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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 18)

John Ellis of Wellbank.

I was very happy when my good friend, the late Ian Gray, told me he had arranged a loft visit to the great John Ellis, as John is a fancier I have admired since I started up 45 years ago. Back in the 1960s, when I was learning the 'trade', I read about John's long-distance performances and his champions, 'Endurance', winner of 1st, 2nd section, 27th, 82nd open British Barcelona Club Palamos (1,044 mile) and 'Wellbank Pride', winner of 1st section, 8th open Rennes in the Scottish National Flying Club, flying 583 miles and so on.

John started in the sport in 1958, with only long-distance racing in mind. His loft has won countless positions in the first ten of the Scottish National Flying Club Open results over the years and recorded 1st and 2nd section, 27th and 28th open BBC Palamos (1,044 miles) in the 1970s. If a pigeon wins from 400 miles he is looking for it to win from 600 miles. John has been in the Scottish National Flying Club results every year since 1962, apart from the season when his father died. One of his most recent champions is the blue chequer hen, '**Wellbank Reliable**' who won the Gold Award in the Scottish National Flying Club; by the time she was three years old, winning five times from 540 miles or over. Her best position was 8th open Sartilly Scottish National Flying Club, 540 miles and she likes to be sent sitting week-old eggs or feeding a small youngster. At the start John obtained birds from several top long-distance fanciers in the north and blended his own family. Crosses are brought in from time to time and he says Stichelbauts obtained from his late friend, Bernard Miles, have produced outstanding birds when put into his own pigeons. He has a grandson of the 'Tee' and a Pol Bostyn hen which are breeding well at the present time. Some more of John's great racers are: '**Endurance**', 1st, 2nd section E. 27th, 82nd open B.B.C. Palamos (1,044 miles): '**Star**', 2nd section, 5th open Nantes: '**Paris Cock**', 11th open Nantes, 30th open Paris (smash): '**Faithful**', Gold Award winner: '**The Mealy Pied Hen**', 21st open Nantes (643 miles on the day): '**Patricia**', 9th open Beauvais.

John has a very smart 40-foot loft with landing board and drop hole trapping and the old birds are raced on the natural system. John's 30 pairs of old birds are paired up the first week in March and are given about three 250-mile races in the local Dundee and District Club before being entered in the National events. The best racers are consistently paired to stock birds, so their mates are always there in the box on their return from the races. Old birds may be asked to fly in two or three long distance races in one season. John feeds a first-class mixture, based on beans and maize and says he is a very heavy feeder. Because of the extremely bad hawk problem around John's Wellbank home, he breeds

a good team of about 50 or 60 young birds each season. He says they are not raced heavily, but he likes them to have a few races to set them up for later life. His local Federation is very slow getting the birds down to the distance, so John has to jump his youngsters 200 miles into the Young Bird National. They are fed on first class mixtures and get plenty of it. We had a great day out at John's loft and handled some of the best long distance 'doos' in Scotland.

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



John Ellis with Keith Mott and Ian Grey.

Photo by Keith Mott.



"WELLBANK ENDURANCE"



WING OF 'WELLBANK ENDURANCE'