

PATIENCE IS THE GAME TRACY ANDREW OF WOODINGDENE

1st Section, 3rd Open Le Mans, 194 miles, 2,255 birds, vel 1273

Having known Tracy Andrew for over 45 years I was very pleased to hear on the local bush telegraph that he had timed a very good pigeon from Le Mans with the BICC on Saturday, 28th July. Being an old friend I tried ringing him to add my congratulations the following day but I was unable to get through to him. On Monday evening I was surprised to get a phone call from a mutual friend, Peter McMahon, asking if it was possible for me to visit Tracy and perhaps take a couple of photographs. Knowing just how reluctant Tracy would be as he shuns any publicity, along with another top Brighton fancier Kenny Abbott, I asked Peter to get Tracy to give me a call. With no luck I

gave him another call and got to speak to him. I eventually persuaded him to let me call the very next afternoon.

Tracy has been a fancier for most of his 71 years, as well as being a top-class amateur boxing champion. At the age of 15 he decided to hang up his gloves and concentrate on his other passion, pigeon racing, and for many years he was just about the best sprint fancier along the South Coast in the '60s, '70s and '80s. While racing with the Brighton & District FC, who boasted of around 75 flying members, he was almost unbeatable along the coast right through to Penzance but in more recent times he has turned his hand to Channel racing along with the NFC and BICC. He had a decent amount of success but he still has the desire to become a real top distance flying and I am sure with his knowledge of how to condition a winning pigeon, he will achieve his goal.

The winning pigeon is a 2y blue chequer Jos Thoné cock bred by his friend Mark Cowell of Ramsgate in Kent. The sire is a grandson of Sumo/Avril and the dam is down from Sarso. Racing this cock has not been easy. Last year as a yearling he returned from a race badly injured in a raptor attack and this season from an early race he was the victim of another attack when he lost most of his tail. Nevertheless, with some rest and time to let nature take control he was ready to go again. He duly won 1st Section in the Bromley Open from Guernsey and a short time later he was sent to Saintes along with the NFC and made a mess of it, returning just two days before basketing for Le Mans. He was so fit and bouncing around the loft that Tracy decided to send him and he was timed at 1329hrs from an 0900hrs liberation to win 1st Section C, 3rd Open with a velocity of 1273, being beaten by Dudley Holmes of Spalding in Lincolnshire and Tracy congratulates Dudley.

When Tracy raced his sprint pigeons only the very best were tolerated. Fools had no place in his widowhood team and he had the right birds for the job in hand but since changing over to racing only the Channel he has found that you need to be

patient. Channel pigeons appear to mature later. As long as they are bred from the right stock, their class will show. To quote a favourite saying, 'Apples never fall far from the tree'. I believe that and looking into the pigeons that he has in his race loft and the class in his stock loft I am sure we haven't heard the last from this loft. When it happens, I will not wait for an invitation.

My thanks to Tracy and his wife, Rose, for putting up with us talking pigeons, friends that are no longer with us and friends that he has made all over Great Britain. He feels that pigeon racing is not as it was back in the '60s, '70s and '80s when, on the Sunday morning after a race, the members from the many clubs in the Brighton area would meet up and relive the race as they saw it; and if you wanted a pigeon or two it would probably cost you a pint of beer. I know that although I lived some 12 miles from Tracy's home if I wanted some help he was only a phone call away and over those years he gifted me some top-class winning stock.

SOUTHCOASTER



Tracy holding 1st Section, 3rd Open BICC Le Mans.



Blue cheq cock, 1st Section C, 3rd Open BICC Le Mans.



Tracy with his young bird loft and stock loft.



The old bird racing loft.