

London & South East Classic Club Prize Presentation 2012.

The London & South East Classic Club held its annual prize giving dinner and dance at the Reigate Manor Hotel at the back end of January when well over eighty members and guests sat down to an excellent roast beef meal. I have been to hundreds of prize presentations through my many years in the sport and can't remember one better than this one, it was a brilliant night! The Classic has been at the plush Reigate Manor for quite a few years now and over that time it has proved to be a really popular venue for the 'main event'. The Classic chairman, Brian Doick, was away attending his daughters wedding in Australia, so stand in chairman for the evening, Gordon Marsh, started the evening by introducing the chief guests, John and Linda Tyerman of Bracklesham Bay. Johnny Tyerman was a founder member of the L&SECC and is a past secretary and President of the Classic club. In the formative years of the club he also convoyed the Classic birds a few times to France in a glorified 'bread van' and look how far things have progressed today, with the club now using the very best in pigeon road transport. John and Linda have been outstanding long distance pigeon fanciers over the last four decades, but hit an all time high in the 2011 season when they won 1st open Central Southern Classic Flying Club Tarbes (550 miles), clocking their champion blue hen, 'Brackbay Star', on the day of liberation. It was great to see John and Linda at the prize presentation and looking so well! John is a great after dinner speaker and in his speech said, 'on behalf of Linda and myself I would like to express our thanks to the committee and members of the London and South East Classic Club, for inviting us to their annual dinner and prize presentation evening. This is the Classic's 25th Anniversary and being one of the founder members it is a privilege and pleasure to be here amongst so many friends and top class fanciers. Thank you and good luck to you all for the 2012 season'. The other principal guests were Mr. & Mrs. Revel of Bamfords who kindly sponsor us for our corn every season and this sponsorship has been carried on for many years, and I would like to thank them for their continuing support.

In his address the L&SECC President, Keith Mott, said, 'John Tyerman and I have been good friends for many years and we have been through several pigeon campaigns together, including serving on the NFC and L&SECC committees and convoying pigeons together. We roomed together when we travelled for the National Flying Club committee meetings and in 2003 we convoyed the International birds to the waiting train in Belgium, when Brian Sheppard of Trowbridge won the race with his wonderful blue chequer cock, Champion 'Legend'. When the members of the NFC sent their birds to their first International, no one really knew what an outstanding success it would be and that British racing history was in the making. That Dax International marked the start of a new era in British long distance pigeon racing and John and I were very proud to be a part of it. The highlight of the 2011 racing season for me was to see my good friend, John Tyerman, win the Central Southern Classic Flying Club's longest old bird race from Tarbes. Johnny has not enjoyed good health over the last couple of years, which has created a worrying and distressing time for his wife Linda and his family in general. I'm happy to say he's back in some good form now. He has spent a lifetime working for our sport, most of the time at the detriment of his own pigeons and for my wife, Betty and me to see him win the CSCFC 'blue Riband' race in such great style was the great thing last season'. Keith informed the members and guests present that three L&SECC members had won 1st open in NFC races in the 2011 season, in the form of Crammond & Langstaff, Mark

Gilbert and Essex partnership of Dave and Gary Heywood who also won 1st open L&SECC Bergerac in 2011. The President pointed out how special the Heywood's performance was last season, winning the L&SECC and NFC in the same season, as was Ken Wise's performance winning two L&SECC races in 2011 and David and Lesley Bridger's performance from the 2011 Tarbes Classic, recording the only bird in the Classic on the day of liberation. Keith mentioned all the 2011 L&SECC winners in his speech and congratulated them on their wonderful performances! In conclusion the President said a special thanks to our secretary, Terri Hoskin, for all her good work last season. He said he couldn't praise Terri enough, she has been just brilliant! Her mum, Geraldine Freeman, has been a great help to her over the 2011 season and a vote thanks to her and partner, Brian Chitty, for cleaning all the club's trophies in preparation for the prize presentation.

The success of this dinner & dance is full credit to our secretary, Terri Hoskin, who works so hard every year in arranging this event and ensuring it is an annual success. Well done Terri! The music was provided by a singing duo and all principal lady guests received bouquets of flowers from the President. Looking around the hall it was nice to see some familiar faces, including two past Tarbes Classic winners, in the form of Darran McFadden and Mark Bulled, who were sitting together with their wives. Darran was the only Tarbes Merit Award winner in the 2011 season and he lifted it with his good blue cock, 'Millie's Blue Boy', and he recorded 49th, 28th, 13th open L&SECC Tarbes (548 miles). A wonderful performance over three seasons! Kenny Wise was there with his whole family and what a credit they are to him and his wife, Lyn, four really nice kids. Lyn made one of her rare visits to the pigeon club and her dad, Peter Carter, was with the party celebrating his 81st birthday. Dereck Bellchambers and Garry Inkley were both in attendance to pick Young Bird Cup and Derek had a lot of his friends at the presentation, which included the premier Three Borders Federation partnership of Dominic and Claire McCoy. Robbie Wilton came over from Chadwell St. Mary in Essex with his family to pick up the 'Fancier of the Year' Trophy for best average for the six main races. Well done to Robbie! Mick Watts of the very successful Martin & Watts of Basildon partnership was at the presentation and brought his good friend Mark Evans. Mark and his partner had driven over 350 miles from Yorkshire to be at the Classic 'do' and afterwards told me it was well worth the effort, they had a great time. Mick Watts' wife got my vote of 'dancer of the night'; she was brilliant and didn't stop all evening! 'Pedro' worked hard selling raffle tickets and made a nice few quid for the club. Many thanks to Peter! The President had a rush of blood and decided to hold a very small squeaker auction at the end of the raffle break. He acquired seven top quality babies from some of the National and Classic winning fanciers in the hall and in a ten minute dash, he auctioned them off, raising just under £700 for the Classic funds. I was talking to our Life Vice President, Gordon Marsh, a few days after the 'do' and he told me it was one of the best L&SECC presentations he had been too, saying it was 'great fun'. I second that! It was a fantastic evening. At the end of the evening, Gordon cleared the top table of glasses and bottles, and his wife Delia danced on the table top with her friends, Ricky Salt and Mr. & Mrs. Mick Watts. A great time was had by all!

The 2011 L&SECC winners were: Alencon – Clive Turner of Capel: Tours – Ken Wise of Isleworth: Tours (Yearling Derby) – Ken Wise of Isleworth: Tarbes – David & Lesley Bridger of East Preston: Bergerac – Dave & Gary Heywood of Laindon: Vire – Mr. & Mrs. Phil Dunstall of Taplow: Vire (old hens) - Mark Gilbert of

Winkfield: Carentan – Ken Wise of Isleworth: Carentan (old hens) – D. J. Cook
Bothers of Wandsworth.

The Classic got the new 2011 season off to a great start in early May, when the members entered 1,811 birds in the Alencon race. For several days before the race, according to the early weather reports, it looked like it was going to be a good race and it proved to be so, with Rube Johnson liberating the convoy at 09.15hrs in to a light South East wind. The Classic's transport manager, Clive Turner of Capel, won the race by a 'country mile' and also took 4th open just for good measure! It was very pleasing to see Clive win this Classic as he is a great worker for our club, maintaining and garaging the L&SESS transporter at his yard near Dorking. He is a busy man and was very hard to pin down for a loft visit, but I finally managed to visit his home set in the wonderful Surrey countryside at Capel, with the view to doing an article. The first pigeon we looked at on my visit to Clive's loft was his 4th open Alencon winner and she was a yearling blue hen, raced on the roundabout system. This game hen had previously won race cards in the Horsham club as a young bird and was bred down from Clive's old Busschaert and Janssen family. Her grand sire won Bergerac twice and her grand dam had a wonderful eye sign, winning many firsts in open eye sign shows. After looking at several premier racers, Clive handed me his 2011 L&SECC Alencon winner, 'The Alencon Cock'. This handsome three year old Staf Van Reet blue pied was raced on the widowhood system and has been one of Clive most consistent racers in recent seasons, winning 15th Federation Lulworth as a young bird, 6th Federation Yelverton and 6th Federation Tours as a yearling, 3rd Federation Kingsdown at two years of age and this season won 1st club Newton Abbot before winning the L&SECC Alencon by 32 ypm clear. Clive tells me he is bred in the purple from a long line of good winners and his great grand dam was Tony Mardon's champion breeding hen, 'Rose'. A brilliant widowhood cock!

The second race of the 2011 was flown from Tours in late May and this event incorporates the annual Yearling Derby. The Classic convoying team, Rube Johnson and Ian Mead, liberated the birds at 06.30hrs in to a no wind situation, but picking up a brisk South / South West wind over the channel the birds romped home, and member enjoyed a good race with excellent returns on the day. I was delighted to report that my good friends, Ken and Lyn Wise of Isleworth, won the Classic in great style! Their winning pigeon was their yearling Gaby Vandenabeele blue chequer pied hen, 'DE A3', and this game celebrate hen won it all, 1st open Classic, 1st open Yearling Derby, £500 Jackpot and the 'Brooker Gold Cup'. Brilliant pigeon racing! She was sent to Tours paired to Ken and was so keen; she fell over when she hit the landing area on the loft. Ken tells me she wasted a lot of time composing her self after the tumble, but still managed to get on the ETS to record her L&SECC win. 'DE A3' has been raced un-paired all this season, flying the Alencon Classic two weeks earlier and has been trained off the south coast, plus one north road toss from Stevenage. Her sire is Ken's outstanding blue Gaby Vandenabeele stock cock, 'DE 195', which has bred several premier racers for the Isleworth loft including: 'DE A3' winner of 1st SW section, 1st open L&SECC Tours, her nest mate 'DE 008' winner of 1st SW section, 4th open L&SECC Guernsey (young bird) and 'DE 130' winner of 1st Three Borders Federation Yelverton (993 birds). This fantastic stock cock was bred by Mark & Dick Evans directly from there champion breeder, 'Benetton' and he in turn was bred from the very of Gaby Vandenabeele's loft. The dam of the Tours Classic winner was 'DE 159', another M. & D. Evans / Vandenabeele, bred by Dave Hawkins and she is a

daughter of his great breeder, 'One So Wonderful'. Outstanding pigeons breeding outstanding pigeons!

The London & South East Classic Club held its Tarbes 'Blue Riband' race in June and this season's 560 mile event turned out to be a very tough affair. The birds were liberated with the CSCFC birds at 07.00hrs on the Friday in a no wind situation at the super market car park liberation site, but soon met up with northerly winds on route which greatly reduced the chances of day pigeons. One game pigeon was clocked on the day, at 21.33hrs, on the south coast and was owned by a delighted David Bridger of East Preston, which is near Littlehampton in Sussex. His Classic winner was his beautiful three year old pencil blue pied hen 'Pipi' and she flew the 524 mile race, being sent sitting 12 day old eggs. She is paired to one of David's premier racing cocks, 'The Star', winner of several premier positions including 1st Federation Messac and 6th Federation Yelverton. Two weeks after the Tarbes Classic, Peter Taylor and I made the 50 mile drive down to the south coast to visit Dave and Lesley and to see their champion pied hen, 'Pipi'. We picked a beautiful July day for the visit and the Bridger's wonderful garden was in full bloom. David told me Lesley is the gardener and I must say she certainly knows her job, the garden looked magnificent! When I asked him about his new champion, he told me, 'the Tarbes winning bird is a 3 year old hen now named 'PIPI', which came about as a result of me first thinking that the quick flash that I saw over the loft was a bat. It was nearly dark and raining, and I had almost given up on timing a day bird and was sitting in the conservatory half hoping but could not clearly see the loft due to rain drops on the glass and the fading light. I initially thought that I had seen a Pipistrelle Bat flick over the loft which is often the case but on closer inspection found my game hen on the landing board. She was sent to the race sitting 12 day old eggs and had previously this year had a few inlands races, then Fougères with the South Coast Federation, Tours with the L&SECC and although being one of those birds that are always thereabouts had never set things alight'.

Two guys I've known and respected since the early 2000's is the father and son partnership of Dave and Gary Heywood of Laindon. I first met the two Essex lads in 2002 when they won the L&SECC Yearling Derby from Tours and came to my home in Claygate to have their first Classic winner, 'Diane's Choice', photographed for an article. Dave and Gary have become racing pigeon legends in Essex over the last few years winning countless top honours in the very best competition including: three times 1st open L&SECC, four times 1st open BICC, twice 1st open Combine and of course 1st open NFC Fougères in 2009 with their champion blue chequer hen, 'Celebration Lass'. Dave and Gary finished off a brilliant 2011 season by winning 1st open NFC Fougères. A fantastic achievement to win 1st open L&SECC and 1st open NFC in the same season!

Dave and Gary have had a good 2011 old bird season and finish it off by sending ten birds to the last L&SECC race from Bergerac (465 miles), clocking five on the day of liberation, and recording 1st, 13th, 26th, 29th and 31st open. The Classic birds were liberated at 05.45hrs into a no wind situation at the Bergerac liberation site, turning south westerly between Poitiers and Nantes and westerly over the channel. A steady race was expected and the anticipation of day birds for this 450 miles race turned in to reality, with 54 first bird verifications being recorded on the day, and some members getting more than one pigeon home on the day. Dave and Gary Heywood hit the

'jackpot' by recording five on the day of liberation and four more by Sunday evening! Their winning pigeon was their good three year old Hartog blue cock, 'Bergerac Dream', and he has been an outstanding pigeon raced on the widowhood system, winning five premier positions in the first 20 open with the L&SECC and BICC. This game cock was given three channel races on his build up to his Bergerac win and was rested for four weeks prior to the marking. He is 100% Hartog, being a son of the champion breeder, 'John Joe', who is the sire of many top racers and grand sire of two 1st open National winners. The partner's second bird from Bergerac was clocked soon after 'Bergerac Dream' to record 13th open and was another premier widowhood cock by the name of 'Young Brian'. This three year old blue pied cock has previously won four top prizes in the Classic and is son of the champion racer 'Gary's Lad', winner of 1st open BICC Falaise, 2nd open BICC Gellainville and 1st Federation Blandford, when mate to a gift De Klak stock hen from the late, great Brian Long.

With the pressure of running his successful haulage business, Philip Dunstall, has not had time to race his pigeons properly for about ten years, but made a come back with his young birds last season with a big 'bang'. Phil tells me he brought in eight pairs of the Leo Van Rijn of Holland pigeons through Brian Hawes and Adrian Duggins about three years ago and these birds have set his success story alight again. The Dunstall loft sent 25 young birds to the first London & South East Classic Club race from Vire (184 miles) and won the race with their good Van Rijn blue chequer hen, 'Dorney View Summer', which was raced on the partner's own celibate system. The two sexes are kept apart all week and are allowed to run together for an hour on marking afternoon. Looking at her pedigree, I notice she is full of the very best of the Van Rijn champions and on her build up to her classic win had the first two Federation races, then two training tosses from Winchester before going to Vire. Phil and Maria clocked their birds on a T3 clock from Vire and recorded eight young birds in 150 seconds, to record 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 16th open. The partners second bird on the clock from Vire was their good blue chequer hen 'Dorney View 961' and she had previously won 8th BB&O Federation Seaton when they took the first ten positions in the open result. She is another Leo Van Rijn pigeon bred down from a long line of premier winners. The husband and wife partnership had three young bird races with Berks, Buck & Oxon Federation prior to winning the L&SECC from Vire and recorded: 4th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 15th Federation Honiton (2634 birds), 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th 10th Federation Seaton (2366 birds), 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 15th, 17th, 18th Federation Exeter (1906 birds). Fantastic young bird racing!

What a brilliant performance by Mark Gilbert, 1st open Old Hens and 3rd open Young Birds from the Vire Classic! Mark is becoming a legend in the in the Classic and National racing pigeon world and wasn't available for comment after the race, but what a brilliant 2011 season he is enjoying, probably one of his best ever. In the last few years Mark Gilbert has won just about every major accolade at National level and of course his biggest triumph was winning the Dax International in 2004. He has been a leading force in the L&SECC for many years, winning 1st open three times, including the longest old bird race from Bergerac in 2006. It was one of the hardest Bergerac races of all time and the Gilbert loft won it in great style recording 1st and 2nd open on a velocity just touching 900 ypm. In 2004 the L&SECC sent 1366 birds to Guernsey for the final young bird race of the season and Mark won it with his good darkness Soontjen blue chequer hen, 'Abigail'. Mark won the L&SECC Guernsey Classic in 2004 and recorded a brilliant season's double, having won the NFC Pau /

Saintes Grand National in the July. 'Abigail' had flown the English Channel three times that season, recording 3rd open UBI Combine Guernsey, well up in the NFC Falaise result and 1st open L&SECC Guernsey. A brilliant hen! She was raced on Mark's semi-widowhood system and on handling her the day after her Classic win I noticed she had cast her third flight. 'Abigail' was bred from two Soontjen stock birds and her dam had bred several Federation winners.

The last L&SECC race of the 2011 season was flown from Carentan in early September and it was nice to see my good friends Ken & Lyn Wise of Isleworth win the young bird Classic and record their second winner in the L&SECC this season, after winning the Tours race in May with their good Gaby Vandabeele hen Champion 'De A3'. The partner's latest Classic winner is now named Champion 'De 006' and she is yet another M. & D. Evans / Gaby Vandabeele and a granddaughter of Champion 'Shadow'. What a family of pigeons, they are winning every where! She was bred out of a son of Champion 'Shadow' when mated to Ken's good M. & D. Evans blue hen, 'DE 008', and she is the nest sister to his 2011 L&SECC Tours winner Champion 'A3'. 'DE 008' has some good form her self racing and recorded 1st SW Section, 4th open L&SECC Guernsey as a young bird in 2010. What a brilliant winning line of Gaby Vandabeele pigeons these are? The Carentan Classic winner, 'DE 006', flew the L&SECC Vire and NFC Fougères races to eggs, being over due for the National, so Ken gave her a big baby five days before she was marked for Carentan. In that week before the Carentan Classic a young blue cock moved into the nest box and started to feed the youngster, so three birds, including 'DE 006', were competing for the box and youngster. She was clocked to win the Classic and the blue cock came a minute after her, with another bird to win 5th and 6th open. Congratulations to Ken and Lyn on a brilliant 2011 season!

The Wandsworth based brothers, David and Jimmy Cook, won the Old Hens Carentan Classic with a game little yearling hen. She won 1st club Messac this season and flew the Saintes National as well as taking cards in the inland programme. She contains the very best Gaby Vandabeele bloodlines from Bob and Danny Carter of the Esher club. She was sent to Carentan paired to a white fantail cock with a pair of young birds in the nest. Congratulation to David and Jim on their great L&SECC success!

Thanks to our Secretary, Terri Hoskin, for all her hard work and producing yet another great prize presentation! Any L&SECC pigeon comments to the Classic Press Officer: Keith Mott: 01372 463480.

TEXT & PHOTOS BY KEITH MOTT.