

RON DOVE of KINGSNORTH

1st OPEN BICC BARCELONA 2016



The following article is a result of an interview with one of the quiet men of the sport. An unsung top class long distance fancier who has been quietly plying his trade and recording excellent results in long distance International races with the BICC without ever receiving the publicity he and his big hearted pigeons deserve. So let's make amends and let Ron tell you in his own words a little of his background and how



Ron & Annette Dove 1st Open BICC Barcelona 2016

he has gone about producing his present day team of long distance pathfinders. Take it away Ron:-

THE BEGINNING.

I first kept pigeons as a teenager in PAR in Cornwall. I knew very little about the sport at that time. No Stock birds just Racers used as Breeders as well, perhaps 20 in total. 2lb jam jars used as drinkers with 3 bricks to keep them upright. Money was short so I had to improvise. Fed mostly Farm corn and occasionally going to the local Corn Merchant to buy 14lb of Maples which was a big deal then. Cycling to the nearest clock to time in, all uphill about one mile!

I packed up pigeons in 1955 as the army called me to do National Service and never came back into it until I took up a job as Gamekeeper on an Estate near Plymouth in 1985. My next door neighbour kept

pigeons and of course the bug bit. I raced birds in Plymouth and was 1st Section BBC Barcelona but it was very difficult to race pigeons because of the proliferation of Hawks. I sold most of my birds but kept the Stock birds to take with me to Ashford to start again.



The loft of 2016 Barcelona winner Ron Dove

THE MOVE TO KENT

We moved to Ashford in Kent in 1999 when I retired and started up again with a self built 40 ft loft, with a great help from Steve White, formerly a fancier from Plymouth. Sheets of ply on a 2" x2" frame. Not as smart as a lot of lofts are, but with a good airflow. The birds seem to love it, so what does good looks matter, if the birds are happy. They are kept as natural as possible on my own system of Roundabout.

THE LOFT.

They go out 365 days a year, summer and winter. When separated every other day in all weathers in the winter. The Loft faces North East and has small section 8 ft x 4ft for a stock loft they - all fly out. The round about section for hens measures 8ft x 6ft with two more sections for racers one 8ft x 6ft and one 10ft x 8ft. The nest boxes are 2ft x 2feet. There is also a corridor to move Cocks and Hens on Roundabout. All sections have grid floors. The grids are only removed once a year and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, and then replaced

with newspaper under to make it easier to clean next time. Perches and Nest Boxes are cleaned daily.

MANAGEMENT.

All birds are mated Mid February, they are allowed to rear a single YB, mostly from stock birds, some rear their own if I fancy trying a youngster from a certain pair of racers. The racers pick their own Mates. Before racing begins all racers get about 4 x 20 mile tosses then all go to the first East of England Race



from Boves in France – 111 miles, including yearlings as their first ever race of their lives. I use the East of England CC for training. Young Birds are not raced, they get about 4 x 20 miles tosses and that is it. All training is done against the wind in any case. I see no point in training with a tail wind, that does not put muscle on birds, I sometimes enter birds into BICC Poitiers, about 300 miles, to get time on wing, before the Internationals start. Of course, this did not happen this year, so the greatest distance the birds had this year was 215 miles with East of England CC and then into Internationals, although I could not send to Pau or Agen as they had not had enough time on wing until they had flown Pithiviers with East of England CC.



Ron Dove holding his 2016 BICC Barcelona winner

Birds are not trained much between races unless I deem it is needed as on Open Hole they seem to keep themselves fit. If I do train it is only from 20 miles or so. Here I have to give thanks to my wife, Annette, who does all the training for me.

As I said I do not race Young Birds but just allow them to mature with no stress and left to grow naturally into good Yearlings, who have their first race across the Channel at 111 miles. All birds are fed higher protein mixes for breeding but when racing is about to begin I change over to a Widowhood mix with added Maize. All birds are fed in their boxes apart from Roundabout hens who are hopper fed.

BLOODLINES

My birds are a Heinz 57 mix, mostly made up from my old family with birds swapped with friends namely Duncan Harvey near Land's End Area, Cornwall, Mick Sheehy, Andy Girling, Trevor Sheavills, Billy Lynch, all local fanciers in and around Ashford with an odd sale bird if I fancied it, but they all have to toe the line by being able to fly the Channel. In other words selection by the basket and by this method I have evolved a family of my own which knows nothing but the Channel.

As regards getting pleasure, nothing gives me more than winning BICC Barcelona.

"At Last"

GB11A17453

**1st Sec ES 1st Open British International
Championship Club Barcelona 2016
Raced by R. Dove, Kingsnorth.**



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NOTABLE PERFORMANCES.

2003 35th Open BBC Palamos

2004 6th Open NFC Pau on the day

2005 15th Open L & SE Classic Pau

2005 15th Open BICC Dax

2007 3rd Open BICC Pau

2009 19th Open BICC Barcelona

2010 5th Open BICC Barcelona - same bird as 2009

2010 15th Open BICC Tarbes

**2011 9th Section 14th Open - BICC Barcelona Same hen as 2010
BICC Tarbes 2010**

2011 28th Open BICC Agen

2012 11th Open BICC Barcelona

2012 25th Open BICC Barcelona

2012 7th Open BICC St Vincent on the day

2012 19th Open BICC St Vincent on the day

2012 5th Open BICC Perpignan

2012 15th Open BICC Perpignan

2012 54th Open BICC Perpignan

2013 60th Open BICC St Vincent same hen as first Barcelona this year

2013 11th Open BICC Barcelona

2013 21st Open BICC Barcelona

**2014 26th Open BICC Barcelona same hen is 1st Open Barcelona this
year**

MEDICATION & SUPPLEMENTS

I use Parastop at the beginning of the year and Orego Stim two or three times a week, plus Matrix, grit and mineral blocks. No other supplements.

Favourite type of bird - not too deep in the keel, longish cast, sits nice in the hand but if they win that's OK by me. If I was only able to use one product/supplement it would be OREGO STIM.

In closing I would like to mention the East of England Continental Club with one of the best Secretary's in the country - Tony Batterbee. Such a well run club sending about 700 plus per race, all across the channel. These provide wonderful training for the Internationals.

There you have it then "straight from the horses mouth". A simple no nonsense but incredibly effective system of management which has brought Ron consistent success in his races of choice- long distance Internationals, over a long period of time.

Congratulations Ron and here's wishing you every success in the future.

Gareth Watkins