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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 19)

Les Kidd of New Milton.

50 years a member of the British Barcelona Club!

Les Kidd has been a member of the British Barcelona Club for the club's full 50 years and he tells me he competed in the very first two Barcelona races in 1965 and 1966. How many fancier are around today can say that! Although he competes in several premier long distances every season, the Barcelona event is the one that is still dear to his heart! He was a leading long distance racer in the London area for many years and moved to New Milton about 14 years ago, and continued his racing success there in Hampshire. Betty and I have taken holidays, on and off, for 30 years in Highcliff the neighbouring town to New Milton and every time Les and I cross paths, he says, 'why don't you pop around and see the birds next time you are in the area'. The month of September saw us take a week's holiday with the family in Hampshire and I thought I might take the opportunity to have a day out on my own to visit a couple of old pigeon fancier friends who live there, in the form of the two London exiles, Les Kidd and Rod Berry who reside in the same road in New Milton. When I arrived at Les home the sun was shining and I was very impressed on how good his loft looked in his wonderful garden. He tells me, his wife, Cynthia, must take the credit for that, as she is very keen gardener and works very hard to keep it looking so nice. She is also a great help with his pigeon management!

Les has a very smart 16ft racing loft, which is of the old design, being open with a full length bay and trapping is through 'bob' holes off the top of the bay, with ETS timing. He tells me the main feature of his loft is plenty of fresh air and has tried deep litter on the floors, but found it too dusty, so cleans out every day. The loft has a 10ft section, with wooden natural nest boxes, for the old birds and a 6ft section for the youngsters, and an eye catching feature in the loft was Les' self-built Plywood corn hoppers, that are filled with farm Tic Beans all the year around. The Kidd pigeons are all, racers and stock birds, fed on farm Tic Beans and get a tip-bit of condition seed for treat. The very small stock bird team of four pairs are kept in a little 6ft x 6ft self-built loft at the top of the garden near Les and Cynthia's bungalow and this loft houses four sons of the champion breeder 'Sadler's Wills' and their mates. The Kidd's 20 pairs of old birds are raced totally on the natural system and are paired up the first week in March, with 550 mile racing in mind. Les uses the shorter races to get the birds trained and 'match fit', and likes to send them to the main long distance events sitting ten day old eggs. He doesn't train his old birds these days because in 2008, when training his old birds from 20 miles, they were attacked by birds of Prey and he suffered losses and several badly injured birds. Les told me, it was like a blood bath in his loft when they returned! He decided not to train again after that terrible day and now, after flying well around home, he jumps them into the first 200 mile race and it works. He maintains after five seasons with not training his old birds his long distance performance are even better! Les like his race team to have eight hours flying from France before going into the main long distance events and this sometimes means two flies from Messac. He breeds about 25 young birds, plus a couple of late bred each year and rarely races his youngster, but maintains if he was a serious young bird racer he would use the 'darkness' system. He likes his babies to grow and is looking ahead two years, that's when they are tested from 500 miles. Although Les doesn't train his old birds, the youngsters are trained from 3 miles every day to teach them about the basket and says, they go off and run along the south coast for well over an hour every morning.

Les Kidd is a 100% long distance enthusiast and has no interest in any other racing what so ever. He has had many years of success racing at the very top level in the long distance side of our sport. He has a big job remembering, but the highlights are: winning the gold medal and 1st open Combine Bordeaux (4,364 birds), clocked five birds on the day of liberation in the NFC Pau Grand National (560 miles) to record 5th, 10th, 64th open (6,066 birds), lifting 'The Queen Coronation Cup' and 'The Orchardson Challenge Trophy' for best two bird and three bird averages. Some of his best racers were: 'The Lerwick Cock' 8th section NRCC Lerwick (flew 604 miles on the day), then turned south road to win 1st club, 11th Federation Bergerac (450 miles). He was another premier breeder for the Les Kidd loft. 'The Pau Cock' 4th open L&SECC Pau (flew 556 miles on the day), 'My Favourite' 10th open CSCFC Pau (north east wind): 'Favourite's Sister' 21st open BBC San Sebastian, 'Pyrenees King' 8th open BBC Barcelona (702 miles), north east a very hard race, 'Misty Lady' 5th open CSCFC Tarbes (526 miles), 'Princess' 9th open CSCFC Tarbes (526 miles), 'Barcy' 8th open BICC Barcelona. 'Lady in Red', a Fear Brothers / Titmuss cross hen bred by G. Frewin and winner of 15th, 16th open BBC Palamos (655 miles), 'Le Mome Piau' (means 'Little Sparrow') 5th open BBC Barcelona (672 miles), 45th open Tarbes, 59th open Tarbes. Les owns two famous pied hens that have won the 'The Blue Riband Certificate' merit award for scoring three times in the first 100 open in the Central Southern Classic Flying Club Tarbes race.

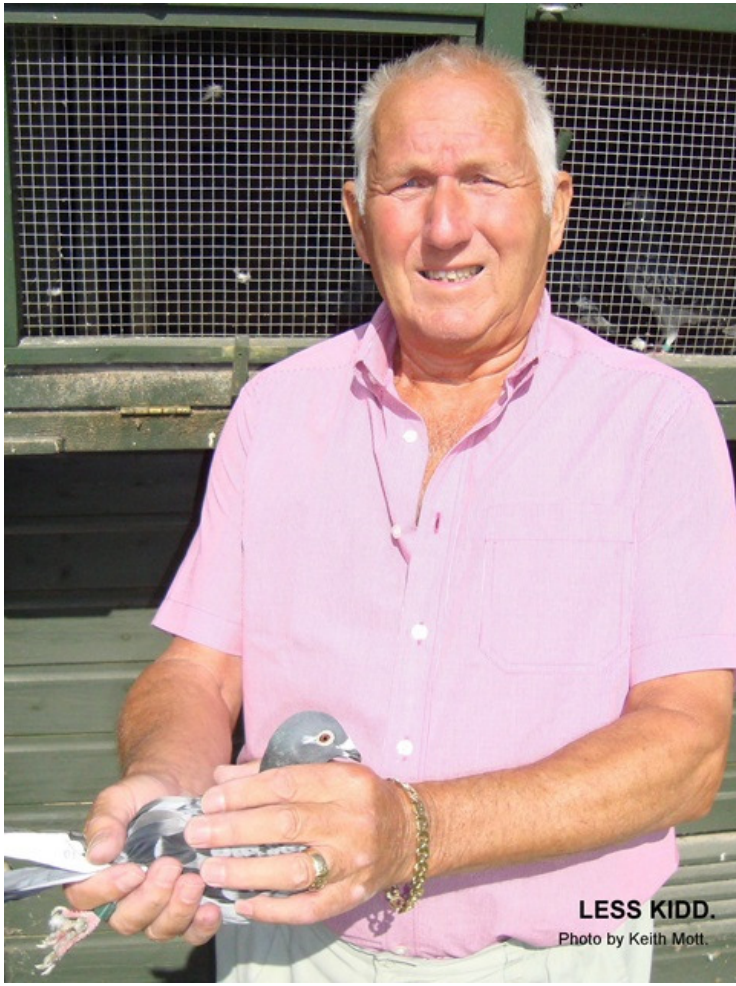
The main family raced is A. E. Sheppard of North London and go back to 1905, and these were originally obtained from the great Surrey long distance fancier, Ian Benstead of Capel. Les brings in a cross from time to time and has had great success with all English bloodlines, including: Mike Young (Spangles), Peter Titmuss, Norman Southwell and Fear Brothers. Johnny Will of Frimley is a great friend of Les' and he is famed for his great success racing long distance with the Ian Benstead pigeons, and years ago he bred Les a youngster which turned out to be the father of the New Milton loft. The champion breeding cock was the blue chequer, 'Sadler's Wills' and Les tells me, nearly all his best birds through the years go back to this wonderful pigeon. This once in a life time stock cock was named after the champion stud race horse and Les' good friend Johnny Wills! His long distance birds have given him a lot of fun over the years and he still gets a great 'buzz' from seeing his birds arrive home from races from France and Spain.

Les kept pigeons as pets as a nine year old lad where he lived in Brentford, Middlesex and tells me there was a lot of pigeon fancier on the council estate where he lived. He played a lot of football when he was young and was called up for a trial for Brentford Football Club the same as he was called up to do Army National Service at the age of eighteen years old. He got married to his wife, Cynthia, and built his first loft which was small 6ft x 4ft structure and Ernie Cloves of Ealing started him up with his first proper racing pigeons in 1962. In the early days he liked sprint racing and won the Federation from Bournemouth, Exeter and Penzance and in 1965 he won the Combine, which made up from five Federations in those days, from Bordeaux (4,364 birds). After over 50 years in the sport, Les remembers that his first club was the Ealing HS and two of the legends of the day, Freddie Meale and Tubby Tate, were in the membership. He laughed when he told me, his first birds were a right mixed bunch of 'mongrels' and the main novice mistake he made in the beginning was, sending his best birds to every race.

Being a good worker for the sport for over 50 years, Les tells me he has been a clock setter for most of his pigeon life and was taught by the old Feltham legends, Bob Carter and Jackie Newell. He told me if he could change anything in the sport he would bring back three races only per season for the National Flying Club, British Barcelona Club and Central Southern Classic Flying Club. Les maintains the Classic and National clubs are turning their programmes into ordinary Federation type programmes and are not really special any more. They should go back to one middle distance race, Tarbes or Palamos and a young bird race from France. The thing he really hates is sending his birds to 550 miles and having them liberated at mid-day, and says what's the point and what does it prove! He is a great believer in inbreeding and line breeding, and has only brought in about five or six birds in to his loft in the last 35 years to cross into his A. E. Sheppard base family. He breeds a couple of late bred each season off his best racers to even up his pairings for the following year.

It was great meeting up with Les and Cynthia again and I must say how well they both looked living that wonderful Hampshire sea air! Thanks to them both for a most enjoyable loft visit!

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



LESS KIDD.
Photo by Keith Mott.



LES KIDD'S LOFT SET UP.
Photo by Keith Mott.

"LA MOME PIAT"

Raced by Les Kidd

5th open BBC Barcelona (672 miles)

45th open CSCFC Tarbes (526 miles)

59th open CSCFC Tarbes (526 miles)



"LEO COCK"

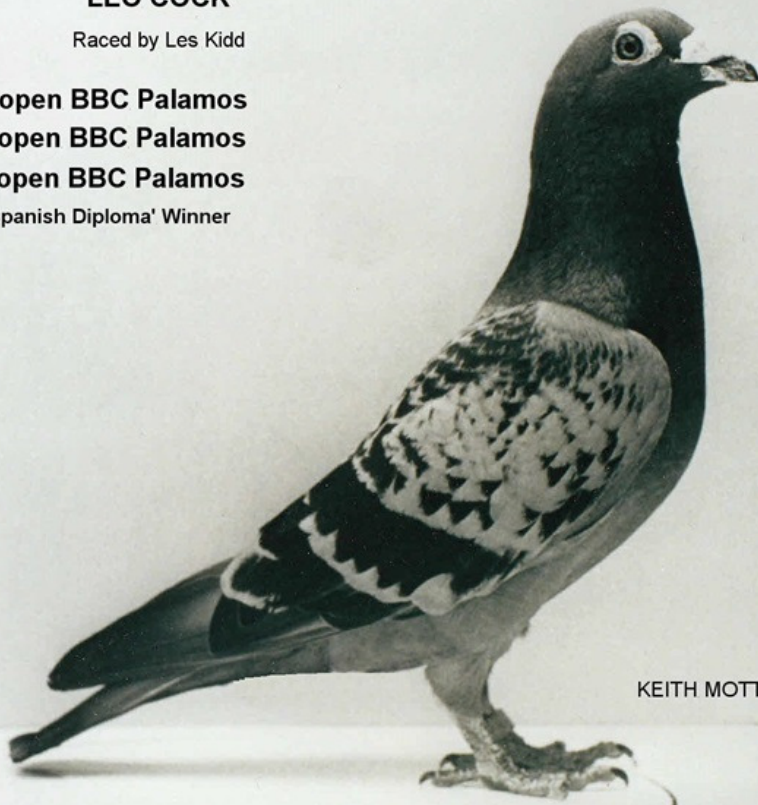
Raced by Les Kidd

43rd open BBC Palamos

59th open BBC Palamos

85th open BBC Palamos

BBC 'Spanish Diploma' Winner



KEITH MOTT

"LADY IN RED"

Raced by Les Kidd
Bred by Gary Frewin

15th open BBC Palamos
16th open BBC Palamos

