



● Steed Bros., West Fed. Champions in 1956 at their Loft

5247 when paired to one of the Berry Black Hens. She topped the N.W. Fed from Penrith as a youngster and then kept for stock. She is likely to be the mainstay of the family for some years yet.

Blue Cock 46N3163, which goes back to 'Spotty'. Although he has crossed the Channel, his claim to fame is as the Sire of 5099, the Cock which won from Dol in 1951 and Rennes in 1952, when he was the biggest individual prizewinner with over £400. There are four birds in the loft which have crossed the channel, all of them being the result of inbreeding 3163 with a daughter of 5099.

The chief hopes for 1957 lie with Pied Cock 54NW800, bred from a daughter of 3163 and a son of 5099. This was their winner in the hard Christchurch race last year and was later sent to Dol, when he was timed the 2nd day. There are two daughters off this cock when mated to the Berry Black Hen and they were my choice from the racing hens.

Conclusion

STEED BROS. have figured in most National Prize Lists since about 1930, their best being in 1952—41st Open with 5099, £425. They have also taken 1st & 5th Dol. In Laurieston, 2nd largest club in Scotland, they have been three-times C. A. winners in 4-years and this year were champions of the N.W. Fed, winning the Bennett Memorial Trophy. They have now won outright the OB & CA Cups in Laurieston.

Two very nice chaps who love their pigeon racing for its own sake and who are completely unaffected by any success which comes their way.

'The Bairn.'

April, 1957

SCIENTIFIC FEEDING (from page 9)

The most important experiments yet carried out on racing pigeons to determine the effect of proteins on their ability to work were those made by the late J. Kilpatrick of Belfast. In my opinion his work has never been accorded the great credit due to it and too few fanciers study his writings on the subject. Mr. Kilpatrick discovered that a racing pigeon worked best on a diet of 15% to 17% of protein in a grain mixture and he described a very simple method for ensuring the maintaining of this percentage at all times.

Let us agree then, that a pigeon needs a diet of mixed grain containing 15% to 17% of protein *when it is working* and the mixture must be fed as such, *not* in separate grains. It is understood that this diet is for working i.e. actual flying and not for breeding purposes.

Breeding diets

WHEN RACING pigeons are breeding they need and should receive a different diet to that prescribed for racing purposes. I refer here to pigeons kept in a controlled loft i.e. not given the open hole. It will be obvious that in lofts where pigeons are given freedom to fly in and out at all times they are capable of finding what extra food they want to supply deficiencies in the

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A CALL ON STEED BROS.

● West Fed. Champion 1956 ●

A 'Ghost' Village

HOW IS it that some fanciers can race well year in and year out and yet never become one of the fashionable lofts? Is it because some fanciers simply race their own family without indulging in buying and selling, with its consequent publicity?

In the case of Steed Bros., it is particularly the latter. I am sure there are no more modest fanciers than Bob and Willie Steed of Standburn, that 'Ghost' mining village to the south of Falkirk. There are now only three lofts where once was a thriving club. The loft had its beginning while Bob was still at school. He joined Avonbridge club in 1924, the only surviving member of that era still in the club being Jock Hill. It is believed the brothers Ormiston, who were in the area at that time are still racing in Cardenden, Fife, Jimmy Ormiston having been, and possibly still, Sec: of the local club.

The loft

A STORM in 1931 was responsible for the erection of the present loft and it is a wonder the storm of a few nights ago didn't do the same again. It is 20ft long, sloping b. to f. and is traditional in design. I thought the position of the loft was very suitable for the straight fly-in but the 'drop hole' is used.

First major success

IT WAS in 1928 that they first hit the headlines when they were 1st Scottish Central Fed., 2nd Open Bournemouth. In those days the race was open to the whole of Scotland and it was won by one of the Gillespies, of Airdrie. In 1930 came the first cross-channel success with 98th Open Rennes & £48, the year the race was won by another local fancier, John Robertson, Slamannan, who is still to the fore.

The family

I HAVE covered many lofts in the last year or two but I have never come across a team of birds so much of a family as this. It goes back to about 1927. It be-



gan with a bird which dropped into the loft and which belonged to the then Sec: of the N.E.H.U. The progeny of this bird, when paired with birds obtained from a Mr. Edwards produced a Black Cock called 'Spotty' who proved to be the real beginning of the present family. He scored from both Rennes and Nantes in 1935.

In 1932 they purchased two hens from the late Johnny Berry, Larkhall, one of the hens was mated to 'Spotty' and that kept the family going until 1949. In that year they purchased a further two pairs from the Larkhall 'ace' and that is the family which fills the loft at present.

Johnny Berry was very well known in Lanarkshire, and indeed all over the country. It was about 1949 that he obtained a number of birds from A. E. Robinson, Belfast, which were mainly Delmotte/Jurion.

Breeding methods

THE PRECEDING paragraph tells its own story. Inbreeding has been carried on very successfully and in spite of the fact that no bird has been introduced since 1949, they have no immediate intention of introducing new blood.

Management

VERY SIMPLE. No fancy notions, no expensive foods, no elaborate training methods. Old birds are conditioned by the race basket and birds for channel races are kept at it each week up to the 300 mile stage. Little forced training is given.

Youngsters are given at least 100 miles when a few are selected; the remainder completing the programme. Yearlings go all the way to Christchurch (375 miles). The most promising of the two-year-olds are selected after Christchurch and sent to Dol, three-year-olds being preferred for Rennes.

The favourite condition is feeding 3/4 days when basked. At the time of my visit no preparations were in hand for mating, which is delayed until the middle of March, the whole loft being put together at the one time. I asked whether this does not reduce their chances of success in the earlier race but they merely referred me to the result sheets.

The birds

THE LOFT contains something in the region of 25-30 pairs. My impression after handling the birds was that the cocks were predominant and Bob confirmed that while the hens held their own, his major successes were principally with cocks. The thing which struck one on entering is the family look, mainly Blacks and Blues.

My first choice was a Red Cock, 5IN5247. If there is such a thing as the 'breeders eye', then this Cock surely has it. He goes back to 'Spotty' and their Dol winner of 1938. Kept for stock, 5247 is responsible for 13 birds in the loft, many of which have flown Dol and Rennes.

In the hens, my fancy was a red, 53NW4586, from

Willie Steed (Left)

Bob Steed (Right)

April, 1957