

## ***AN INTERVIEW WITH DEAN CHILDS OF BASILDON***



***TRIPLE NATIONAL WINNER WITH OLD BIRDS IN 2017***

***Dean Childs 1st Open BICC Pau International [Mont de Marsan] with his Dad John and young son***

***To win one National race in a fancier's lifetime would be good, but to win three National races in the space of a few weeks is bordering on the incredible! However, this is exactly what a young Essex fancier, Dean Childs of Basildon, achieved during the 2017 old bird season.***

***These National wins were:-***

***1<sup>st</sup> Open BICC National Mont De Marsan [substitute for Pau International].***

***1<sup>st</sup> Open BICC St Vincent International.***

***1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Open BBC National Fougères.***

*After much cajoling on my part, an extremely reticent Dean finally agreed to an interview and this article is the result of my “interrogation” of Dean.*

## ***The BEGINNING.***

*Pigeons have always been in Dean’s family and as a young boy he can recall listening to stories of when his Father and Grandfather raced together in London. Dean’s Aunt and Uncle have also always raced pigeons and the young Dean greatly enjoyed visiting them and seeing the pigeons at their home.*

*The first loft was built for him by his Dad and measured just 12 ft x 8ft and had a tiled roof. The birds were acquired from his Dad and uncle and in fact Dean raced in partnership with his Dad for a few years.*

*However, this first foray into pigeon racing was relatively short lived as Dean moved to Ireland for a number of years in order to improve his career prospects.*

*On his return to Essex at the age of 23 he bought his first house and the first priority was to erect a new loft and get some pigeons to race, this time in his own name.*

*The 2017 season was only the third season of racing to his present location and what a season it proved to be.*



***John and Dean Childs outside the lofts***

## **THE LOFT.**

*At present Dean houses 34 pairs of stock birds in a self-built 16ft by 10ft loft with an additional 16ft by 6ft aviary attached.*

*The Yearling and Old Bird race teams are housed in a 6 section 36ft by 9ft Tranter loft. This loft is separated into 2 large sections, one for cocks and the other for hens and all pigeons are raced on a form of celibate/roundabout system.*

*The young birds race to two 9ft by 6ft Blakes lofts which have a 6ft by 6ft aviary attached to one end. The early rounds of youngsters are put on the darkness system in one of the lofts and then all other rounds are placed into the second loft with aviary and left on natural. Cocks and Hens in both lofts race together and are allowed to pair up if they choose.*

*The old bird lofts have grided floors and these are cleaned out every other week with boxes and perches cleaned daily.*

*Young birds are weaned onto a deep litter of straw and remain on it for the entire year.*

*Dean currently keeps around 100 young birds and as many old birds as are left at the end of the season, as Dean says - "If they manage to come through the racing season then they have earned their perch!"*

*As mentioned earlier, all Old birds are raced on a celibate/roundabout system with young birds raced to the perch.*

## **MANAGEMENT.**

*The team of stock birds are usually paired up in January.*

*The old bird race team are never paired up until after the season has finished. They are then allowed to choose their own mate and rear one pair of babies after old bird racing finishes.*

*In preparation for the old bird race season the birds are exercised around the loft at home for up to one hour once a day to get them fit. They are then given one 5 mile, two 12 mile, two 30 mile and one 50 mile training tosses before the first club race which is usually around 90 mile to Dean's loft.*

*The birds are not forced to fly for the first few weeks of home exercise. After this loosening up period Dean begins to flag them in stages starting at 20 mins, 30 mins, 45 mins and then up to one hour on the wing around home in preparation for their first training toss.*

*Cocks and Hens are exercised once a day every morning.*

*Young birds are then given an open loft all afternoon every day.*

*Once old bird racing starts the old birds are rarely trained privately as they are raced every week inland and then at least every other week across the channel with the main objective being the BICC National and International programme.*

*Young birds are trained twice weekly from 50 miles in between races on Terry Bentham's training service.*

*The young birds are well educated in the year of their birth as Dean tries to get as much experience into them as is possible. To this end they are raced in the club every week and trained hard before and throughout the young bird season. He usually likes the youngsters to have a couple of Channel races but this year they were all kept to inland racing only. Youngsters are raced on both the darkness and Natural systems. The first round goes onto the darkness system all subsequent rounds are raced natural.*

#### **FEEDING.**

*Dean uses exclusively Versele-Laga corn for all of the pigeons and they are all fed in hoppers with as much as they want to eat.*

*He firmly believes that Versele-Laga have got the balance correct and there is no need to change it. The only modification is the addition of fats in the final days building up to the National races.*

#### **BLOODLINES.**

*In order to create a good family of pigeons Dean believes that you need a good family base to work from, one which is proven at your desired distance and one that is proven in competition at the top level. In his opinion you need look no further in this country than Mark Gilbert as Mark's pigeons possess everything, speed, endurance, intelligence fantastic pedigree and all round quality. Not surprisingly therefore, Dean went to Mark and bought from his best. To this base family he has only ever brought in direct children of champion pigeons from elsewhere.*

*The most successful acquisition so far has been 'Chalice King' a direct son of Alwyn Hill's champion "Wing Down", which, when paired to a*

*number of Mark Gilbert hens has bred 2 x 1<sup>st</sup> National winners, a 4<sup>th</sup> National winner and many other top National performers.*



***‘Chalice King’***



***‘Chalice Queen’***

*Once he has the top bloodlines then Dean sets about crossing the various bloodlines for racing as he believes the youngsters to be stronger and more robust when cross bred. However, he likes to inbreed to certain lines to preserve the bloodline for stock purposes. Mark Gilbert has proved to be a great influence in recent years and Dean regards him as a real gentleman within the sport, who does much more for the sport than most people realise.*

#### **SOME TOP PERFORMANCES.**

*1<sup>st</sup> National Mont De Marsan- ‘Chalice Darcey’ was Dean’s first National winner and therefore will always be very special.*

*"Chalice Darcey"*  
**GB15X20471**  
1st East Sect 1st Open British International  
Championship Club Mont de Marsan 2017  
Owned & Raced by  
Dean Childs, Basildon

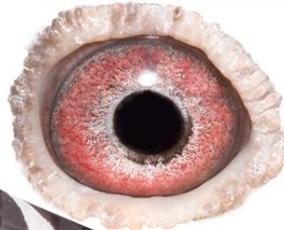


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*1<sup>st</sup> National St Vincent- 'Chalice Sidney' because he has never fancied a pigeon to win more than he did him that day.*

*"Chalice Sidney"*

**GB15N01307**  
1st East Sect 1st Open British International  
Championship Club St Vincent 2017  
Owned & Raced by  
Dean Childs, Basildon



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*Taking the first 3 National positions in the BBC National was also a massive thrill for Dean completing an unbelievable season for him in 2017.*

GB15X20462

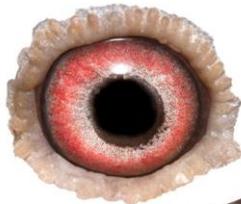


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***“Chalice Dream” 1<sup>st</sup> BBC Fougères 2017***

GB16N79617



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***“Chalice Joy” 2<sup>nd</sup> BBC Fougères 2017***

GB16B09503



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***“Chalice Supreme” 3<sup>rd</sup> BBC Fougères 2017***

*Other top 20 National results are:-*

*1<sup>st</sup> National Mont De Marsan 2017*

*1<sup>st</sup> National St Vincent 2017*

*1<sup>st</sup> National Fougères 2017*

*2<sup>nd</sup> National Guernsey YB 2016*

*2<sup>nd</sup> National Fougères 2017*

*3<sup>rd</sup> National Tours 2012*

*3<sup>rd</sup> National Fougères 2017*

*5<sup>th</sup> National Guernsey YB 2014*

*6<sup>th</sup> National Guernsey YB 2015*

*7<sup>th</sup> National Alençon 2015*

*8<sup>th</sup> National Alençon 2015*

*8<sup>th</sup> National Guernsey YB 2016*

*9<sup>th</sup> National Guernsey OB 2014*

*10<sup>th</sup> National Guernsey 2013*

*11<sup>th</sup> National St Vincent 2017*

*13<sup>th</sup> National Agen 2015*

*20<sup>th</sup> National Tours 2015*

*20<sup>th</sup> National Alençon 2016*

*All the above National positions achieved in the short time that Dean has been at his present location.*

*I asked Dean to outline some of the top pigeons he has raced in recent seasons and here's what he had to tell me:-*

*“Chalice Darcey”- 1<sup>st</sup> Open BICC National ‘Mont de Marsan’ – She has a pedigree to die for being a granddaughter of 3 champions i.e. ‘Southfield Supreme’, “The L Ring Hen” and ‘Wing Down’ This was the first time she had been sent to a long distance race over 500 miles and she is now in my stock loft!*

*‘Chalice Sidney’-1<sup>st</sup> BICC National ‘St Vincent’ & 27<sup>th</sup> BICC National ‘Mont De Marsan’-He is a very special pigeon who oozes class, from the Mont De Marsan National he came at 7.30am on the second day and showed me that he had the ability to win a National. That National win came on his next time of asking when he flew the 535 miles on the day from St Vincent.*

*1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> BBC Fougères – with ‘Chalice Dream’ ‘Chalice Joy’ and ‘Chalice Supreme’- All 3 hens came together. ‘Chalice Dream’ at 2 years old had shown plenty of promise being my 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> pigeon home on many occasions so it was no surprise to me that she managed to win a National. Both ‘Chalice Joy’ and ‘Chalice*

*Supreme' were late bred youngsters having their first ever channel race and so had not had a chance previously to show their class.*

*'Chalice Trojan'-The 2<sup>nd</sup> Pigeon on both occasions to my 2 long distance National winners, scoring himself 24<sup>th</sup> National 'Mont De Marsan' and 11<sup>th</sup> National 'St Vincent', he is still in the race team for next year and I have very high hopes for him!"*

#### **MEDICATION & SUPPLEMENTS.**

*Dean never self diagnoses or medicates his pigeons as he thinks it is possibly the biggest mistake any fancier could make.*

*He prefers to use the expertise of two leading vets in this country to diagnose a problem and then he treats accordingly. As for supplements he uses Matrix grit and mineral and he is also a big believer in electrolytes awaiting all pigeons on return from a race.*

*To finish this report here are Dean's views on how to progress the sport:-*

*"I think the sport has come a long way in cleaning up its image to the general public in recent times but the following points must always be at the top of the sports priorities:-*

- 1. The people in charge at all levels must strive to continuously keep the sport clean and fair.*
- 2. Collection of lost birds must be adhered to by all fanciers as this is our biggest interaction with the general public and our biggest opportunity to show that racing pigeons are cared for and in good hands.*
- 3. Although the long term future of our sport desperately needs more young people to get involved a more realistic target audience would probably come from targeting the retired generation looking for a new hobby or past time which in turn could filter down to their children and more importantly their grandchildren.*

*To do this properly we as a sport need to invest into advertisement in the correct areas*

- 4. Lastly money talks and most people outside of the sport cannot understand why we do what we do with no attractive prize to try and win for all the effort, therefore we need to find a suitable way of generating more funds so clubs can put up for grabs larger and more frequent prizes.*

*All that is left is for me to offer Dean my congratulations on a truly outstanding season's racing at National and International racing.*

*Well done young man and here's wishing you many years of continued success in the future.*

*Gareth Watkins*

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