

The British Pigeon

YOUR RP

7 MARCH 1997 • 55p

PROVEN MASTER FANCIERS



Bobby & Martin Adair photographed receiving the Derwent Valley 'Big Cup' from RP scribe Billy Wortley. Photograph courtesy of the West Cumberland Times and Star.

It was my pleasure, at the close of the 1996 season, to present the Derwent Valley Fed trophies which included presenting the famous 'Big Cup' to the father and son partnership of Bobby & Martin Adair from Flimby. This trophy is awarded to the loft achieving the best Combined

Average in the Federation, and is valued in excess of £20K, being permanently stored in a bank vault, removed for presentation only.

The trophy is very difficult to win and whilst only a handful of fanciers have gained it more than once, the Adair partnership have

DRIFT TO SR RACING

The fifty third Annual General Meeting of WGNFC took place recently at the Trehafod Social Club. A sparse gathering of just 30 members were in attendance when president Dan Driscoll called for a minutes silence as a

mark of respect for those members who had passed away during the past 12 months.

Proceedings then got under way with secretary Dave Aldridge reading the minutes of the AGM of 24 February 1996. These were confirmed and passed as a true record. The membership list showed that 137 members had resigned prior to the AGM, confirming both the continued drift to south road racing and a general decline in the sport as a

continued on page 48

been the proud recipients of the trophy on no fewer than ten occasions, which our readers will concur is a marvellous achievement.

The village of Flimby is located near Maryport in West Cumbria, absolutely on the Solway shore. Owing to their location, in the extreme north of England, the Cumbrian fanciers have no realistic chance of successfully competing from the National classics and their Classic races are the prestige Channel events in their Combine which comprises four distinct Federations.

West Cumbria is a former mining community with an obvious pigeon connection, and Bobby Adair reflects on being reared in this environment with pigeons being housed at the back door during his schoolboy years. The restrictions caused by the outbreak of war consequent in the family parting with their team however. Bobby then developed an interest in cage birds, specialising in British birds, and he became one of the leading exponents in the country. He won all the major shows, and in one season won both the Scottish and English Nationals. He was also in great demand as a judge at the principal shows.

When Martin was only seven years old he caught two stray pigeons and initially kept them in an orange box. The schoolboy fancier was encouraged by his grandfather, and within a couple of years more pigeons were added to the colony. He originally sent his small team with the club as trainers only but Bobby reasoned that if the family were going to participate in our hobby then they would do it properly. A cock was acquired, and Martin and his grandfather joined the local club. During their first season they raced exceptionally well with only eight youngsters.

Bobby continued to show the cage birds, but as the rail network of the time was being cut back he became increasingly frustrated with the problems he was experiencing sending the birds to the

shows. He explained to me that it was all about competition and if the birds were worth keeping then they had to compete against the best in the major shows. As his problems with transport restricted his options however, after much deliberation he decided to part with the cage birds in 1971 and he converted the bird shed to a pigeon loft.

Bobby had worked beside Gordon Jenkinson for a number of years in the local coal-mine. Gordon was a legendary fancier in West Cumbria, and as the pit baths were local to his loft at Great Clifton, Bobby spent many



One of the original mealy cocks.

hours in the loft with his work-mate viewing his pigeons.

I vividly recollect visiting the loft of Gordon Jenkinson in 1959. The loft was set at the top of an incline in the undulated West Cumbrian terrain and having climbed the incline I was 'spell bound' as I viewed an absolutely superb team of pigeons lying in the sun, on the grass, in front of the loft. Over subsequent years I have viewed many lofts of pigeons, but I have never seen a team to compare with Gordon Jenkinson's. When I identified specific pigeons on the grass and questioned where they came from, I was told that they emanated from the loft of Fred Gee from

continued on page 44



9 770033 739017

PROVEN MASTER FANCIERS

continued from front page

Marple Bridge, near Manchester. When I returned to Scotland I searched through the stud books to read of F Gee in the Stockport Federation, Manchester FC, and the Great Northern, and of quality pigeons such as 'Northern Queen', 'Briardene Favourite' etc.

I was to subsequently learn, however, that the Gee pigeons were but one line in Gordon Jenkinson's loft and other important lines were the Vandeveldes of George Gorley, Bill Heatley and

Bricoux line had been obtained from George Lawson from Silloth who was another superb West Cumbrian fancier. Such was Bobby's interest in the Bricoux cross that he obtained pedigrees of these pigeons from Gordon Jenkinson and went to George Lawson to try to get more of the same. George Lawson explained that he had no pigeons 'the same way bred, but Bobby was fortunate that George Gorley was able to negotiate with connections of Tommy Buck to obtain a blue hen

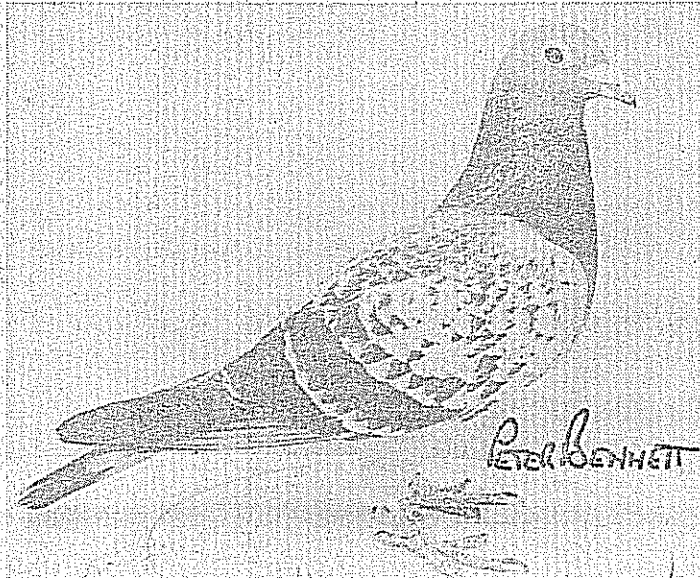
Jenkinson to a Channing of Newport pigeon that was obtained from Eric Edwards and this pairing produced two blue hens. A blue pied hen from Eric Edwards that contained the 'Tiger Tensing' and 'Sweetheart' lines of S B Cooper from Snaith was then coupled to a George Gorley Vandevelde cock and produced a couple of cocks that were, in turn, paired to the blue hens from the former mating. Bobby Adair received eggs from each of these pairings and a blue cock emerged that was to make a considerable impression in the loft.

As we identify the base pigeons in the Adair loft, a further introduction came from a friend Howard Pickthaw who travelled to Fraserburgh and bought pigeons from Bob MacDonald's 'Cripple Cock' and 'Bournemouth Hen' line. When Howard returned to West Cumbria he met Bobby Adair and Gordon Jenkinson and allowed them to handle his acquisitions. Bobby expressed a liking for them with the consequence that he was gifted an egg from the pair which emerged into a blue chequer cock that won Nantes and was subsequently blended into the family.

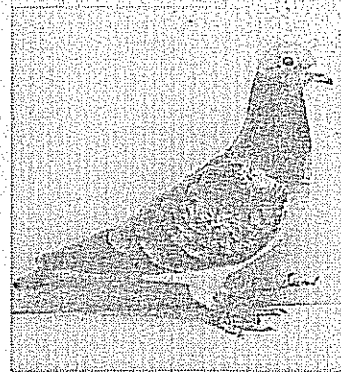
Whilst all of the pigeons mentioned were used to found the family, two mealy cocks were particularly influential. These

Federation, and members desiring to compete entered their birds through the neighbouring East Cumberland Fed. The mealy cock was additionally entered for this race and was right up with the leaders to be 4th Section.

Being a keen student of the



Blue chequer cock, 1st Cumbria Combine Nantes 1996. Photo by Peter Bennett.



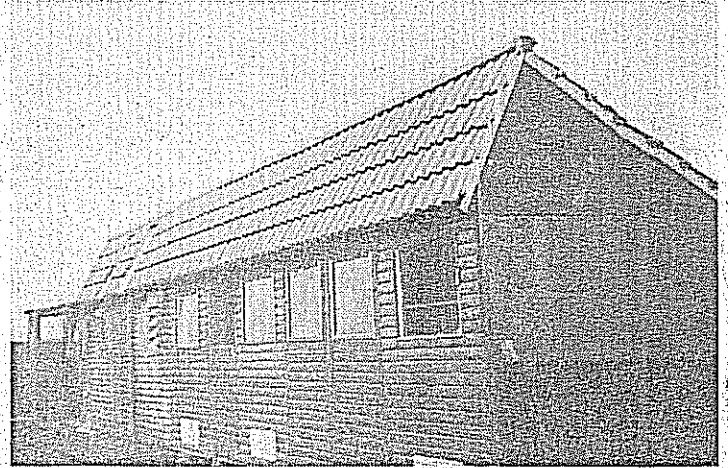
Blue chequer hen, 1st Fed Dorchester as a yearling; 1st Fed Rennes, only three birds home on night, and then twice 2nd Fed Rennes.

Alf Robinson. At the time George Gorley resided at Cockerthorpe in West Cumbria, and indeed I had the pleasure of viewing this team of pigeons on a number of occasions also. Owing to his friendship with Gordon Jenkinson, Bobby Adair received quality pigeons on which to found his loft. Gordon had two exceptional cocks, the bloodlines of which were George Gorley Vandevelde x Bricoux, and Bobby received direct progeny from each of the cocks. The

and a red hen on loan which were Doctor Anderson Bricoux, and Bobby used them as a cross with the Vandeveldes.

Gordon Jenkinson was a frequent visitor to Fred Gee at Marple Bridge, and on one occasion took friend Archie Millar with him. Archie was the sleeping partner of Wilf Pearson from Workington and together they bred and raced the famous 'Weasal', one of the finest pigeons ever to compete into the North of England. She was small in stature but had the heart of a lion, and was a prolific winner. When Archie Millar was shown Fred Gee's pigeons he took a fancy to one of the loft champions and suggested that it should be paired to the 'Weasal'. The suggestion was initially 'knocked back' but as they departed, Fred told them to take the pigeon to pair to the West Cumbrian Champion for one nest only, and he stipulated that one of the pair of youngsters had to go to Gordon Jenkinson.

A further prominent fancier in Cumbria was Eric Edwards from Keswick who was very affluent, and spent a small fortune on pigeons. In time the daughter of the 'Weasal' and the Fred Gee pigeon was coupled by Gordon

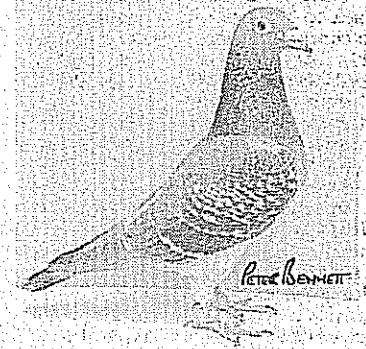


Loft of Bobby & Martin Adair.

were bred from the original line introduced from Gordon Jenkinson containing the George Gorley Vandevelde x Bricoux bloodlines and one contained the line of the Fred Gee Champion x the 'Weasal'. These were two super pigeons and almost all subsequent winners can be traced back to these two. As an example of the quality understand that one of the cocks was ten times at the Channel and nine times in the Fed list. At one time fanciers in Cumbria competed in the National Lifeboat race from Rennes. Derwent Valley Fed did not participate in the race as a

Nantes. At the end of the season, friend David Osborne and I travelled to West Cumbria to see the pigeons, and my 'did we get our eyes opened!' At that time the birds were housed in a flat-roofed shed in allotments near to the family home. We learned that it was a cock-dominant family, but several hens in the loft were absolutely 'out of this world'. The pigeons were like 'peas in a pod', with balance, length, character and each displaying classic 500-miles wing conformation.

We learned that the Rennes convoy had been liberated at 6 am into a light NE wind. Bobby &



Dark chequer cock, 2nd Fed, 5th Cumbria Combine Sartilly 1996.

Cumbrian pigeon scene I have been much impressed as I followed the fortunes of this loft over a number of years. Season 1988 was extra-special, Bobby & Martin were 1st Cumbria Combine from the two prestige Channel races, Rennes and