

TERRY HALEY OF ABBOTS LANGLEY.

Every season I seem to be reporting on the fantastic racing performances put up by my good ol' mate, Terry Haley, and the 2013 season has not been the exception. Terry recently retired from work and on becoming an old age pensioner the 'Watford Wizard' has taken his pigeon racing to an even higher level of success. At the time of writing this report, Terry has won fourteen first prizes, three times 1st Federation, 1st open Combine and lifted the 'Brooker Gold Cup' in the London & South East Classic Club for the second year on the trot. I think it is common knowledge that Terry races North and South Road and will send the same pigeons on both roads and win with them. In July 2013 the Inter Counties SR Federation decided to postpone their Minstead young bird race because of a very bad weather forecast for the Saturday and marked the birds on Saturday evening and held the race on the Sunday. Terry sent 12 youngsters to the North Road race from Newark on the Friday night and won 1st, 2nd, 3rd Watford NRFC, 1st, 2nd, 4th, 8th, 9th, 10th Thames Valley NR Federation on the Saturday. He then had the same pigeons re-marked on the Saturday evening and sent them South Road to Minstead. The birds came really well and the 'Watford Wizard' recorded 1st Boxmoor club (247 birds), 1st Inter Counties Federation (1,216 birds). Brilliant racing by our Terry! He tells me he did the same thing a few years ago, but the opposite way around, when he sent a pigeon South Road that won 1st Boxmoor club Blandford on the Saturday and then following day was sent North Road to record 1st Watford NRFC, 1st Thames Valley NR Federation Newark. Just goes to prove that if pigeons are mentally and physically fit they will come from any direction!

Mid-season in 2013 I did paragraph in the fancy press on this brilliant performance of winning two Federation on the same weekend, but straight after that his young bird performances climbed to ever great heights! Betty and I bred, and gifted a blue Gaby Vandabeele cock to Terry in 2013, and he finished the season by winning the Combine for the Haley loft. The blue cock now named 'The Watford Wizard' has won as a young bird in the 2013 season: 14th Spelthorne open Yeovil (650 birds), flew the L&SECC Guernsey Young Bird Classic (a really bad race), was then clocked from the NFC Carentan (France) Young Bird National to record 415th open (3,330 birds) and seven days later was turned 205 miles North Road to Aycliffe to win 1st club (by 20 minutes), 1st Thames Valley Federation, 1st open North Thames NR Combine. Another example of Terry racing a pigeon South Road, clocking it from France, then turning 205 mile north the following weekend for its first race ever on the North Road and winning the Combine! 'The Watford Wizard' was a darkness youngster, raced to the perch, and was bred from our Vandabeele stock birds, 'Myrtle Olympic' and 'Myrtle Exile'. The key pigeon has been the blue white flight hen, 'Myrtle Exile' and she has produced premier winners with both our two M. & D. Evans stock cocks. Our four Gaby Vandabeele stock birds were all bred by Mark & Dick Evans of Whitley Bridge and 'Myrtle Exile' is a granddaughter of the world famous Champion 'Golden Gaby', winner of 1st open National Orleans (12,875 birds). What a fantastic breeding hen! The Gaby Vandabeele stock birds have really been breeding fantastic and have produced some brilliant racers, including 1st open Combine and 2nd Three Borders Federation in 2013. Brilliant results in the 2013 season with only two pairs of Mark & Dick Evans / Gaby Vandabeele stock birds! He finished the season in great style recording: 11th, 50th, 140th open NFC (932 old hens), sending only three old hens and clocking all three, 72nd, 415th, 436th open NFC Carentan (3,330 young birds) and 18th, 27th, 48th open L&SECC Guernsey (213 old hens). One of the star birds in Terry's loft in 2013 was his champion mealy hen, 'Miss Anticipation' and she recorded: 9th open L&SECC Bergerac (450 miles), 11th open NFC Carentan (old hens), 48th open L&SECC Guernsey (old hens), 148th open L&SECC Guernsey, 85th open BBC Bordeaux (450 miles) and previously won in 2012: 2nd section D BBC Carentan and Best in Show at the Southampton Open Show. A wonderful all round hen!

Terry only usually keeps 14 pairs of pigeons, no stock birds or prisoners if possible, and races on the natural system. He has several lofts, with various trapping systems and uses sifted ballast on the floors, which is raked clean each week. He feeds on the floor amongst the sand and says he has found this satisfactory for the last 40 years. He maintains he feeds beans, peas and tares because the birds fly well on it and you don't change a winning system. The birds are paired up on

14th. February and rear one batch of youngsters and these are weaned off while the old birds are competing in their first Federation races. The pigeons are mostly raced on eggs only, thus ensuring all birds can be sent through the old bird programme, as no more youngsters are required. Terry is a retired fencer by trade and used to quite often takes his birds to work with him, if he is down the road a bit, for training. Terry trains in any weather including rain and maintains, he had to work in the rain so why shouldn't the pigeons work in the rain! The cocks go almost every week and the hens are only left at home if they are due to lay. The loft is usually almost empty on Saturday morning and is cleaned out whilst the birds are away. The Haley young birds are trained well and race the programme, through to 200 miles. He likes to show his birds in the winter months and has won at all the major National shows, including the B.H.W. 'Show of the Year' Blackpool, the 'Old Comrades' show and the R.P.R.A. Southern Region show. He has had pigeons in the British team for the Olympiads for many years and has won 'best bird' in the team. Every winter he is in demand to judge shows and has judged at all the major National events. Terry says his family take an interest in the pigeons and his son, Ryan, raced his own pigeons to his own small loft when he was younger. Terry flies in the Watford N.R.F.C. and his wife, Karen, was the Secretary for 30 years. Karen was an outstanding fancier pigeon fancier in her own right and won the Federation many times when she raced with her late father, Bryn English. A really great pigeon family!

Terry won the 'Brooker Gold Cup' again in the 2013 season making it two years on the trot that this coveted trophy has gone to the Hertfordshire loft. His winner this season was the yearling mealy cock, '03035', and he was flown on the natural system. Terry has a very successful line of mealies in his loft and this cock was bred down from a long line of good channel winners. One of the main trophies in the L&SECC today is the 'Brooker Gold Cup' competed for each season in the Tours Yearling Derby and is won by the first nominated yearling on the open result. When the old London Columbarian Society disbanded a few years ago their magnificent array of trophies were donated to other clubs in 1998 and the 'Brooker Gold Cup' was donated to the L&SECC by the Society. This wonderful trophy is solid gold and is now insured for £5,000. I was chairman of the London Coly in the 1980's and my good friend, the late Dick Brooker of Claygate was president for a number of years at that time and there was always confusion that he had donate the 'Gold Cup'. In fact it was a memorial trophy for the late Mr. W. J. Brooker presented to the London Coly by his wife in 1930. Terry won the 'Brooker Gold Cup' from the Tours Classic in 2012 and what a good season he has enjoyed. His 'Gold Cup' winner was his yearling natural blue pied hen, 'Gold Strike' and she recorded 4th section, 25th open, and was the only bird on the Tours Classic result flying over 300 miles. A great performance! This game hen flew most of the young bird programme in 2011 and recorded 20th section E, 63rd open BBC Fougères. As previously stated the Haley loft races both South and North Road, and Terry tells me his yearlings had raced really well on the North that season, winning a list of positions including 1st Newark, 1st Weatherby and 1st Newark. His good mealy hen, 'Miss Anticipation', had won 2nd section BBC Carentan and 'Kerry's Gift', bred by Terry's friend, Kerry Mellonby of Bridlington, recorded 3rd section E NFC Cholet.

I think I have known Terry and Karen Haley well over 30 years and all that time the 'Watford Wizard' has always been at the top of the game, being one of the premier North Road fanciers in the U.K. He has been a good friend of my family for many years; in fact he is my son, Mark's godfather. His pigeons have won countless major positions through the years and have won 1st Federation from Leicester (68 miles), through to Lerwick (600 miles). He recently tried to count up his Federation wins and tells me they are about 30 firsts, but has won the Federation at least three times from Thurso (492 miles). Terry has won 1st Thames Valley Federation Champion race from Berwick, Perth, Banff, Fraserburgh and Thurso, as well as first in the young bird Federation Championship. He has won 17 R.P.R.A. awards and London Region trophies and medals, and of course 1st open Combine with his champion blue hen, 'Misty Lady'. This wonderful hen died of old age in the autumn of 2005 and has left a dynasty of winners in the Haley loft. The 2004 season saw Terry win 1st open North Thames N.R. Combine from Arbroath, with his good blue cock, 'The Pimpernel' and this champion pigeon went on to record 2nd open North Thames N.R. Combine Stonehaven in 2005. He is from a brilliant winning line of pigeons; with his dam being one of

Terry's good racing hens, 'The Ghost'. The 2013 season has seen Terry win the Federation three times with young birds and 1st open North Thames NR Combine Aycliffe (205 miles) with the Gaby Vandenabeele blue cock, 'The Watford Wizard'. Terry maintains that pedigree forms don't win races and says his loft is based on Channing, Barker, Gits and Westcott's mixed with his original birds to produce winners. His wonderful blue hen, Champion 'Misty Lady', must rate as one of the greatest long distance racing pigeons in the UK, when she was alive.

Terry Haley's pigeon career started at the age of 11 and was greatly encouraged by some school friends who kept pigeons. This was in 1959 and Terry recalls that his first stock were from local farm buildings and anywhere else where pigeons could be caught at night. He says it was a hobby catching them as well as keeping them. In the early days he admired the performances of the late Wally Brewer and Jack Payne of Bedmond, who were winning races regularly at the time. Wally Brewer helped many Watford fanciers and he sold Terry a pair of Barker / Gits pigeons in 1966 for £3, which Terry says proved to be a real bargain. The Haley loft still houses some pigeons bred from the original farm building strays, one of which was the old blue chequer cock, 'Nunnies', which flew from Scotland over 30 times, including eight times Thurso (593 miles). This wonderful old cock was born in 1966, and was in the Guinness Book of Records for his record mileage in racing, winning 1st club Leicester, 2nd club, 5th Federation, 10th open Combine (3,111 birds) Perth, 2nd club Thurso, 2nd club Newark and three other major positions from Thurso. 'Nunnies' is more or less the sire of Terry's loft with 1st Federation and 1st Open winners being bred from him. I hope you have enjoyed this little update on the latest performances of my ol' mate, Terry Haley. Photos can be viewed in the website 'ALBUM'.

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