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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 17)

The late, Norman Middleton of Iver.

1st open BBC Nantes (298 miles) 1999.

The last weekend of May 2001 saw the London & South East Classic Club hold it's Sennon Cove race, incorporated the annual Yearling Derby, and members entered 1,530 birds for this 250 miles event. More or less from the time we arrived at the grassed car park liberation site, on the cliffs above Sennon Cove, it was fogged out by dense sea mist coming in off the Atlantic and had to hold over until the Tuesday, when I liberated at 08.00hrs in a west wind. I released the convoy into blue sky and sunshine and after forming one big batch, they cleared the site very quickly. I anticipated a brilliant race but, although the velocities were good and constant, the race didn't really live up to my expectations, with returns being very patchy. A local Sennon pigeon fancier, Peter Lugg, informed me that there are at least 15 pairs of Peregrine Falcons within sight of the Sennon Cove liberation site and, on my return home, several classic fanciers reported getting birds home badly hawked. When I liberated the classic birds on the Tuesday morning, the convoy was in 'mint' condition and it was a perfect day for racing pigeons. It makes me wonder if the convoy was attacked and broken up by hungry Peregrine Falcons en route home.

The weekend after the race I made the 30 miles drive to Iver in Buckinghamshire to visit the winning loft of Norman Middleton Brothers and I must say how impressed I was with the quality of the pigeons in the loft, which were mainly Starview Busschaerts. Norman clocked his winning pigeon, a two year old Busschaert blue chequer hen, to record 1668 ypm and she was raced on Norman's own roundabout system. He named his champion hen, 'Miss Camin', and she is bred from the very best Massarella Starview Busschaert lines, with her sire being Norman's champion blue chequer cock, 'Buster's Pride'. This wonderful champion is now at stock, breeding many winners, after a brilliant racing career, winning 1st Sect. E, 2nd open N.F.C. Saintes (beaten by 2ypm) and 1st open U.B.I. Combine Nantes. Another daughter of 'Buster's Pride', a blue pied sister of 'Miss Camin', won 4th open U.B.I. Combine Liskeard. A brilliant family of pigeons!

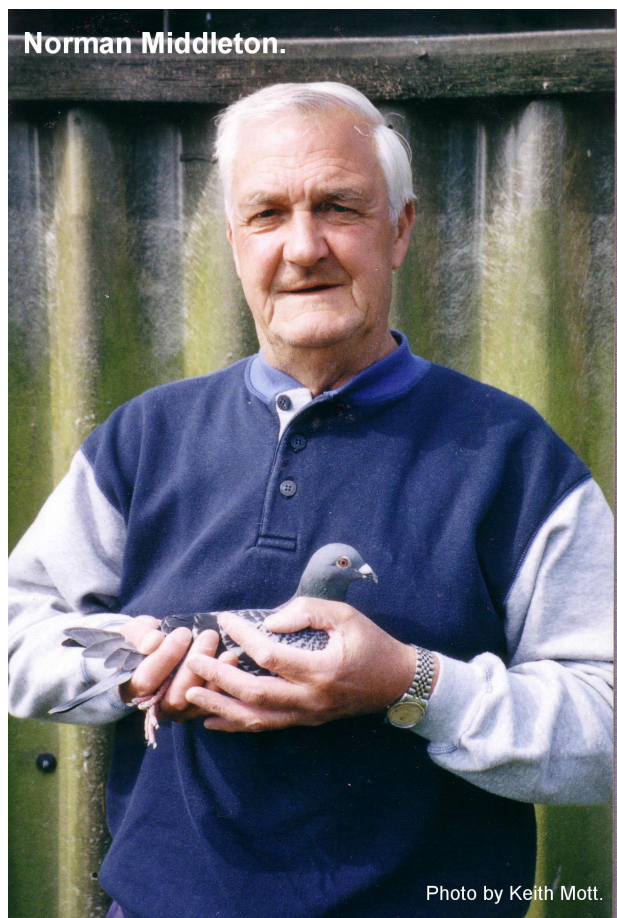
Norman's late brother, 'Buster', was an outstanding fancier for over 50 years and started as a lad with a pair of pigeons in a box on the garden shed roof. The young Buster helped and cleaned out the loft of Tubby Bignell of West Drayton and on the starting up racing pigeons, Norman taught Buster how to drive so he could train his birds. Norman has always helped Buster with the pigeons but, in recent years when he became very ill, Norman helped him more and altered the loft to suit Buster's

ill health. When Buster passed away he left a wonderful team of pigeons to Norman in his will, with some money to meet the running costs of the loft, as he wanted it to carry on after he had gone. I must say that Norman did a brilliant job carrying on with premier positions where Buster left off.

Norman raced 40 pairs on the roundabout system but said it's not hard-core and called it his own 'messabout' system. The birds were fed twice a day, a seed mixture in the morning and widowhood mixture in the evening, and were given a 50 miles training toss once a week. He raced only south road and said at that time his hens were racing best, although the cocks flew out best on their twice a day exercise sessions around the loft. Norman liked to race middle distance best but said he thought the Starview Busschaerts could fly Pau (560 miles). Norman's racers were flown to a self built 40ft. loft with seven sections and drop hole trapping and his 14 pairs of stock birds were housed in two lofts and a wire flight.

Norman's pride and joy was his champion blue chequer cock, 'Buster's Pride', and he told me that, after a fantastic racing career, he had to retire him to stock because he was damaged by a Sparrowhawk attack. On my visit to the Iver loft, Norman showed me several of his top performers, including his champion four year old chequer pied Busschaert hen, 'Galazy', and she had recorded racing on the roundabout: 1st Sect. D, 1st open British Barcelona Club Nantes (2,691 birds) and two weeks later 1st Sect. E, 5th open N.F.C. Nantes. A brilliant hen! Norman has since passed away and was an outstanding pigeon racer! He made me so welcome on my visit to Iver and I must say, his lofts and pigeons were a credit to him and his late brother, 'Buster'.

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

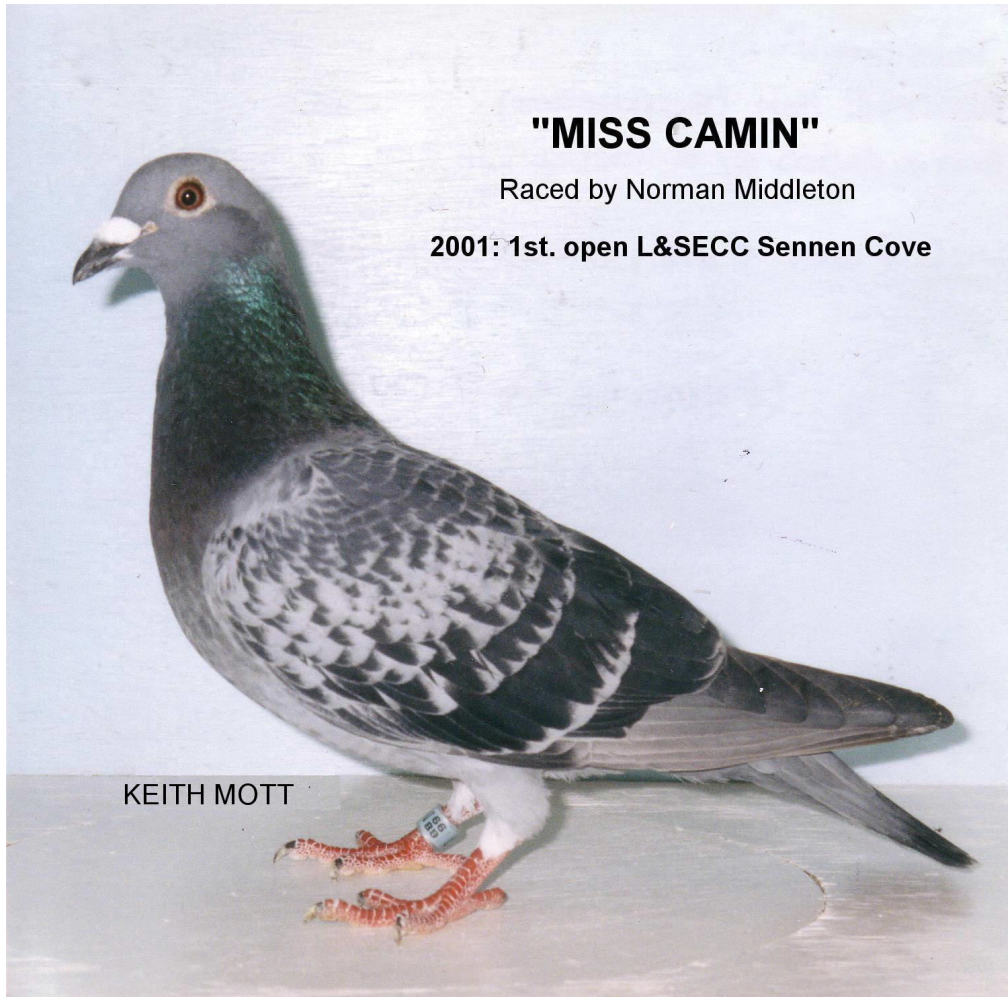


"MISS CAMIN"

Raced by Norman Middleton

2001: 1st. open L&SECC Sennen Cove

KEITH MOTT



"BUSTER'S PRIDE"

Raced by Norman Middleton

2nd. open NFC Saintes

1st. open UBI Combine Nantes

Sire of "MISS CAMIN"

KEITH MOTT

