

*Take it Easy and enjoy your sport.*

*A loft profile on Alan Annis of Wingham in Kent.*

*4<sup>th</sup> sect 5<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Perpignan 2017.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> sect 2<sup>nd</sup> Open BICC Marseille 2017.*

*5<sup>th</sup> sect 12<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Agen 2017.*

*6<sup>th</sup> sect 13<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Barcelona 2017.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> sect 10<sup>th</sup> Open BBC Bordeaux 2017.*

*All the above positions achieved in long distance National and International racing with Old Birds in 2017. No wonder Alan is enjoying his sport!! As a result of the above performances, in addition to Alan's past record in long distance and marathon races with the BICC, I thought a long overdue loft report was thoroughly deserved. Thankfully, Alan was fully cooperative in the making of this report and we both hope that someone somewhere, will glean some information that might encourage them to take up the baton in distance racing and just as importantly enjoy the sport along the way.*



*Alan Annis and Simon Knowles well stocked up to celebrate another good long distance performance*

## ***THE BEGINNING.***

*Alan was introduced to the sport some 50 years ago when he picked up a streeter that he kept in the garden shed, soon to be followed by gifts from fanciers in the locality.*

*Alan's father in law, Cyril Keam of Whitstable, was also a successful fancier being the owner of a pigeon named "Jungle Jim". Cyril and Alan spent many years together training and racing etc.*

*Alan's fondest memory of many long distance successes, was when he clocked Gloria's Pride to win the London and South Coast Combine from Le Mans.*

## ***THE LOFTS.***

*The present lofts have been sited at Malibu Grains for the past 20 years and are in close proximity to Alan's good friend and mentor Simon Knowles's lofts. The lofts are almost constantly being renovated as every couple of years Alan adds a bit more to the overall structure.*

*The main loft measures some 36 feet in length with a 2 foot roof overhang front and back. This loft originally belonged to Len Jeavons who timed a San Sebastian bird on the day racing to it so Alan thought the ventilation must be right and has left well alone.*



***Alan Annis Lofts***

## **MANAGEMENT.**

*Alan is not an enthusiast of the scraper and so keeps the birds, both young and old on deep litter, as he says "I don't make pigeons hard work."*

*A fairly hefty team of around 100 racers are housed as Alan competes in lots of races on a Saturday, sometimes with as many as 4 or 5 on most weekends. The stock birds are shared jointly with Simon Knowles. The race birds have open hole from early morning until dusk and all are raced Natural. The stock birds which are housed at Simon's lofts are mated as and when Simon feels appropriate with the racers being mated at the end of February. This is a simple process as Alan simply opens up the sections and allows all race birds together and they are allowed to choose their own mates. This obviously keeps them happy in the extreme if Alan's results are anything to gauge by.*

*Old birds are trained with the Wingham club transporter every Wednesday from 50 miles. The rest of the week they have an open loft with no forced flying just left to do as they please.*

*The old birds have 2 or 3 of these mid week trainers and then go into the East of England Continental Club's first race from Boves about 100 miles.*

*However, if there is a special race coming up that Alan has set his sights on then he likes to give the candidates a single up from Devils Dyke (Brighton) about 60 miles in preparation.*

*His preferred nest condition for the birds destined for the long races is sitting eggs but he's quite happy to allow the birds to tell him what they prefer.*

## **YOUNG BIRDS.**

*The Annis young birds are trained as much as possible. The young birds housed in one loft, amounting to a team of around 30 birds, are entered in BICC and NFC races - just for a bit of fun at the end of the season as it's a long winter! The young birds are raced totally naturally and are allowed to eat their fill at each meal with no rationing – but also no food is wasted.*

## **FEEDING & SUPPLEMENTS.**

*Stock birds and racers are hopper fed exclusively on Bucktons VIP and nothing else except for some peanuts and sunflower hearts in the build up to an International race so as to increase the fat content in the diet.*

*The birds must have plenty of fuel in the tank for these “long haul” flights.*

*Matrix grit supplement is hand fed to the birds as a treat and Harkers Wonderbird is added to the drinking water from time to time. In the past Alan has also used Gerdon 1 with good results. The only other supplement given is the product Sliepsanol which is added to the drinking water before the longer races and at least once a month throughout the year.*

*Parastop is used before the start of the season to safeguard against paratyphoid and then the birds are treated for canker from time to time during the season.*



*Alan Annis celebrating his 13th Open Barcelona 2017*

## **BLOODLINES.**

*Most of the birds housed are bred by Simon Knowles but Alan does introduce some new birds occasionally. These are usually direct sons and daughters of BICC winners. However, two recent introductions that are starting to show promise are six birds brought in from the Padfield Family and four from Steve and Lesley Wright at the House*

*of Aarden. The breeding policy is also quite basic and founded on sound common sense – Alan and Simon pair best to best and then let the basket sort out the survivors.*

*The best bird this year has been his winner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Open BICC Marseilles. This was bred from a son of “Invincible Detori” and a grand daughter of “Padfield’s Invincible” bred by House of Aarden. He likes small pigeons – “the smaller the better” he says.*

*Some recent performances of note are:-*

*2015.*

*22<sup>nd</sup> Open BICC Barcelona; 36<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Agen; 56<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Pau.*

*2016.*

*14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Perpignan; 15<sup>th</sup> Open BICC St Vincent; 14<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Barcelona; 48<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Agen.*

*2017.*

*145<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Pau; 12<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Agen; 13<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Barcelona; 47<sup>th</sup> & 50<sup>th</sup> Open BICC St Vincent; 2<sup>nd</sup> Open BICC Marseille; 5<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Perpignan & 10<sup>th</sup> Open BBC Bordeaux.*

*The reader will note the gradual improvement in the performances year on year. Recognition should also be given to the fact that in the International races quoted above, the pigeons not only have to cover the huge distances from the race points in southern France and north east Spain, but they also must have the intelligence and single mindedness to break from the thousands of pigeons racing to lofts throughout Europe. There are “no tramlines” in International races.*

#### **THE FUTURE OF THE SPORT.**

*Alan believes that it would be better if we could stop all these “Mickey Mouse” clubs being formed. These types of club usually have just one good flyer and 4 “also rans” amongst their membership. They should be made to amalgamate with bigger clubs to increase competition.*

*I’ll let Alan have the last word:-*

*“I would like to thank Simon and Sarah Knowles for always looking after me. Simon has been my rock over the past years and usually manages to stop me doing something daft!! Pigeon racing is such fun on a Saturday, really enjoyable, a pack of beer and loads of racing what could be better?”*

*My thanks to Alan for answering my questions, here's wishing you many more years of enjoyment from the sport that you so obviously love.*

*Gareth Watkins*