pigeons are given no further training but raced every week which Art believes keeps them fit. In closing Art asked me to congratulate the winners and to thank Joe Doheny for all his advice.

**2<sup>nd</sup> South section, 3<sup>rd</sup> Open, S Richardson & Gdtr Balbriggan, Vel 686, flying 421 miles, winning £3,563**

2<sup>nd</sup> South section, 3<sup>rd</sup> Open goes to Sean "Cheyenne" Richardson and his granddaughter Caitlin. Cheyenne is one of Balbriggan club's old characters and has been racing in the club since Balbriggan club was founded with success most years, most of which he puts down to his 'Gucci Gucci' potion, unique to his lofts. Unfortunately in 2014 his racing season was cut short as he fell ill but he didn't let that stop him and after spending the closing months of 2014 in hospital and missing out on most of the 2015 racing season, he was back on form this year and eager as ever to race. The pigeon timed here, now known as 'Caitlin's Pet', is a stunning three-year-old blue hen. As a yearling in 2014 this hen was 8<sup>th</sup> club Owenahincha, and 2<sup>nd</sup> club, 8<sup>th</sup> Open East Coast Fed Bude. Unfortunately in 2015 Cheyenne didn't see

much of the hen as he was in hospital but his son Jason was there to look after training and get one or two races into her before St Malo, where she was 2<sup>nd</sup> club, 27<sup>th</sup> Open East Coast Fed. This year she had 4 inland races and was in Bude where she was 12 hours on the wing. She was also trained weekly from Leopardstown by Sid McAleer and was sent to the King's Cup sitting on overdue eggs. Cheyenne would like to thank Sid McAleer who helped him out with training over the last year when he was in ill health and all who contacted him to congratulate him and he would like to pass on his congratulations to Mr & Mrs Magill and Art Kelly who were 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Open.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> North section, 4<sup>th</sup> Open K Carson & Son Crumlin, Vel 681, Flying 487 miles, winning £1436 and the Nelson Vase for 1<sup>st</sup> RPRA member after the winner in King's Cup**

We go to the Crumlin club in Co Antrim for our 4<sup>th</sup> Open pigeon, to the lofts of Kevin Carson and his sons Ferdia and Manus. Kevin has been a life time in pigeons. He began racing with his father Dan in the Grosvenor club in Belfast. Later when he got married he went to live on the Antrim Road and raced in the Fortfield club for a couple of years before moving to Crumlin, home of such great pigeon men like the late Bob Harkness and Kirker Porter. (I'm not sure how much that influenced his choice of location). The pigeon timed here is a yearling hen sent sitting on a five-day-old youngster. The sire is a Staf Van Reet from his brother P & C Carson, Fortfield, while the dam is a Belgian pigeon 'Vinnios' from John Price of Crumlin. As a young bird she flew the whole young bird club programme including Talbenny and was 6<sup>th</sup> club Fermoy. This year she had every race up to Penzance Classic then rested for 14 days in preparation for this race. For the most part the old birds are raced on the Natural system, but Kevin likes to try a few cocks on the widowhood for the Yearling National (they were 41<sup>st</sup> Open in 2015). On talking to Kevin he is very much National orientated and is keen to do well at National level.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> South section, 5<sup>th</sup> Open F Moran Malahide & Dist, Vel 680, Flying 408 miles, winning £1286**

3<sup>rd</sup> South section, 5<sup>th</sup> Open goes to Fintan Moran of the Malahide & District club, another hotbed of National racing. Fintan had a great race here with two birds in the result with his second pigeon taking 35<sup>th</sup> Open. Fintan also had two in the result last year at 103<sup>rd</sup> and 175<sup>th</sup> Open and was 30<sup>th</sup> Open in 2014, so has been timing consistently in the King's Cup. The pigeon at 30<sup>th</sup> Open in 2014 actually bred his second bird here. The pigeon timed here at 5<sup>th</sup> Open is a two-year-old mealy cock that was sent sitting 10 days on eggs. He was raced celibate up to Bude when he was given a hen the night before basketing. This certainly gave him a boost as he was 1<sup>st</sup> club, 7<sup>th</sup> East Coast Fed with 1,730 birds competing. Fintan doesn't race young birds but they are trained privately to 50 miles both north and south. As a yearling the mealy cock had four inland races and Penzance. This year he had Rosscarbery when he was 5<sup>th</sup> club on a day that he took 5 1/2 hours for 170 miles, Skibbereen, Pilmore Beach and Bude, and was given a few private training tosses from 50 miles between Bude and the King's Cup. Breeding is from Andy Parsons, Salisbury with the dam being a half sister to Andy's 1<sup>st</sup> section, 5<sup>th</sup> Open Tarbes National in 2012. Fintan's first bird was timed at 5.45am on the second day and Fintan said he returned as fresh as he was when he was sent.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> North section, 6<sup>th</sup> Open C & L Fryers Dromara, Vel 674, flying 466 miles, winning £2,496**

We go to the Dromara club in Co Down for 3<sup>rd</sup> North section, 6<sup>th</sup> Open to the lofts of Christine and Laurence Fryers, another top rated distance loft who were 6<sup>th</sup> Open in the King's Cup in 2012. Christine and Laurence are contenders for the French diploma having also been 2<sup>nd</sup> section, 19<sup>th</sup> Open St Malo

with the NIPA the week before the King's Cup. The pigeon timed here is a four-year-old light blue cheq hen sent to this race 14/15 days on eggs. The sire is their NIPA Gold Medal winner for 4 times in the prizes from St Malo. The gold Medal winner is from their own strain built up over many years with a few introductions over the years. The dam was bred by Aidie Hughes & Sons, Lisburn from the Fryers' own strain. Like many of the birds in the top ten this four-year-old hen was unraced as a young bird and only given a few races as a yearling. In 2014 she was 2<sup>nd</sup> club, 5<sup>th</sup> section, 35<sup>th</sup> Open Bude on a velocity of 1363, and then went on to take 1<sup>st</sup> club, 2<sup>nd</sup> section, 60<sup>th</sup> Open St Malo on a velocity of 523. Last year he was timed at 9.25pm on the day from the King's Cup but didn't make the result. This year after Bude she was rested up and only given two short tosses from Portaferry four or five days before the race and this is the direction she came from on returning from St Allouestre.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> North section, 7<sup>th</sup> Open J Braniff Fortfield, Vel 667, flying 482 miles, winning £773 and the Ulster Federation Cup for 1<sup>st</sup> Ulster Federation member in King's Cup race**

4th North section 7th Open is Jim Braniff of the Fortfield club in Belfast. Jim had a couple of good races from France last year when he was 33<sup>rd</sup> Open King's Cup and 114<sup>th</sup> Open Friendship National from Quimper the following week, both with the same pigeon which just happens to be a sister of the pigeon that takes 7<sup>th</sup> Open here. I noted above that many of the birds in the top ten were not raced as young birds, well this is another but this one had never had a race at all before the King's Cup. She is a blue yearling hen that was sent to the King's Cup racing to the perch, and timed at 9.20am on the second day. She was trained regularly twice a day to 25 miles, going to Newry in the mornings and then to Oxford Island in the evenings. This hen wasn't the original choice for the race but Jim felt that the hen that had been selected was sitting longer than he wanted and was past her best condition for the task at hand. He looked around the loft and as sometimes happens this hen just caught his eye and almost asked to be sent. The breeding is Busschaert x Vermeerbergen-Wilms, with the sire bought at Roy Kennedy's sale and is a Parkside Superman Busschaert. The dam is from Robert McNally, Malahide. Jim said the pigeon was in 'mint' condition on arrival.

#### **5th North section, 8<sup>th</sup> Open E Murtagh & Son Individual North, Vel 665, flying 475 miles, winning £1,146**

We move to the Armagh area for the lofts of E Murtagh & Sons. The partnership originally consisted of Emmanuel and his sons mainly Aaron and Noel. Since Emmanuel's death it has become a real family affair with everyone helping out, including Emmanuel's wife and Aaron's wife Deirdre right down to Aaron's little grandson who all help out. The Murtaghs concentrate solely on National racing and are not members of any club so there is no racing other than Nationals. The pigeons are however trained hard from May when the weather picks up and wherever Aaron is going the pigeons go too. He has a good friend who drives for a living and sometimes the pigeons go with him to Cork. The pigeon at 8<sup>th</sup> Open is a three-year-old dark cheq hen called 'Dinky's Delight' after Emmanuel. As a young bird and as a yearling she was unraced but trained hard. As a two year old she was in the King's Cup but was just out of the prizes, and then back again this year. Breeding is a father and daughter pairing of Nico Volkens pigeons from Dickie and Steve Pearmain, Wickford in Essex and Lifford in Co Donegal. The sire has bred pigeons that were 1<sup>st</sup> Open BICC Marseille in 2014, 2<sup>nd</sup> Open BICC St Vincent in 2012, and 4<sup>th</sup> Open Barcelona 2016. I noticed when I was doing some research for this report that E Murtagh & Sons were 6<sup>th</sup> Open King's Cup in a similar race in 1998

#### **6<sup>th</sup> North section, 9<sup>th</sup> Open, N Thompson Comber Central, Vel 637, flying 480 miles, winning £139**

6<sup>th</sup> North section, 9<sup>th</sup> Open goes to another loft with a proven track record in National races, that of Norman Thompson of Comber Central club. Norman won the Harkness Rose Bowl in 1998 in a race similar to this one when there were no birds on the day. Norman was 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Open on that occasion. Norman had another good pigeon this year at 17<sup>th</sup> Open which in most years would have been enough to win the Harkness Rose Bowl again. The two pigeons timed by Norman are mother and daughter with the daughter taking 9<sup>th</sup> Open. She is a two-year-old hen sent sitting on a two-day old youngster. The dam is a daughter of a cock from Joe Doheny, Malahide that contains much of Norman's original lines. He is a nestmate to Joe's Friendship National winner when paired to a daughter of his King's Cup winner. Her dam is from Pat Lambert, Arklow who, when he heard that Norman was starting back again in 2007 having sold out in 2003, wanted to give him back his original breeding. As a young bird the pigeon at 9<sup>th</sup> Open had one Roscrea, as a yearling she had 2 inland races, Talbenny and Penzance. This year she had 2 inland races and 1<sup>st</sup> Talbenny. The birds are always well trained, going with John Abernethy in the early part of the year, then with Tommy Cairns and Rosie's Training Services to Balbriggan on Saturdays and Sundays, plus some private training. The pigeons aren't given any training in the week prior to the race to let their reserves build up

**7<sup>th</sup> North section, 10<sup>th</sup> Open E Murtagh & Son Individual North, Vel 617, flying 475 miles, winning £921, the Harkness Rose Bowl for best two bird average King's cup and the Joe Doheny Cup, Single Bird Challenge King's Cup.**

We go back to the lofts of E Murtagh & Son for our 10<sup>th</sup> Open pigeon this year and what a way to finish a report. This five-year-old hen known as 'Manny's Girl' not only wins a Hall of Fame but also wins the Single Bird Challenge. This was the only Hall of Fame winner this year and was her fourth time to be clocked from the King's Cup but she missed out on the prize list last year when we had a much faster race. Her positions to win the Hall of Fame were 178<sup>th</sup> Open in 2013, 23<sup>rd</sup> Open in 2014 and 10<sup>th</sup> Open 2016. The sire is Southwell from Jimmy Shepherd of Chichester while the dam is a Jan Arden based Nico Volkens pigeon from Dickie and Steve Pearmain. The dam has bred four different birds to take high positions in the BICC at International racing from 520 to 620 miles. In closing Aaron asked me to thank Dickie and Steve Pearmain for all their help.

I would like to thank all the fanciers in the top ten who give me a great insight into their birds and their preparation for this race and all who helped with photographs. I would also like to thank all those who helped at the marking station and the clock centres, and Frazer Animal Feeds for their sponsorship of this race.

Brendan McLoughlin

INFC Press Officer