

## IRISH NATIONAL FLYING CLUB

### Kings Cup – Saint Allouestre

The 2017 King's Cup from St Allouestre was originally scheduled for Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June but due to adverse weather conditions the basketing was postponed from Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June for a possible race on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July as weather reports indicated an improvement in the weather. However the improvement didn't materialize and the update on Monday morning showed that the birds had been held over due to drizzle and low cloud from the north coast of France to Sennen Cove. On Tuesday morning we were informed that the pigeons had been liberated in St Allouestre at 7.20am in a light and variable wind which was to turn westerly on route. Around 4pm word began to filter through that Liam McCall from Wicklow had timed at 3.36pm and that was the target for everybody, a target that nobody was to beat as Liam held on to be win the 2017 King's Cup.

671 members had entered a total of 2,546 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 £32,779 in pools and prizemoney. When the results were announced it was Liam McCall of Wicklow who was the winners with Joe Doheny Malahide 2nd. Alec Crawford of Ballylesson at 3<sup>rd</sup> Open was the winner of the North section and The Harkness Rose Bowl for the best two bird average was won by G Buckley & Son Annaghmore. The race was sponsored by Frazer Animal Feeds and we are very grateful to them for their continued sponsorship of this race.

**1st South Section, 1<sup>st</sup> Open Liam McCall Wicklow, Vel 1343, Flying 377 miles, Winning £1325, King George V Challenge Cup and the Joe Doheny Cup for the Single Bird Challenge**

The winners of the King's Cup this year is Liam McCall Wicklow whose Hall of Fame winner 'Red Laddie's bloodlines were in last year's winner for Mr & Mrs Magill of Randalstown. Liam joined the Wicklow club in 1970 and raced the north road. He got off to a great start and in 1972 he was 2<sup>nd</sup> Open from Malin Heads (175 miles). He first flew with the Irish National Flying Club in 2002 and again success came early as he won the Harkness Rosebowl in 2003 from Messac, a race that saw only 21 birds in race time and Liam had 3 of them to take 13<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Open. The bird at 20<sup>th</sup> that year went on to win a Hall of Fame finishing 13<sup>th</sup> Open in 2004 and 25<sup>th</sup> Open in 2005. Liam's winner here, called 'Chloe' after a special granddaughter also wins the Single Bird Challenge. It is a five year old blue hen that won the IHUNFC from St Malo in 2015. She was sent to the King's Cup sitting on a 6/7 day old youngster. As Liam was working the pigeon was timed by Liam's wife Gertie. The sire is from Liam's own old family which is mainly Harkness and Gilmour & Beattie lines. The dam is a granddaughter of a bird from Joe Murphy from Fife, from his old Scottish National lines. In 2014 the King's Cup winner had two channel races, one of them the difficult Truro, in 2015 she had Penzance before the St Malo win and in 2016 she had three inland races before the King's Cup when she returned on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. This year she had four inland races, two from Skibbereen (169 miles) and two from Barleycove (190 miles). When they have flown from France they aren't sent back on the channel except to France. Liam had two more pigeons in the result here at 138<sup>th</sup> and 139<sup>th</sup> with the 3<sup>rd</sup> bird being a son of 'Chloe'. Training is from Arklow (12 miles) three or four times a week and it is Gertie who does the training. Liam started to train his young birds earlier

than usual this year and he trained the French birds with them for the few weeks before the King's Cup to provide extra protection from the hawks. Liam asked me to thank everybody who called to congratulate him and to the club members who organized a night to celebrate his win, not forgetting Alan Duffy for the bottle of bubbly.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> South section, 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Joe Doheny, Vel 1313, Flying 407 miles, winning £1823 and the Gilliland Cup for 1<sup>st</sup> IHU member after winner in King's Cup**

2<sup>nd</sup> South section, 2<sup>nd</sup> Open is former double King's Cup winner Joe Doheny from Malahide who almost made history here by becoming the first to win the King's Cup three times. This loft needs no introduction as Joe has a host of National wins behind him including National Champions in 1981 and 1987, King's Cup winner in 1982 and 2002, Friendship National winner in 2011. Add to this Joe won the Miller Gold Cup in 1969 and 1987 and was runner up in 1972, 1976 and 1982. He won the Old Bird Derby in the South Road Fed in 1976, 1977 and 1978, the latter being a very difficult race with only 5 birds in race time and Joe was 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Joe has cultivated his own family of pigeons since 1962 but they mainly centre round the pigeons he got from Billy Walkingshaw, Killyleagh. It is now 50 years since Joe timed his first pigeon from France in 1966. There are very years that Joe doesn't take a top ten position in a national and last year he was 7<sup>th</sup> Open Yearling National. The pigeon timed here is a two-year-old chequer hen full of wonderful distance bloodlines. She is a granddaughter of 'Rosie' winner of 1<sup>st</sup> Open Friendship National in 2011 and also 19<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Friendship National. The dam is an inbred granddaughter of Jackie Waring's Gold Medal winner for 4 times in the prizes in the King's Cup. This year the hen at 2<sup>nd</sup> Open had three inland races plus Talbenny and Penzance. The birds were given three tosses from Wicklow (25 – 30 miles) before racing and then just exercised at home as they fly well at home.

### **1<sup>st</sup> North section, 3<sup>rd</sup> Open, Alec Crawford Ballyleson, Vel 1262, flying 477 miles, winning £1,608 and the East Down Combine Cup for 1<sup>st</sup> EDC member in the King's Cup**

1<sup>st</sup> North section, 3<sup>rd</sup> Open goes to Alec Crawford of the Ballyleson club, on the outskirts of Belfast. Alec told me that he was the first man to introduce Soontjens into Irelands back in 1986, and they went on to become one of the most popular and successful lines brought in from Europe. The pigeon timed here isn't one of his Soontjens but a bird he got from Jeff Greenaway from Dromore. Three years ago Alec's young birds were hit by a sparrowhawk and he lost half of his team. He went to Jeff and bought ten youngsters to supplement his team. The pigeon timed here was one of these ten; a three-year-old Dark Cheq cock that had been on widowhood for the early part of the season but then paired with this race in mind. He was sent sitting to the King's Cup on a small youngster. Last year this bird was 5<sup>th</sup> Open East Down Combine from St Malo when there were only five birds on the day. This year the cock had three Inland races, 2<sup>nd</sup> Talbenny and Penzance prior to the King's Cup

### **2<sup>nd</sup> North section, 4<sup>th</sup> Open Glen Buckley & Sons Annaghmore, Vel 1251, Flying 480 miles, winning £834**

4<sup>th</sup> Open this year goes to another familiar name, Glen Buckley and son Johnny from the Annaghmore club. This is another loft with an impressive record having been 1<sup>st</sup> Open NIPA Lamballe in 2004, 1<sup>st</sup> Open

NIPA Portland in 2005, and 1<sup>st</sup> Open NIPA Lamballe in 2007 plus many other top positions including 2<sup>nd</sup> Open King's Cup in 2009, 7<sup>th</sup> Open King's Cup in 2010, 8<sup>th</sup> Open Friendship National in 2010 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Penzance Young Bird National in 2015. The pigeon timed here is a two year old hen sent to the King's Cup race sitting 10 – 12 days on eggs. The breeding is Boxford Busschaert crossed into their own Soontjens lines. She wasn't raced as a young bird but last year was sent to the Friendship National and was timed on the second day, just out of the prizes. She was on roundabout at the beginning of this year but paired with this race in mind. Prior to the King's Cup she had a few races up Ireland, two Talbennys and Penzance. Training was mostly twice a week with Stanley West from Clogherhead (40 miles), with private training in last couple of weeks.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> North section, 5<sup>th</sup> Open Mark Hughes Edgarstown, Vel 1233, Flying 478 miles, winning £304 and the McCloud Cup for first Yearling in the King's Cup**

We move two miles to Edgarstown to the lofts of Mark Hughes, another prolific racer from France. The pigeon timed was a black yearling hen that had been sitting on overdue eggs and given a four day old youngster on the morning of the basketing. The sire is a Geoff Hunt pigeon from Paul Swindell, Newry, while the dam is a hen off 'Miss Endurance', a superb racer who was 35<sup>th</sup> Open Yearling National, 15<sup>th</sup> Open St Malo (11hrs 30 mins) and 7<sup>th</sup> Open Friendship National (14hrs 20 mins) in 2009. Her sister was 12<sup>th</sup> Open Friendship national in 2008, when Mark won the best 2 bird average. 'Miss Endurance' has bred seven different prizewinners in the King's Cup. Her sire 'The 33 cock' was 48<sup>th</sup> Open King's Cup in 2006 and his brother was 34<sup>th</sup> Open Friendship National from Fougères. This brother bred the pigeon that was 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Friendship national for G & C Topley in 2015. The pigeon at 5<sup>th</sup> Open here had 3 inland races, Talbenny and Penzance. Mark gave the birds a couple of tosses with Stanley West at the beginning of the season and then they were just raced and flown around the house. The birds are fed Frazers breeding mix plus some beans, and three weeks before the French races they are given a high fats mix from Frazers.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Open James Cullen, Bray Invitation, Vel 1221, flying 391 miles, winning £405**

Jimmy Cullen Bray Invitation, a winner of the King's Cup in 1992 from Rennes is 6<sup>th</sup> Open. I'm delighted to write this report on Jimmy as he has made a great recovery from a stroke in December 2015. As a result he had to sell a lot of his pigeons and the pigeons that were retained were locked up for almost a year. Jimmy is very grateful to his family and to the members of the Bray Invitation club who rallied around and ensured that Jimmy was able to return to the type of racing that he really enjoys. The pigeon timed here is a three year old pied hen sent to the King's Cup on chipping eggs. She is closely related to 'Sarah' who was 3<sup>rd</sup> Open King's Cup in 2014. Both birds are down from Jimmy's Stan Biss pigeons, with the sire's side down from 'Turban' who was 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Pau National. Jimmy has had these pigeons for over 20 years now and most of his pigeons now are from this source. As usual Jimmy's first race was the Skibbereen Old Bird National and the only other race this hen had was from Dunmanway, two or three weeks prior to the King's Cup. Birds are trained south to Wexford town or north to Drogheda, both around 50 miles.

### **4<sup>th</sup> North section, 7<sup>th</sup> Open N Black & Sons Dromara, Vel 1220, flying 471 miles, winning £511**

The 1996 King's Cup winners N Black & Sons, Dromara are 7<sup>th</sup> Open here and what a wonderful record they have being double National Champions, Gold Medal winners, three Hall of Fames and now 19

times in the top ten of the King's Cup. Having been 6<sup>th</sup> Open NIPA from St Malo the previous week they are the probable winners of the French Diploma. The pigeon timed here is a small dark cheq pied now known as 'Minnie' after the partnerships great aunt. A natural young bird she was well trained and had only one young bird race. As a yearling she had two young bird races plus Talbenny and Penzance. This year she had Corrin, Talbenny and Bude plus 8 to 10 x 40 mile tosses. All the birds exercised well around the house this year. 'Minnie' was sent to the race on a one day young bird, her first ever young bird. 'Minnie' is inbred, her sire being a son of the 'Good Pair'. This pair has bred a 10<sup>th</sup> Open King's Cup, a 19<sup>th</sup> Open Yearling National plus a lot of other National prizewinners. The cock of this pair is a half brother to 'Annie Mary', 4<sup>th</sup> Open and 8<sup>th</sup> Open King's Cup, while the hen is a daughter of 'Pinehall Lass', 27<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> King's Cup. 'Minnie's dam is a daughter of the 10<sup>th</sup> Open King's Cup bird when paired to '03' another daughter of 'Pinehall Lass'. The feeding and supplements are all Frazers, mainly a widowhood mix with high fat added over the last few days. This is the partnership's fifth time to be 7<sup>th</sup> in the King's Cup and the third time that a hen racing to 'Minnie's nestbox has been 7<sup>th</sup> Open.

### **5th North section, 8<sup>th</sup> Open Burns Bros Comber Social, Vel 1209, flying 480 miles, winning £2,237**

We move to the Comber Social lofts of Burns Bros for 8<sup>th</sup> Open and what a bird this one is. The partnership was originally brothers Paddy and Hughie but when Hughie passed away Paddy decided to retain the partnership name in respect to his late brother. The pigeon timed here by Paddy was a three-year-old cheq w/f hen named 'Trish' after Paddy's very supportive wife. This hen was 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Friendship National in 2016 for one of the best ever averages over these two races. The hen was sent sitting on a three day old youngster, while last year she was sent on a youngster that had just hatched an hour before basketing. The sire is off the 'Rosebowl Pair', winners of the Harkness Rosebowl in 2006 when they were 11<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Open King's Cup. This cock has bred many pigeons to take prizes at National and club level, while the dam is down from 'Dolly' whose lines are contained in the winner of this race (see above), and in the sire of 'Trish' as 'Dolly' was one of the two birds timed to win the Rosebowl in 2006, the same year she won the Hall of Fame, having been 21<sup>st</sup> Open in 2004, 33<sup>rd</sup> Open 2005 and 40<sup>th</sup> Open in 2006. Bear in mind she was also 28<sup>th</sup> Open East Down Combine from Lamballe in 2004. 'Trish' had only one race this year prior to the King's Cup from Fermoy. While she had a few training tosses from Balbriggan with both John Abernethy and Tommy Cairns most of her training was private training along with Norman Thompson from Drogheda, when they were put up in lots of three. Paddy had another superb French race here with two other birds in the result at 124<sup>th</sup> and 238<sup>th</sup> Open.

### **6<sup>th</sup> North section, 9<sup>th</sup> Open, W B Shaw Corrigs, Vel 1206, flying 458 miles, winning £325**

6<sup>th</sup> North section, 9<sup>th</sup> Open goes to another loft with a proven track record in National races, Billy Shaw of the Corrigs club in Newcastle, Co Down. Billy was 2<sup>nd</sup> in The King's Cup in 1978 from Rennes when he won the Harkness Rosebowl with his second pigeon 11<sup>th</sup> Open. The following year he won a Hall of Fame. In the very difficult King's Cup in 2005 from Messac Billy had 4 birds in the result when only 110 were recorded in race time. With several good positions in between Billy was 22<sup>nd</sup> Open last year. The pigeon timed here is a two-year-old cock that had a few Inland races, a Talbenny and Penzance before the King's Cup. He lost his hen in Penzance but continued to feed a young bird they were sitting on, his first of the year. Billy took the young bird away about a week before basketing and gave it back to him on the Monday before basketing. He was raced through to Penzance last year and returned from Penzance with an injury following a hawk attack. The sire is from Padfield Bros of Wales who were 1<sup>st</sup>

and 3<sup>rd</sup> BICC from Barcelona (757 miles) this year. They have won at least 6 Nationals. The dam is from Mr & Mrs Ken Hines of Hayes in Middlesex, twice winners from Palamas (almost 700 miles). Training is with Ronnie Williamson to Balbriggan (45 miles) at least twice a week.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> South section, 10<sup>th</sup> Open Martin Murtagh Skerries, Vel 1206.36, flying 418 miles, winning £672**

We go back south to the lofts of Martin Murtagh of the Skerries club, for 3<sup>rd</sup> South section, 10<sup>th</sup> Open. Martin has been racing since 1973 and this is probably his best result yet although he was 7<sup>th</sup> Open East Coast Fed two years ago from St Malo. The pigeon timed is a three year old blue cock that was sent to this race driving his hen to the nest. Breeding is Hansenne from his club mate Art Kelly who was 2<sup>nd</sup> Open in the King's Cup last year. The Hansennes originated from Terry Tregoining from Wales and is the same lines as Art's bird that was 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Friendship National in 2012. This was this bird's seventh channel race. He was in Penzance two weeks before the King's Cup and was Martin's second bird home. His only other racing this year was two inland races. The birds are trained to Rathangan once a week and are flown at home in the evenings. Martin is a busy farmer and had just stopped for a cup of tae when the bird arrived

I would like to 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. Thanks also to Glen Moon in Jersey, John Angwin in Sennen Cove and Olly Gittins in Bude for all their help during the channel racing.

Brendan McLoughlin

INFC Press Officer