

MICKY WATTS
of
Southminster, ESSEX.

1st,2nd,3rd, 4th & 5th Open BICC Guernsey OH's 1,014 birds and 2nd Open BICC Guernsey YB's 1,891 birds in 2014.

The above performances are pretty impressive I'm sure you'll agree. As a result of this and also the fact that as BICC press officer I like to feature each BICC race winner in a personalised article, I approached Micky and asked if he would be prepared to share his experiences in the sport with the fancy in general.

Micky kindly completed the questionnaire which is printed below and I am also grateful for the excellent photographs provided by Chris Sutton.

When did you start in the sport.

I started in the sport in 1992

Who was your first major influence.

The Cooley Brothers.

Can you give brief details of your first loft, birds, management etc.

My first loft was in my parents back garden where I raced for 10 years.

How long have you raced to your present location.

I have raced to my present location for 2 years having previously been in partnership.

Can you give details of your present loft set up i.e. overall dimensions , orientation , number of sections etc.

My present loft has 4 sections along with an aviary.

The young bird loft is 14 ft long and has two sections with the old bird loft also 14 ft long with two sections. Both lofts are 6ft deep, with a 12ft long and 8feet deep aviary split into two sections.

Do you use deep litter ,grids or clean daily/regularly.

Both lofts are cleaned daily.

How many birds do you keep:- stock. racers, young birds.

I do not have any stock birds and the race team starts with approx. 50 youngsters . At the moment I have 20 racing cocks.

What system do you use to race the birds e.g. widowhood, round about, natural etc.

All old birds are raced on the widowhood system.

When do you mate your stock birds, racers.

The old birds are mated each season on Boxing Day.

What is the preparation of the racers prior to the first old bird race.

The birds having been confined to the lofts for the duration of the winter months are exercised around the loft for a period of 2 weeks and then have two weeks of intensive road training prior to the first race.

Do you force fly your birds during exercise or are they left to do as they please.

My birds seem to exercise well of their own accord and do not need to be forced to fly.

How often do you exercise the race birds.

I like to train the race team in the mornings and are then exercised around the loft in the evenings weather permitting.

How often do you train the race birds before and during racing.

I like to get them into 3 trainers at 33 miles each week if possible.

Is there any specific preparation for the birds before National races.

There is no specific training before Nationals as I like to maintain a high level of fitness in the birds at all times during the racing season.

How much racing do your young birds receive and how many training tosses do they have in the year of their birth.

I try and send to every race if possible, with as much training as possible-weather permitting.

Do you race your young birds on the Natural system or Darkness/light system.

All young birds are raced exclusively on the Darkness System.

How do you feed the racers, stock birds, young birds – hopper /by hand. How do you gauge how much they need at each feed.

Young birds are always fed by the hopper and the old birds fed individually in pots in their boxes.

What mixtures do you feed.

I am a great believer in Versele Laga Gerry plus and also add barley and a good widowhood mixture from time to time. I don't feed any differently for the National races.

What are the main bloodlines that you house now and which lines have proved the most successful.

The only family I have now are the very versatile Vandenabeeles from M&D Evans .

Do you line breed, in breed outcross when breeding. Which method has been most successful for you.

I don't have any fancy theories about line breeding/inbreeding. My system is simply "best to best".

Is there any fancier who has helped you more than any other.

Yes , M&D Evans have provided me with good pigeons and good advice when needed.

Can you give an outline of your many top class performances and those that have given you most pleasure.

I have been fortunate to have recorded multiple Combine, and Amalgamation wins plus two National wins. In addition to these outright wins I have also many 2nd & 3rd etc.

Can you give details of some of the top pigeons that you have raced.

M&D Evans blood lines "The Man" winning 3rd combine as a baby and as a yearling 1st Combine and then the week after 1st Amalgamation.

Do you have a specific programme of medication.

I try not to medicate so keep it to a bare minimum if possible.

Do you use any supplements such as vitamins etc.

Yes multi vitamines.

Do you feed any supplements in the build up to long distance / National races.

No nothing special.

How does your ideal pigeon look/ handle.

My ideal pigeon would handle like a pear fairly broad at the front and tapering off towards the tail.

If you could only use one product / supplement what would it be.

Garlic.

Straight and to the point. Many thanks Micky.

Gareth Watkins



Micky Watts in the main corridor checking over the inmates



Micky Watts loft-Set-Up



Micky Watts Trapping-Set-Up



Micky Watts-Set-Up



Micky's Old Bird cocks'section