

Solent South Road Federation

Falaise 1

Okay, it wasn't easy. The east wind which had previously led to some new names on the role of honour caused the telephone lines among the Solent fancy to be red hot on this day! The most common remark was 'Where are they?', as the birds seemed to be taking far too long for the flyers who were waiting in what seemed very pleasant weather conditions in their gardens. Well, in the end the 3140 birds sent by 245 members did come. I think the historians among the members would have to think a long way back to recall a race from such a short distance to be won on 1228 ypm. As always in such instances, there are the theorists who always come up with one hundred and one reasons/excuses of what happened. The fact is.....we don't know.

Well, 'when the going gets tough, the tough get going' and on this occasion, the toughest loft, taking 1st Prize Solent South Road Federation was that of Messrs Moody & King of **Channel FC**. Gary Moody and Fred King have this year resumed their very successful partnership of six years before a three year break.



Gary states that it was while courting his wife Emm, Fred's sister, and watching Fred's birds return from races that he first got the pigeon 'bug'. This loft is certainly no stranger to success, with this being the 18th time that they have topped the Solent Fed. They have enjoyed a host of other good performances in classic and national racing, but they feel that their very best performance was in 2001 when they were 1st, 2nd & 3rd Open Central Southern Classic Flying Club from Sennen Cove, and were a full seven minutes in front of anyone else. 'We could have gone in doors, made a cup of tea, then clocked and still won!' Over the weeks that I have been writing these reports I have been used to each week seeing their name on the result, scoring with their 'Maurice Matthews' pigeons. These, they feel, are the backbone of their loft. Fred first bought this strain from Bob Thompson of Wales in 1989. They are typically sprint to middle distance birds. Of the team of stock pigeons housed at Fred's house, 90% are Maurice Matthews, supplemented with a few other strains that have proved to be outstanding performers. Each year Gary & Fred buy in a dozen youngsters to train and race against their home bred birds. Over time they have tried various strains, but accept, that apart from the odd pigeon, many simply don't stand up against their Maurice Matthews birds. One that did was their Federation winner. This pigeon was bought at the Lier Market for the bargain basement price of £16! He is Janssen based and what a great purchase he has proven to be. This is his fourth top fed position and he has previously been 9th and 16th. He started to show his potential right from the start as a young bird with a 3rd fed from Guernsey when this loft took the first four positions. (Who knows, this could have been his second fed win if he had been clocked first?). In that race he was also nominated into the Goldalming £5 nom Open race and won £600. This partnership normally starts each season with a team of 60 old birds which are flown on a natural system. Their winning cock was sent to this race sitting 8-10 day eggs. They never try to orchestrate the nest conditions during the season, but just let the birds be as 'natural' as possible. Gary Moody lives in an area known locally as 'The Golden Mile' for pigeon fanciers. He estimates that within a mile radius of his property there are about 50 lofts. This, he feels, prohibits him from racing on any type of widowhood system, as it would be difficult to exercise such a team successfully with no free air time in the area. Gary recalled the time when three pigeonsFed!

dropped in from a race to his and two other lofts, not 100 yds from his, and they were 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The 80 young birds that Gary & Fred start with each year are sent to every race possible and they like them to have seen the channel at least once. They have tried putting the youngsters on darkness in the past, but found that, although they looked a picture, the performances as yearlings were not up to the mark, and they therefore haven't done so since. They breed early and feel that certainly the first round would not benefit from going on darkness, and if the condition of the second rounders deteriorate, they simply stop them. The boys now use an ets system for timing their birds. Both see the benefits, but each see different advantages to its use. For Gary, the main advantage is not having to complete the tedious paperwork for club racing, while Fred finds that being able to use it for counting the birds on their return from their twice weekly training sessions from Poole, a real plus. In the past the main aim for this loft would be to concentrate their efforts towards the fed and winning the very prestigious Buckingham Cup average trophy. Having won this ward 5 times in six years as well as Old Bird, Young Bird and Combined averages many times they now concentrate on the classic and national races. They have, this year, missed a race in the programme, to help them resist the temptation of racing for averages at the end of season. They opening admit that in years gone by they have been guilty of losing good birds near the end of the season by being overzealous in competing for averages. The aim of this loft at the beginning of the season is to win the fedtwice, or a National race.....or two! When I rang to book to visit this loft Gary's wife told me the boys were out having their 'Pigeon Breakfast'. On further investigation I find that every Saturday morning a bunch of Portsmouth fanciers meet for breakfast before racing at 'Mammas Cafe' Now I don't think that it sounds like a muesli and croissants affair.....

Second place Solent South Road Federation was won by Mr J Bowen of **Leigh Park RPC**. Jason and his partner clocked their home bred Janssen/Vandebeele cross on 1216 ypm. Jason has been keeping birds for many years, principally with a sprint team, but due to family commitments, the birds took a back seat in recent times. Now he is back with a vengeance as his partner has 'caught the bug' and takes a major role in the management of the birds which now tend to be sprint/middle distance pigeons. In 2006 they suffered a blow when they had a major flyaway with their young bird team. Good friend Jimmy Wearn stepped in and gifted them some late bred young birds from his prestigious stock loft. It is direct from these birds, that their 2nd fed is bred, and they would like to thank him for the kindness and support that he showed. The Bowen team start as 18 widowhood cocks and 15prs of naturally raced birds. They are flown twice a day, with just a few training tosses before their first races. This yearling cock was unraced as a young bird, and his success was achieved in only his second ever race. He was sent driving his hen to nest. In the past Jason has won the Fed and was 1st CSCFC Ramsgate. The aim for this pigeon is either to Messac with the Fed or Classic Cholet (if the weather ever looks like it might be an easier race).

Mick & Sue Betteridge of **Milton HS** sent a very well bred two year blue hen to claim 1st Club, 3rd Fed on 1214 ypm. The dam of this bird was bought for the princely sum of £15 as part of a kit of young birds and went on to win 1st Open Messac BBC last year. Sue tells me that they fly a very small team of birds, just 16 prs of old birds from a 12' x 6' loft on a natural system. Their 2 year old blue hen is typical of their Cattryse/Berger family. Like her dam, they achieve better results when only raced lightly as youngsters, and seem to come into their own as two or three year olds. Mick & Sue feel that the tougher races suit their birds as they are 'feed heavy, train heavy' fanciers. For this race the hen was sent sitting 12 days. They are aiming her for a Classic race later in the season.

Gosport RPC had 8 members send 98 birds to Falaise. Bill Edwards had the winner and 4th Fed, his first win since returning to the sport after a few years absence. The winner, doing 1209 ypm is a yearling blue cheq Herbot widower having only his second race. He was bred by Bill's good friend Tommy Slowther from Consett who has sent some good birds to Gosport over the years. Paul Ayling had second and 12th fed on 1184 with a 2 year old blue pied roundabout hen. She was bred by Brian Shepherd and is a grand daughter of 'The Legend' and 'Jingles' and purchased by Paul's Dad, John, and only broken off by Paul this year. 3RD spot went to Barry Stitch with a grizzle Van Loon roundabout cock on 1098 ypm, bred by fellow club member Dave Harris.

Channel FC are the leaders of this week's club 'chart table'. 11 members sent 143 birds. As well as having the winner, other members also produced performances that produced top fed cards. D Waterhouse took 2nd club, 5th fed on 1205 ypm with a yearling cheq pied cock, flown naturally. This is one very consistent pigeon that always seems to be in the frame. 3rd club, 10th fed was V Venables with a four year old blue bar cock, flown naturally on 1186 ypm. Another very consistent pigeon who also won £105 on the noms! Nice One!

Well? This is where I say 'I told you so!' Did you believe that the members of **Milton HS** were going to be at the bottom of this report each week? Never in a million years. 10 members sent 190 birds to this race. As well as this club having the third fed prize winner, Albie Webb & Son also took a top fed position with a yearling blue cock on 1199 ypm to be 2nd club, 6th fed. Their Vandenabeele, flown on widowhood, was direct from M & D Evans. Bomber Mellis was 3rd Club, 67th Fed with a two year old white Roland/Janssen hen on 1077 ypm, flown on widowhood and bred for him by Club secretary Mick Johnson.

Parade FC, where 17 members sent 235 birds, saw a win for Horn Bros I. Their Belgium rung two year old blue bar cock took the 1st club, 8th Fed on 1167 ypm. It was a good day at the office for these brothers as they also secured 2nd club, 19th Fed with another Belgium rung two year old blue bar cock. Both these birds were flown naturally. Kevin Hookey won 3rd Club, 27th fed with his yearling mealy cock. on 1156 ypm, flown naturally. 4th spot, 36th fed went to Harry Butcher with his mealy hen yearling also flown naturally on 1145 ypm. The club £5 noms this week were won by Steve Benham.

Keith Pritchard won the 1st prize, 11th fed at the **Eastleigh Irish RPC** where 8 members sent 64 birds. His two year old blue Van Reet cock romped in on 1184 ypm. This pigeon previously won 3rd Truro 2007. 2nd Prize, 73rd fed went to D Hayles & Son with a yearling cheq hen on 1072 ypm. This Jan Aarden hen also won 1st Guernsey YB in 07. Keith also secured 3rd spot with his two year old blue Van Reet cock on 1003 ypm. A good strong competitor, this pigeon, who has previously won both 2nd Messac and 3rd Cholet last year as a yearling.

What a strong club **Bognor & Chichester** are! 16 members sent 314 birds to this race. Winning first prize, 14th fed in this, which for some could be a small fed race, was L Severe with a De Klak two year old blue cheq hen on 1181 ypm. This hen is flown naturally and was bred by Tony Cowan from stock birds from Long & Cox, Stowmarket strain of De Klak. Crammond & Langstaff, have you got a touch of the 'seconds'? 2nd prize for you yet again, third week in a row, with a two year old white flight cock on 1159 ypm that was..... you guessed it..... second last week from Newton Abbot in the South Coast Fed! He is one of their veryshould I say consistent....M & D Evans Vandenabeele widowhood cocks. Both 3rd and 4th places were won by K Saunders. 3rd, with a blue cheq Janssen/Southwell two year old cock on 1159. This bird was unpaired, a sent driving a hen to nest.

Portsmouth Manor Park saw 7 members send 99 birds to this race. The winner was S MacMillan with a yearling blue bar pied widowhood cock on 1171 ypm. 2nd was M Drackett. His black yearling widowhood cock was on 1194 ypm. K Wearn took third prize with a two year old blue bar hen flown naturally on 1015 ypm.

I had the greatest pleasure this week to meet a superstar for the future. Billy Gilbert, seven years old of **Camrose RPC**. This young lad (with a bit of help from his dad), is showing the members of this club the way with his third win on the trot. His three year old red Janssen cross cock took 1st club on 1135 ypm, flown naturally. 2nd sport was taken by Tony Flinn with a yearling blue Busschart cock on 1134 ypm, again flown naturally. Zac Richards was third with a yearling blue cheq Van Loon cock on 1110 ypm. This bird was bred by fellow club member Tony Hayward. His sire was 9th Fed Saintes and 36th Open NFC Bordeaux.

Racecourse HS was won by a pigeon who is no stranger to success, a previous 1st prize club winner on several occasions. Raced by J Clements, this Van Loon, pencil cock was on 1060 ypm. L Pitney,

Cronin & Freshney took second position with a blue cock on 999 ypm. This bird was bred from stock originating from J Whitley. J Clements also secured third prize with a 6 yr old blue Van Loon cock on 927 ypm. This pigeon has taken cards before and flown Pau. He was sent sitting youngsters.

Portchester RPC saw 5 members send 54 birds to this race. Mr & Mrs I Mitchell took 1st and 3rd positions with two blue blue three year old cocks, both flown naturally on 1049 and 1000.262 ypm respectively. 2nd prize was won by F Smith with a two year old mealy cock on 1000.914 ypm.

East Cowes had 9 members sending 120 birds. Top spot was won by Brian Mills with a four year old Janssen cross blue hen flown naturally on 1014 ypm. 2nd & 3rd positions were both taken by Robert Harbour with two yearling Cattrysse cocks on 1008 ypm & 894 ypm, both flown on a roundabout system.

Wootton & Bashley WMFC was won by Ray Hoare & Claire. My Pau cock was the winner this week. He has flown NFC Pau/Tarbes four times winning well over £1100 from that race and is closely related to Dad's 5th Open NFC Pau hen. 2nd was Ron Ayres with his blue pied Janssen cock on 977 ypm. Ron has a quality team of Curtiss, Wall & Green stock birds. This bird won a 1st position from Truro last year. 3rd card was won by my husband's red cheq cock 'Reg'. I could write a book about this bird. But I will just say that one day he will return from a race and actually look like he has put in a bit of effort!!

Fawley saw two members sending 13 birds. 1st prize was won by Mrs & Mrs Steve Cox with a yearling blue bar Busschaert cock, flown naturally, on 968 ypm. They also won second prize with a blue cheq Busschaert/Janssen hen on 812 ypm. James Cox was third with his yearling Busschaert/Janssen cock on 749 ypm.

Conveyors report. All birds loaded at both pick up points by 2125hrs. Arrived Portsmouth ferry port at 2245hrs. Boarded ferry at 2345hrs on top deck which I always request. This is not always possible but when it is the birds get plenty of air with the sides of the transporter up and all vents open. Arrived on site at 0800hrs. Weather overcast and light rain. All the birds watered. Tony called and said the weather should clear up later in the morning which proved to be the case. We agreed to liberate the birds at 1100hrs. We had trouble contacting the site agent which we tried to do all morning, and in the end had we got on and liberated the birds into broken cloud and sunshine. No wind. Birds cleared well, but got up very high. This is the first time we used this site. It is a good site, but it's in a bit of a valley. Perhaps this is why the birds got up so high.

Thank you to those who sent in their press report forms. Keep up the good work!

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