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The British Barcelona Club celebrating '50' years 2014

BRITISH BARCELONA CLUB'S 50th ANNIVERSARY

A GALLANT HEN

By S. P. NASH, of Mr. and Mrs. Nash

1st British Barcelona Club, Barcelona 1966

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It was a great thrill when I opened my loft door and saw my gallant "Shandon Queen" sitting on her favourite perch after flying 678 miles from Barcelona and winning this race by a great margin. The only thing was I was not there to greet her when she arrived home, but we made up for that afterwards.

Only just 16 weeks previous she had been stolen, but nobody knows only herself and the people who took her where she was. It was a great shock to me on a Saturday night in February to find 24 of my team of racers missing, including "Shandon Queen" when I went to feed them at 7.30 p.m. If you have never experienced this I hope that you never will, because I can tell you it is a great shock, but I class myself as being very lucky because after six weeks of worry and anxiety I had 17 return in one morning. I think this was because of the publicity that was given by the police and The Racing Pigeon and other journals that it was published in.

I kept constant look out for "Shandon Queen" that day but she did not return and I had to wait another two weeks before she came back and I must admit very fit and well. In fact, she laid within ten days of returning home. Now I had to decide whether to get her fit for this great race from Barcelona or just rest her another season.

As you all know by the result we decided to send her, and how glad my wife and I were to think that she achieved something that one great fancier said was

impossible. If I was giving advice on what pigeons to send to this race I would say the best you have in the loft as racers—and I mean racers up to 500 miles. I think the reason returns are so bad is because so many of us send so many "has beens." I am sure that it is no good sending pigeons that have won out of their turn as two-year-olds to four-year-olds and then have slowed down to start arriving two or three days late out of race time.

They will come home from a 700-mile race but many days or weeks too late. You need youth or pigeons that are still winning and racing home for these long distances of 600 miles and over.

My "Senorita de Barcelona" was three years old when she won this race and her sister, "Shandon Queen" was six years old, but, mind you, she was still racing. In fact, I timed her in from Rennes the year before I jumped her into Barcelona. It all depends on the pigeon. Some hold their youth longer than others. But I still say do not send pigeons who have had their day and have slowed down.

As regards training, my racing team gets as many tosses of 40 miles as I can give them before the first race, and after that two tosses per week according to how the race was the previous Saturday. They are given an open loft all the year round, including my youngsters. They are always let out with the old birds and I seldom lose one off the loft or have fly aways.

The old cocks seem to shepherd them and if one is nervous flying after his first fly off the loft, these old cocks seem to sense it and give a couple of hard flaps with their wings and settle them on the loft again. It is great fun just watching them. My youngsters are started training as soon as they are flying strong round the loft and are given very careful training for the first 20 miles, having as many as 10 tosses inside this distance.

I know some of the older fanciers will say they fly that distance on their own. Perhaps they do, but you must realise that we are training a baby to come home after being released from a basket which is a great experience for them. Once they are racing home to the loft with great vigour I then train them to 45 miles before the first race and they get as many tosses as I can give them at this distance. I feed on finest beans and plenty of barley in the winter, plus a tit-bit or two.

Well, I hope that this has been of interest to you all and wish everyone a good season for 1967.