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THE HOME OF LONG DISTANCE PIGEON RACING

Patron: Mark Gilbert

The British Barcelona Club celebrating '50' years 2014

BRITISH BARCELONA CLUB's 50th ANNIVERSARY (Part 25).

Wilf and Janet Reed of Upper Redbrook.

1st open BBC Palamos (736 miles) 2002.

While on holiday in the Cotswold a few years ago, my good friend, Bill Harris, arranged a great pigeon day out in Wales, visiting some premier lofts. Wilf and Janet Reed's loft in Monmouthshire must rate as one of the best long distance establishments in the U.K. today! I have been following their great performances for many years and when Bill arranged this loft visit, I was highly delighted. You have to go up a very steep track to get to 'Duffield Farm', where Wilf and Janet live, and to be quite honest, the road was so bad, and I didn't think Bill's car wouldn't make it! But we did get up there and what a treat it was when we arrived. The view was spectacular, with the lush green rolling hills and the wonderful Welsh country side. When I asked Wilf if his farm was in England or Wales, he told me his boundary fence was the border and it was in Wales.

Wilf has been a farmer all his life and tells me he is now semi-retired, spending most of his time these days with his pigeons and sheep dogs. He was the youngest of five brothers and was the one who stayed at home on the farm with his farmer father. When Wilf was a young boy, he worked on his dad's farm and in those days they didn't get wages, but if he wanted something, his father would give him some money to purchase it. Wilf has had pigeons in one form or another all his life and in the early days his father bought them for him out of adverts in the pigeon papers. Wilf started racing pigeons when he was in his early teens and his first quality birds were the Tom Clarke pigeons. He flew North Road when he was a teenager and his first big success was in his second season, when he won Thurso (500 miles). Wilf tells me, with Tom Clarke's help he flew Lerwick (600 miles) two years running. When he married Janet, he could afford to keep his pigeons, so he had to give them up for a few years, starting up again when Janet's younger brother got interested and kept a few birds. Wilf purchased all Eric Buffin's pigeons, about 70 in all, when he retired from the sport and these were very successful for the Reed loft in the early days. The foundation pigeon of the Wilf Reed loft today was a blue chequer cock called, 'The 23 Cock', and he was bred down from these original pigeons, from years ago.

Wilf and Janet have had pigeons at 'Duffield Farm' since the early 1970's and he told me years ago he used to like racing at all distances, but these days, is only interested in the long distance events. The loft's performance over the years has to be described as fantastic and is far too much to record in this article, but the highlights are: 1st open B.B.C. Palamos, 3rd open N.F.C. Pau (twice), winning the N.F.C. three bird average from Pau and the loft has won the Welsh S.R. National Flying Club several times. The 2002 season was one of the best for the Reed loft, winning the British Barcelona Club Palamos National with the blue chequer hen, 'Endurance – Pride of Wales'. This game little hen was on the natural system when she won Palamos (736 miles); beating 832 birds entered and is now in the stock loft breeding quality long distance racers. That same season Wilf and Janet won 1st open Welsh S.R. National Flying Club San Sebastian with their good blue chequer hen, 'Spanish Queen', and she flew San Sebastian (500 miles) twice that year, previously winning the club from Saintes. Two wonderful hens! The 2006 season had seen the

Reed loft win 1st open Combine from Brussels (319 miles), by 23 ypm, with 8,000 birds competing. Brilliant pigeon racing!

Wilf's very impressive loft is 50ft x 12ft, with open door trapping in to a corridor, a tiled roof and has been built 10ft off the ground. It has two big wire aviaries on the ends and Wilf told me he has been with livestock all his life and knows that to maintain good health they need plenty of fresh air. He is not keen on the Belgium closed in type lofts and says, years ago when lofts were more open, pigeons and the fanciers were healthier. Wilf races his own roundabout system for the shorter races and then repairs them up for the main long distance events. The 40 pairs of racers are paired up in late March and are fed on a good mixture which has a big percentage of Barley. The birds are given short tosses from Chepstow and Wilf likes to let them go in big training liberations to make think and sort themselves out.

The 24 pairs of stock birds are paired up the same time as the racers in late March and are housed in an old granary building, which is kitted out nicely with nest boxes and flight, to make the inmate comfortable. The first rounds of eggs from the stock loft are floated under the yearlings in the racing loft and Wilf says his birds are his own family, with the odd cross he brings in from time to time. The stock birds only breed two rounds each season, then are parted. Wilf says, when he brings in a new pigeon as a cross, it must be from the very best long distance bloodlines and likes small to medium birds, with good balance in the hand. The loft has a straw deep litter, which the birds also use for nest making. Live in the country and by a big forest, Wilf and Janet, are constantly having the birds attacked by hawks and have had many killed through the years.

Needless to say, Wilf and Janet, are wonderful livestock people and as well as being racing pigeon champions, they are also sheep dog trial champions. Wilf has always worked dogs on the farm and in the early 1960's began to do sheep dog trials, with outstanding success. He told me that he is very proud of the fact that he started with a male dog named, 'Sweep', and his successful line is still at 'Duffield Farm' today. He has represented Wales 14 times with his dogs and one year won the biggest prize in the sport, 1st International! There is eleven dogs at their farm in Monmouthshire and Wilf and Janet both have and work their own teams at the trials, travelling all over the U.K. They have all appeared on the B.B.C. TV Programme, 'One Man and His Dog', which is about sheep dog trials and their granddaughter, Kelly, appeared at the age of ten. Kelly borrowed a dog from her grandfather to go on the show and was the youngest person ever to appear on the programme.

There you have it, the great Wilf Reed of Monmouthshire! It was a great pleasure to meet Wilf and Janet, they are wonderful people and they made us very welcome at their home in the hills of Wales. I can be contacted for any comments on Telephone: 01372 463480.

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



WILF & JANET REED.

Photo by Keith Mott

WILF REED'S LOFT SET UP.

Photo by Keith Mott.



"ENDURANCE"

"PRIDE OF WALES"

Raced by Wilf & Janet Reed

2002: 1st. open B.B.C. Palamos
Flew 736 miles (832 birds).

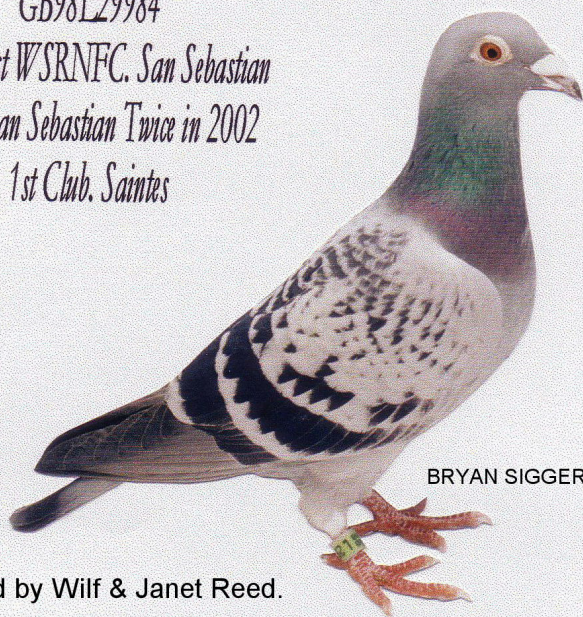
Peter Bennett



SPANISH QUEEN

GB98L29984

2002. 1st WSRNFC. San Sebastian
Flying San Sebastian Twice in 2002
1st Club. Saintes



BRYAN SIGGERS

Raced by Wilf & Janet Reed.