

RENNES RACE (with Scottish National)

s. Hamilton	8-39-34 p.m.	1067	3rd W. Sect., 21st Open	£188 G.C.
& J. Hastie	9-14-13 p.m.	1010	8th W. Sect., 66th Open	18
Greenshields	9-48-17 p.m.	994	14th W. Sect., 83rd Open	160 G.C.
Kerr	10-8-53 p.m.	981	57th E. Sect., 90th Open	19
s. Hamilton	10-7-8 p.m.	971	17th W. Sect., 96th Open	82
Greenshields	10-24-1 p.m.	958	19th W. Sect., 103rd Open	158
Greenshields	6-45-55 a.m.	839	35th W. Sect., 149th Open	344
s. Hamilton	7-14-24 a.m.	815	47th W. Sect., 169th Open	115

£1084

At this stage I had won the George Greenshields Cup (Inland Average), W. Young Cup (Inland Nomination), Allinson Memorial Cup (1st Rennes), "Daily Express" Cup (Two-Bird Nom. Rennes), Red Potts's Special (1st Nom. Bird Rennes). Matt Greenshields was runner-up to all these trophies, and he and I faced the last race with the Gold Cup, Morgan Memorial Cup, J. L. Muir O.B. Average Cup, "News of the World" Cup and Pikelting Special and the President R. Beattie's £10 to the winner of the Gold Cup stake. Up to Rennes there had been only the matter of minutes between us, but at Rennes I gained just over an hour, but while it was good to have that in hand, it is not so great in a race of 100 miles.

Every fancier who had birds away racing on July 8 and 9, 1955, is not likely to forget it. When ten o'clock came round in the evening of July 8 I was beginning to think there would be no birds on the day, when over the trees three birds came on towards the loft. Two alighted on the loft while the other wheeled and landed on the roof of the hay shed. I timed my birds to register 10-1-47 and 10-1-49, and they proved to be the only birds on the day in the L.S.C. When the excitement of the timing was over we chased the third bird on its way.

DOL RACE (508 miles)

James Hamilton	917 G.C.
James Hamilton	916-9
T. Brownlie	684
M. Greenshields	645 G.C.
J. Deans & Son	640
A. Miller	556
R. Beattie & Son	469

Now about the birds which did the winning. The Blue Pied Cock SURP.51.L.12080 certainly did his share by counting three times in the Gold Cup, being my first bird from Worcester, Cheltenham and Salisbury, winning a 1st and 2nd Club. He was my third bird from Dol, returning injured but in race time. The Rennes winner is a Mealy Cock SURP.51.L.12057, from 1103 x 1120. 1103 is from 359 x 366; 1120 is from 22932 and is

a half-sister to 12080. My second bird from Rennes is a Blue Cock 11896, and he is a full brother to the sire of 12057. The third bird is a Blue W.F. Hen 4841, and is a half-sister to my first bird 12057, being from the same dam 1120.

The bird credited with being the first from Dol is a Blue Cock 12843, and is from 359 and 366, and therefore a full brother to sire of the Rennes winner and to the second Rennes bird 11896. The second Dol bird is 11872, out of a son of 359 and a daughter of 22932. I leave the reader to puzzle out the relationships to each other of these six pigeons. They are a family I have cultivated over the last twenty years without a fresh introduction. In this I am indebted to my old friend, James L. Muir, in getting the right kind to cultivate and in many other respects. It is true that during these years I have from time to time received birds from friends but, somehow, something always seems to happen to them or their progeny. I have one such pigeon in the loft now, the survivor of a pair I was presented with in 1954, but it remains to be seen how it fares racing from the distance in 1956. The breeding is there, but will it do with my methods of management or, more important, will it blend with mine?

Half measures in pigeon racing are worse than useless. You must have a mind of your own; continual chopping and changing of birds and methods of management are fatal to success. If I decide to race a pigeon, well—it races or goes under. I do not keep many pigeons, and even then I only breed and rear from about half of them, and I find that these just keep me about right for replacing the losses of a season's racing.

Talking about this with an old friend, he said: "You know Jimmy, most men take a pair of youngsters from every pair when they would be better taking several from the few pairs that are worth while." To this I would like to add that, from my experience, there are not so many pairs that are really worth while breeding from. A look over my loft book proves this up to the hilt, and if the reader cares to look over his own he most likely will get a surprise and lots of food for thought. I am not a writer and must confess that this is a family effort, first in the pressure brought upon me to write and in assistance rendered in knocking this article into shape. I am pleased and honoured in being asked to write for SQUILLS and happy now that the ordeal is over.

One last thing. Although I won all the L.S.C. trophies except two, Matt Greenshields was runner-up to every one of them. His brother George pipped him for the Young Bird Average Cup leaving Matt with only one trophy in spite of a brilliant season racing. Matt won the Tennant Trophy as the winner of the hardest race, and I ask you to give a thought to a game and gallant rival.