

PREECE BROTHERS & SONS of CWMTILLERY

1st Open BICC Falaise YB & AA Race 2016

Outstanding cross border results in all competitions.



***Preece Brothers & Sons of Cwmtillery 1st Open BICC Falaise YB.
The late Henry Preece centre back row***

The above partnership consisted for many years of brothers Colin and Henry Preece and Colin's two sons, John and Leigh. However, Henry sadly passed away in 2015 after suffering a debilitating illness for a number of years. Nevertheless the partnership has continued under the stewardship of John Preece ably assisted by his brother Leigh and overseen by their father Colin, who himself is now severely restricted in his movements.

To describe the partnerships' results over the past 40 or so years as outstanding would be a massive understatement - something akin to describing Pele or the late Bobby Moore as "good" footballers. The partners have been fanciers out of the top drawer for more than four decades. I can well remember, visiting the partners in the late 1980's following their great Lerwick National win of 1986 clocked on the day at 590+ miles. Since that time they have wracked up something like 14 x 1sts; 13 x 2nd Open and 12 x 3rds in National races, and their occasional forays into cross border classic racing has seen the name of Preece Bros & Sons feature prominently in the results culminating in their National win with the BICC in this year's difficult young bird National from Falaise, a race in which their YB National winner

finished at the top of the pile beating the winner of the old bird race by some distance.

SOME OF THE HISTORY.

The partners joined the Gwent Greater Distance club in the winter of 2007/8 with the intention of taking up the challenge of International racing with the BICC and their results in 2008 old bird racing indicated what was to come:- 11th sect 18th Open BICC Falaise 2 4,298 birds; 1st GGDC, 1st section 62nd Open BICC Saran; 2nd GGDC 3rd section 61st Open BICC Tours; 3rd GGDC 3rd section 37th Open BICC Alencon. Add to these positions a top ten finish in the Welsh SRNFC Tarbes race at 600 + miles; 1st Open Welsh SRNFC Bergerac 500+ miles [8th NW sect 52nd Open CSCFC] and one week later 1st & 11th Open Welsh SENFC Giessen 520+ miles in an absolute disaster of a race with not much more than twenty or so birds clocked in race time from a convoy of close on 1,300, all flying over 500 miles. This constitutes an outstanding season's racing in anyone's estimation. The performance of the partners two year old hen in the Giessen race earned them the Queen's Cup, a trophy awarded each season to the pigeon with the best performance or series of performances in races over 300 miles and flown under WHPU rules.

This extremely high standard of results has continued unabated in the intervening years culminating in their first National win with the BICC in 2016. The only thing that has changed is the fact that the partners no longer compete on the South East route but have decided to concentrate all their efforts into South road racing with the Welsh SRNFC; BICC; NFC and CSCFC.

THE LOFT.



The reader might therefore assume that the Preece set up is a big, professionally run affair, with hundreds of pigeons housed in a massive range of lofts. Professionally run it certainly is, but as for big – think again, the photographs that accompany this report demonstrate just how small the set up is – which must give great encouragement to other back garden fanciers. As long as you have birds of the right calibre and the skill to get the best out of the best of these, then you have nothing to fear from the big team boys.



The loft is a 34 ft x 8ft L shaped structure. Three sections with nest boxes house the racing cocks, whilst the hens occupy the remaining section that has an aviary attached. A 10 ft x 8ft stock loft also has an aviary and this houses 16 pairs of stock birds, whilst the 64 youngsters reared annually are housed in a separate 12 ft x 8 ft section. Once the stock birds have finished rearing they are separated for the year and the youngsters have access to their section in addition to their own 12 ft x 8 ft section, so there's certainly no overcrowding here.



MANAGEMENT.

The race team, which amounts to 30 pairs, are mated in mid February and are allowed to rear a youngster and sit their second round eggs for 8 days, at which time the birds are separated and race the remainder of the season on round about. The old birds get something like five training tosses before racing starts and are then kept fit by twice daily home exercise until the build up to specific target races, at which time individual birds are trained specifically for those races, usually from around 50 miles. The race cocks are fed individually in their boxes and are allowed to eat their fill at each meal time following their twice daily exercise periods. There is always corn still in the pots when it comes to each feed. The hens however are controlled more strictly and are allowed access to the same food mix as the cocks but only for 10 minutes, after which time all remaining food is removed. The racers are never fed break down mixtures – they are fed a mixture made up from two sport mixes at all times and each night they get a special treat of sunflower hearts plus a pinch of Hormoform.

The usual routine is for the cocks to be airborne by 5.30 am each morning. They are allowed to do as they please for 90 minutes before being called in for their early morning feed. The hens are then released for their morning exercise and fed in after one hour. In the evenings, all birds are forced to fly for 1 hour, until the build up to the National races, when the hen's get just one 1 hour exercise session per day but are trained every other day from around 50 miles.

During a visit to the Preece set up I handled a number of their top pigeons including the following:-



Preece Bros Benoni 1st National Bergerac

The winner of the Bergerac National is quite some pigeon. This 5 year old cock, named "Benoni" [see accompanying photo] has won the following positions in classic competition:-

7th sect 7th Open National Saintes as a yearling[12 hrs on the wing];49th sect 67th Open National Cholet as a two year old before being hawked and retired for the season. As a 3 year old 3rd sect 5th Open National Bergerac[9th sect 13th Open CSCFC] over 15 hours on the wing .The 2007 season saw him take a week to negotiate the 600 mile trip from Pau and this leads on to the 2008 season where he was clocked to win 3rd Section 37th Open BICC Alencon and 33rd section BICC Saran in the build up to the Bergerac National. His race preparation entailed two short in land races on the east/west route, the aforementioned BICC channel races, followed by four weeks rest and just one short 50 mile race and four private training tosses of approximately 40 miles. Once again, we see in the breeding of this long distance National winner, the influence of the great Dutch long distance families. His sire is a Jan Aarden containing the bloodlines of Smaraagd 2 and Dolle 2, whilst his dam was gifted to the Preeces by Tony Haynes of Ponderosa UK at Weymouth and contains the bloodlines of the Wim Muller Aardens. This medium sized dark chequer pied cock handled like silk and had one of the best full dark circles of eyesign I've ever seen

Next, we move on to the Welsh SENFC winner from Giessen. This 2 year old hen was sent sitting 10 day eggs as she had started to show an interest in some of the other round about hens. She contains the very best of the old Lee and Cooper Lefebre Dhaenen x Verheyes via Bob Lee, crossed with Van Loons from Richie Ryder and Lefebre Dhaenen courtesy of Jeff Davies.

Her preparation for her Queen's Cup winning performance from Giessen included four short races through to Maidstone [160 miles] followed by three channel races with the GGDC and BICC in one of which she was 7th Section BICC. Following these she



was re mated and received 2 x 50 mile tosses and a couple at 40 miles which should have taken her 1hrs flying time. Unfortunately [or fortunately] she took 4 hours as the hens were well split up and some took all day to return home. This Queen's Cup winning hen was small

to medium in the hand with short stubby legs and a strong thick neck, typical of the old Planet Brothers Van Loons.

A magnificent blue cock winner of 10 x 1sts whilst racing plus a 2nd Open National and five other top twenty finishes in National races was also part of the impressive race team. This cock's half brother also won third and fourth Open in National races, returning to win 3rd National with all the secondaries ripped out of one wing! Both these top class cocks were bred from the phenomenal "Ryder Hen" bred by Richie Ryder from the very best of the original Planet Brothers Van Loons. She is dam, grand dam etc of a host of top class performers up to and including National level.

During my short visit to the partners' lofts I also handled the "Saintes Cock" winner of 8th National Saintes and 1st Open National Herstal among many other top performances. He was slightly deeper keeled than the other birds handled and yet he is now the number one stock cock being responsible for scores of winning pigeons at all levels of competition, especially when mated to an old grizzle hen which contains the bloodlines of Burgham Brothers and the old Morgan & Cook Atwells.



The 2009 season was another one full of top class performances at classic level with 3 x 1st National wins including 1st National Tarbes, plus 2 x 2nd National and 3 x 3rd National. The partners' were also awarded their second successive Queen's cup.

As I mentioned earlier in this article, the Preece partnership has now won FOURTEEN Nationals, a record that is unlikely to be surpassed, although Ron Scammell and Paul Peploe, not forgetting Derek Flowers might have something to say about that!

During the 2010 old bird campaign the success story continued. In the Tours National race at 350+ miles the partners clocked a yearling round about cock a Richie Ryder Van Loon x Ponderosa Troye Janssen for 1st section 2nd Open National. This performance was followed by 1st section 4th Open National Reims and 2nd section 11th Open National Metz, both performances achieved by the same pigeon, a two year old round about cock, a grand son of 1st National Herstal and the

champion stock cock “One Leg”. Next we move on to the Tarbes National and the 2009 Tarbes National winning cock was clocked once again to win 4th section 4th Open. This great long distance racer was also entered simultaneously in the CSCFC race where he won 5th section 21st Open.

So to the present day and as mentioned earlier not much has changed except for the fact that the partners now concentrate all their efforts into South Road racing with the aim of winning one of the big Classic Nationals and the main one is the CSCFC Bergerac National where they have come oh so close on a number of occasions.

Also over the last few years, a small family of Deweerdt stock has been developed with introductions from Andy Gregson and Geoff & Catherine Cooper. These have produced some really good racers when paired together and also when crossed in with their old channel family. In fact this year’s BICC Falaise YB National winner proved to be from the Deweerdt line crossed with the partners’ “Old Family” bloodlines. The Falaise winner is a medium to small chequer hen flown on darkness system, now named “Gwasted Polly”. She was sent smooching



with an old cock and was our pick of the young birds. “Polly” was our Llanhilleth b/b and is a full sister to our 2015 gold cup winner. Her sire is our no 1 stock cock “Gwasted Nikon” sire of numerous channel performers for us from 190 miles to 606 miles being a combination of all our old blood Lefebvre/Dhaenen/Burgham

Bros and Morgan & Cook. The dam was a gift to our henry from Geoff and Catherine Cooper being a direct daughter of champion Wriggler. She has also bred numerous other good pigeons for us.

“Polly” has had three races in the build up to Falaise the longest last week at 110 miles.

That then is a report on one of the most successful lofts ever to have flown pigeons into Wales. Readers should take note of this loft’s amazing past winning record in Welsh Nationals – it is nothing short of phenomenal and they are now, well on their way to emulating that success, in cross border Nationals.

Gareth Watkins