

EDWARD AND PETER REILLY of BARNSTAPLE

1st OPEN BICC ALENCON 2 NATIONAL 2016.

The 2016 BICC race from Cholet had to be replaced at short notice by a second race from Alencon. This was due to the fuel strike in France which caused ferry cancellations and the need to find an alternative shorter distance race point. The 4,326 birds entered by the members of the BICC were eventually liberated at Alencon on Sunday 29th May and with an easterly influence in the wind over the English Channel it was predicted that the members in the western regions of the club's boundaries would enjoy the benefit of the conditions. This is exactly what occurred as the eventual race winner was clocked "way, way out west" on the North Devon coast, at the Barnstaple loft of Edward Reilly and son Peter.



The following loft report is based on an interview with the partners shortly after their great National win – one which came about just two weeks after they joined the BICC!!!

Eddie Reilly started his career in pigeons in 1970 and son Peter followed him to form the present partnership of Reilly & son in 2002. Eddie's father was his first major influence as Eddie has been to son Peter since they joined in partnership.

THE LOFT.

The Reillys have been at their present location since 1979 and the present loft measures some 30ft long by 9ft wide and has 6 sections. The loft and the stock loft is kept clean with regular application of the trusty scraper.



A team of 16 pairs of stock birds is housed in a separate block built loft, with the main racing loft housing 24 pairs of racers which are raced on the round about system and around 50 youngsters.



The usual practice is to mate the stock team in the beginning of January followed by the racers in mid February. All racers are mated at the same time whether they be intended

for club and Federation races or the Nationals.

The race team is then put through a rigorous training regime prior to the start of the season. This early training is supplemented by regular home exercise periods of one hour duration each day throughout the season. They also get a daily training toss from around 25 miles.



Youngsters have at least 35 training flights prior to their first race and then the partners are quite satisfied if the youngsters have just five outings in club races to complete their education in the year of their birth. I should also point out here that the young bird team is raced exclusively on the darkness system.



FEEDING & BREEDING POLICY.

Stock and young birds are fed by hopper with the old bird racers fed individually in their boxes. All birds are fed on the various mixes marketed by Marimans.

The breeding policy here is based on inbreeding for stock and then crossing inbred lines for racing purposes. John Highley has been a great source of advice with regard to the correct bloodlines to introduce and work on.

I'll reproduce here what Eddie and Peter had to tell me about the breeding of their Alencon National winner:-

“The sire of the pigeon is from Mark Gilbert and is nephew of Dream which was 2nd Open Tarbes NFC. He also has Deweerdt and Jan Arden bloodlines in his make up. The dam is from John Highley of the Yorkshire Syndicate. Her sire is a brother to Luka 07 the father to Marco which was 1st Belgium National 5th International from Pau for Etienne Meirlaen. He is also the uncle to Pennine Heights 1st Open Tarbes National Flying Club. The mother to this hen is a Janssen from

Leach Brothers of Hebden Bridge. We got the Janssen to cross in to the distance pigeons for speed. This cock, now named "Red Eyes" as he homed in a thunder storm, has been up in the prize cards as a young bird and a yearling. His full brother was 8th section D from Fougères NFC."



Using these breeding methods on top class stock introduced from various sources has produced some impressive recent results including 2 x 1st section with the NFC and of course the recent National win with the BICC in the Alencon 2 race. One other enjoyable race performance was the clocking of four birds high up in the section result in the Saintes National with the NFC.

1st section Saintes with the NFC and 1st section Alencon 1st Open Alencon BICC plus 2x 6th section NFC Saintes in recent years seem to indicate that the Reillys are certainly on the right lines.

Edward and Peter have no specific programme of medication nor do they use any supplements to bolster their pigeons' constitution. They believe in keeping it simple and relying on the class, natural ability and sound constitution of their team to gain success in the races. So far this seems to be working a treat and long may it continue!

Gareth Watkins