

IRISH NATIONAL FLYING CLUB YOUNG BIRD NATIONAL PENZANCE

The Irish National Flying Club Young Bird National was held on Wednesday 6th September with the birds liberated in Penzance at 7.40am in a light westerly wind. The race was once again sponsored by Frazer's Animal Feeds. The entry was slightly up on last year with 380 members from across Ireland sending 2,251 birds (last year 385 members sent 2,174) and members were racing for total pools and prizemoney of £16,235.51.

While the birds were released in a light westerly wind this was to freshen as the day went on and there were reports of mist and patches of fog further up the west coast of England. With birds reported in Newry around 3pm it seemed that we were going to have a great race. However at the end of the first day there were only 31 birds home and with only another 37 the next day this was a rather disappointing race. However bad a race is, there are always a few fanciers who will have good races. This was the case for the winner Jeff Greenaway from Dromore who had three in the top ten with another two in the result. McCracken Bros Banbridge also had a great race with three on the day and another one on the second day.

1st North Section, 1st Open J Greenaway Dromore , Vel 1055, Flying 295 miles, winning £465, The J.M.K McGugan Perpetual Cup for the winner and the De-Scheemaeker Trophy for best two-bird average.

The winner of the Penzance Young Bird National 2017 is one of Ireland's top fanciers, Jeff Greenaway, Dromore. Jeff had a terrific race here with three birds in the top ten at 1st, 3rd, 8th, and another two taking 19th and 36th Open. With such a strong result he was the winner of the De-Scheemaeker Trophy for best two bird average and is the likely winner (not confirmed) of the Jarvis Cup for Best Average Penzance and Skibbereen Young Bird Nationals and the Harkers Trophy for Best Average Sennen Cove Yearling National and Penzance YB Nationals. Jeff was 10th Open in this race last year and won the three Cups mentioned above in the 2014 season. It will be a great achievement to win all three again. The winning pigeon is a Blue Tip hen that was sent to the race being driven to nest by her cock. The breeding is Van Reet x Soontjens and is the same lines as Wesley Sawyers' Friendship National winner in 2016 and Ivan Parkes and Son's Skibbereen National winner 2016 – you can't get much better than that. The sire is a direct son of his best racer/breeder 'Unlucky', while the dam is a direct daughter of a good racing hen that was 2nd Open Young Hens National with NIPA and the following week was 2nd Open NIPA 5 Bird Fermoy. The young hen timed here had every young bird race this year except Talbenny. Training is most days to Ardee or Clogherhead with Joe Brown. Jeff's father, Billy is a great help especially with the stock birds.

2nd North section, 2nd Open A McAteer & Sons Ballyholland, Vel 1048, Flying 281 miles, winning £1,302

2nd North section, 2nd Open are A McAteer & Sons, Ballyholland on the outskirts of Newry City. The McAteers were winners of the Friendship National in 2012, in a year which saw them 2nd Open NIPA from St Malo, two weeks previously. In fact the bird timed here is a son of the 2012 National winner. They have also won a Hall of Fame Award this year with another one out of the National winner. The pigeon timed here is a Blue Bar cock, sent to this race 'looking at his hen'. As mentioned the dam is the Friendship National winner, 'Drumcove Olympic Gold', and is from the best lines available from Mick Conlon Banbridge and Alan Darragh, Cullybackey. The Conlon birds are down from 'Grove Hill Gold', Mick's Hall of Fame and Gold medal winner, while the Darragh pigeons go back to 'Achievement'. Aiden

tells me that the mother of the loft is a daughter of 'Northbound' and 'Achievement'. On the sire's side the grandsire is much the same containing all these lines. The grand dam is from R McDowell & Son Annsborough and is out of his great St Malo hen that was twice first Open East Down Combine from the Old Bird Derby. The grandsire on the other side of the sire is from Aiden's cousin Johnny Murtagh, Ballyholland and the grand dam is Aiden's Bronze Medal winner for three times in the prizes from St Malo, including 3rd Open NIPA. As you can see there are some great distance lines here.

3rd North section, 3rd Open, J Greenaway Dromore, Vel 1041, Flying 295 miles, winning £272

We go back to the winner Jeff Greenaway for the 3rd North section, 3rd Open bird. This one is a chequer cock sent to this race sitting 10 days. Breeding is Mark Gilberts on both sides. The sire is a grandson of 'New Laureat'. These birds have done really well for Jeff. Jeff asked me to thank Mark Gilbert for supplying these top pigeons which have done really well for him.

4th North Section, 4th Open D McClelland Ballyclare, Vel 1034.59, Flying 320 miles, winning £1087

The Ballyclare lofts of David McClelland are 4th Open here and David is having a good Young Bird season having been 6th section C, 8th Open Talbenny. Unfortunately when I tried to contact David he was having a well earned holiday so the information is a bit scarce on this one. I do know that the pigeon timed here was bought from Grattan Bros Eastway. David's father David Senior is responsible for training and the birds are trained from various locations but always into a head wind.

5th North section, 5th Open Mackey & Lockhart Ballylesson, Vel 1034.06, Flying 306miles, winning £452

5th North section, 5th Open goes to the Ballylesson partnership of Mackey & Lockhart, with the first East Down Combine bird in the race. The partnership was originally Bill Mackey and Albert Lockhart but following Bill's recent passing Albert is on his own but has retained the partnership name. The pigeon timed here is a blue hen sent to this race racing to the perch. A game little hen, she has had most races this year including Talbenny when she was 10th West section, 13th Open East Down Combine. Breeding is Soontjens from birds obtained from club mate Alec Crawford. The dam had flown St Malo twice but was lost at the same racepoint this year in a very difficult race. Albert likes to train hard and the birds are sent with Brain Foulis four days a week, weather permitting to either the border or to Castlebellingham. Albert asked me to pass on his congratulations to Jeff Greenaway on a terrific race.

6th North section, 6th Open, J Eagleson & Sons Ballymena, Vel 1024, Flying 329 miles, winning £474

We move to the Ballymena club for our 6th North section, 6th Open bird, to the lofts of leading flyers Johnston Eagleson & Sons. The partnership of Johnston and his two sons Mervyn and John are previous winners of this race in 1997 with 'Precious Memories'. They were also 2nd Open in 1991 with 'Valda' winning a car in the process and the two bird average. They had been out of the sport for about ten years returning in 2013 and have soon got back to their winning ways. The pigeon timed here is a chequer hen sent to this race sitting on eggs. She had most races and was 1st Open Mid Antrim Combine, 2nd Section B, 29th Open Talbenny. This young hen was bred by Jackie Steele, Rasharkin and is off a direct Lambrecht cock. She is a full sister to the loft's famous '02' cock, a previous winner of the Mid Antrim Combine's OB of the Year winner and down from Danny Dixon's 'Heartbreaker'. The partnership train very little after racing starts but the pigeons are raced every week and flown at home during the week.

7th North section, 7th Open, G Buckley & Son Annaghmore, Vel 1019, flying 301 miles, winning £686

7th Open goes to the Annaghmore lofts of Glen & Johnny Buckley and what a superb year this has been for them. Having been 165th North section Old Bird Skibbereen, 63rd Open Yearling National and 4th Open in both the King's Cup and Friendship Nationals, they are the likely winners of the National Championships for 2017. Three top ten finishes in any season is surely remarkable racing and well worthy of National Champion status. They have another pigeon in this result taking 29th Open. The pigeon timed here at 7th Open is a blue cock sent to this race 'looking at his hen'. He had every race including Talbenny when he was their third pigeon home. After the Penzance National this young cock was sent to Rosscarbery with the NIPA for the final race of the season when he was 11th Section E, 56th Open. The sire is from Ad Schaerlaecaens while the dam is from their own Soontjens lines. Young Bird training follows a similar pattern to the old birds with the birds trained with Stanley West and then privately trained towards the end of the season.

8th North section, 8th Open J Greenaway Dromore, Vel 1018, flying 295 miles, winning £110

We go back to the winning loft of Jeff Greenaway for our 8th Open bird. This one is a chequer hen that was in the prizes from Talbenny. It is related to the two hens that were 8th and 18th Open in 2014 in this race to win the two bird average that year. The dam is down from 'Starlight' and 'Euro diamond' from Mark Gilbert. These Gilbert pigeons are working really well for Jeff. Jeff followed this superb result with 6th, 7th and 8th in the Skibbereen National 9 days later and then 2nd, 10th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 34th Open NIPA Rosscarbery plus a few other Open positions, two days after that. It was certainly a magnificent end to the season for Jeff.

9th North section 9th Open C & G Quinn Drumnavaddy, Vel 1017, flying 297 miles, winning £85

9th Open in the Young Bird National goes to the lofts of Gerry and Chris Quinn who race in the Drumnavaddy club in the Banbridge/Dromore area in Co Down. Chris is currently working as a gamekeeper in New Zealand so dad Gerry is looking after the pigeons this year. The pigeon timed here is a blue bar cock that was sent to the race just flying to the perch. The youngster is down from "Hunter", 31st Open in the King's Cup in 2011 and 3rd Open King's Cup in 2012, when he was the highest money winner that year lifting £4,043 plus £400 for being second in the Single Bird Challenge. 'Hunter's sire is from their own family while the dam was a gift from one of Banbridge's long distance stalwarts, Jim Butler. Interestingly 'Hunter' was also in the Penzance Young Bird National in 2009. The young cock timed here had the full programme this year, including Talbenny. Gerry trained privately to the border (25 miles) and to Annagassan coming up to the big races. When not training, the birds are flown twice a day at home.

10th North Section, 10th Open McCracken Bros Banbridge, vel 1006, flying 294 miles, winning £85

We move to the Banbridge lofts of McCracken Bros for our 10th Open bird. This partnership was originally Raymond and his late brother Bobby. Nowadays it's Raymond and his son Robert and they have had a great young bird season being highest prizewinners in the Banbridge club and culminating in

a wonderful race here where they had three birds on the day, one the next day and another within a week of liberation, taking 10th, 20th, 25th and 52nd Open. Their third bird won £2,000 in the Banbridge Breeder buyer and was bred by themselves. The sire of the pigeon at 10th Open here is off a pigeon that was in the prizes from both St Malo with the NIPA and Quimper with the Irish National Flying Club. The breeding is their own old Krauth lines and Jeff Greenaway lines. The dam is pure Greenaway. Robert said that all five pigeons they got from this race were half Greenaway. The nest mate of the 10th Open bird was 1st club from Rosscarbery in the last race of the season. Training is all private training, usually to the Carrickdale car park (20 miles) but they had an extra toss from Castleblaney in the run up to this race.

Thanks again to our race sponsors, Frazers Animal Feeds. I'd also like to thank all those who helped with photographs. We are also always grateful to those who help at the Marking Station and Clock Centres.

Brendan McLoughlin

Irish National Flying Club Press Officer