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THE HOME OF LONG DISTANCE PIGEON RACING

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The British Barcelona Club celebrating '50' years 2014

BRITISH BARCELONA CLUB'S 50th ANNIVERSARY (Part 15).

Jim Biss & Tony Waite of Whitchurch.

1st open BBC Palamos (679 miles) 1998.

I was very sad to hear the bad news of Jim Biss's passing, I think the sport of pigeon racing has lost one of its greatest fanciers! I met him at his "Hillside" lofts in the mid 1990's when we were making a "Many Miles with Mott" video on fanciers in Norfolk and found him to be a perfect gentle man. I think Jim Biss was a "man's man" and was a great man to talk to about long distance pigeon racing, having a brilliant life time record, which was second to none. Jim was an original member of the British International Championship Club and gave it his full support in the 27 years, since it was formed in 1978. I think I'm right in stating he won the BICC twenty times, including 15 times 1st open Marseille and lifted the 2 bird average several times. He won 1st open NFC Pau Grand National and in partnership with Tony Waite, they won 1st open British Barcelona Club Palamos and 1st open NFC Saintes. A wonderful record put up by one of our greatest champions!

It was the weekend before the 1996 Pau Grand National when I visited the Jim's fantastic pigeon set up, at his home in Brundall near Norwich. His racing record in National, Classic and Federation events has been well documented through his 70 years in the sport, winning 1st. open countless times. Jim started up in 1936 and the best performance that came to mind, he said was the 1993 Pau N.F.C. race, when he was 1st, 2nd and 7th open, plus several other useful positions. The 1993 Pau National had 5,427 birds entered and Jim's 1st open winner was the blue widowhood cock, "Vend", which had also flown the 646 miles from Pau the previous season, which was a very bad race. A few minutes after clocking "Vend", Jim recorded the dark chequer cock "Turban" to take 2nd open Pau, and this great pigeon's previous form in distance Nationals was outstanding. We handled these two great champions when we looked at Jim's team of breeders in his wonderful stock lofts, which housed 70 pairs. All Jim's old birds were paired up on 13th January and picked out breeders on their winning bloodlines, saying good pigeons are normally a good type. After 70 years in the sport he raced his own family of pigeons, based on his old English family of 1936 with different introductions through the years. A lot of his champion racers were bred down from a hen he had in 1939 and several generations of National winners have come down from her.

Jim raced 90 cocks on the Widowhood system and was only interested in long distance racing. The racers were not broken down, but got a light feed in the morning and a heavy mixture at the evening feed. The birds got a few tosses before the first race, after which they flew out around the loft for one hour morning and evening. The hens were never shown to the cocks on marking nights, but the pairs were left together for about an hour on the cock's arrival from the race. Jim never flagged the cocks around the loft, as it kills their keenness, and he maintained you need fitness and keenness to win at the long distance. The Hillside loft bred 100 young birds each season to race and replace old widowhood hens. They were raced through to 160 miles and some cocks were stopped and set aside for the widowhood system. The babies were well trained up to 40 miles before their first race, but after that no training was given. Jim took no notice of young bird performances and considered these races for learning.

On leaving Jim's Norfolk home in 1996, I shook his hand and wished him good luck in the Pau National the following weekend. Little did we know that he was going to win the race, with his partner, Tony Waite, at their loft in Whitchurch. Because of adverse weather at Pau the National convoy was brought back and liberated at Saintes on the Tuesday morning. Jim Biss recorded 14 birds in the open result at the Brundall loft and took 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Section H. A fantastic performance! The Sunday morning after the Pau / Saintes National saw me drive the 150 miles round trip to Coal Henley, a quiet little village, just outside Whitchurch in wonderful Hampshire to visit the latest N.F.C. winners, Jim Biss and Tony Waite. Jim bred all the Biss & Waite pigeons and Tony raced them to his home, which was set in the Hampshire countryside. From the Saintes National, Tony Waite clocked 27 birds at the Whitchurch loft to get into the open result and chalked up 15 birds in the first 50 open, including 1st, 4th, 15th, 17th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 33rd, 35th, 36th, 39th, 42nd, 44th, 48th and 49th open, with 4,976 birds competing. A fantastic performance!

Jim and Tony formed their very successful partnership in the early 1990's and won several National races in Hampshire. Jim bred all the birds from his champions in Norwich, and although the birds won the Federation in sprint races, the main aim each season was the National and long distance events. Their ultimate win being their British Barcelona Club Palamos winner in 1998. The partners raced both widowhood and natural, with the main team being 72 widowhood cocks. Yearling cocks were raced natural and not put on the widowhood until they were two years old. The 60 ft. widowhood loft had a pantiled roof and open door trapping, with six sections, four for the racing cocks and two for their hens. The nest box fronts were the same as Jim's at his Norwich lofts and the lofts had grille floors. Tony started to pair up in mid- March and paired one section each week, so that the birds' condition was staggered through the racing season. The natural old birds and young birds were housed in a second loft, with pantiled roof and "super" trapping. Biss & Waite had 20 natural pairs and Tony told me, he liked hens sitting for the long distance events. This loft had a wire flight in front, as Tony maintained fresh air was most important, and I must say the partners pigeon looked in brilliant condition on my visit to the loft, the weekend after the National win.

TEXT & PHOTOS BY KEITH MOTT (www.keithmott.com)



JIM BISS.

Photo by Keith Mott

JIM BISS' LOFT SET UP.

Photo by Keith Mott





TONY WAITE.
Photo by Keith Mott.



BISS & WAITE LOFT SET UP.
Photo by Keith Mott.