

Bill Stribling of Weston Super Mare

For many years fanciers would have seen the name W Stribling on many long distance results as Bill's is fanatical about long distance racing. Here is a little bit about Bill.

Bill's passion for pigeons began through a neighbour when he was about 8 or 9 years old in Ilfracombe, North Devon, but he didn't start actually racing until 1964 at the age of 22. In North Devon it was very hard to race but in 1970 he was 9th Open 6th Section NFC Nantes. Bill has been married to Rosalind for 56 years and they have three children, Gary, Jackie and Bill junior. Unfortunately, none of their children or Rosalind share Bill's enthusiasm for the birds but they do support him on the presentation nights.

His local Club is the Wraxall Village Club who compete in the West of England South Road Combine and Bill is also a member of the National Flying Club, British Barcelona Club and The British International Championship Club.

The strain of pigeons Bill has kept over the years, are all old British strains. When he was racing in Ilfracombe Bill obtained pigeons from Jim Barnes of Kent, then Reg and Myrtle Venner of Street. Bill's Venner bloodlines are now supplied from Dave Vowles of Street. In more recent times has also swapped pigeons with Phil Newton, (Bill likes to call Phil's pigeons "the Van Newtons"). One of the pigeons Phil gave Bill bred 2nd Open 1st Section BBC Palamos which was a Staf van Reet x Ken Hine cock bird.

All the birds are housed in just the one loft which is 16ft x 6ft and has 3 sections: 2 x 6ft by 6ft compartments which are for the old birds and 1 x 4ft by 6ft compartment for the young birds. Bill races roughly 28 old birds and keeps 8 stock pigeons which are let out. Approximately 20 youngsters are breed to race and another 10 later young birds are bred. The old birds all have one round of youngsters and once racing starts the pigeons are on roundabout for about 5 or 6 weeks then they are paired together for the longer races. No more than 6 birds are ever entered for the specialist racing. Bill gets a lot of self satisfaction from sending a small team.

For years Bill used to train from Yeovil which was 40 miles away 2 or 3 times a week but when he moved to Weston Super Mare in 1971 he became friends with Bill Morris of Elson which lead to them both joining the Weston Club and Bill started to train with Bill Morris. After 45 years both Bills still phone each other most weeks. Because of hawks this year Bill has mostly flown with the West of England South Road Combine but lost a lot of yearlings. He began the season with 26 old birds and ended up with only 8 left which is rare as most years he does not lose that many.

The feeding regime during the winter time is Tick Beans from Steve Willis of Bridgwater and Barley. The racing corn is purchased from Gary Summers of Nailsea and is Gem Supplements corn which is very good. Bill also gives the birds Gem products as well.

Bill's preference is the extreme long distance racing and his most memorable performances over the years have been in 1981 when Bill won a Spanish Diploma with a pigeon who flew

Palamos 3 times in race time and also Pau 4 times. As an 8 year old, this pigeon also took 4th Section 18th Open.

Bill's luck seemed to change when he retired from bus driving in 2000. In 2009 he was 4th Open 2nd Section BBC Barcelona with a hen called "Sylvia" (GB 05 N 70987) named after his Mum who went on to win a Spanish Diploma in 2012 by taking 27th Open 5th Section BBC Palamos 2011 and 42nd Open 6th Section BBC Barcelona 2012.

In 2010 Bill was 10th Open 1st Section BBC Barcelona with another good hen GB 07 C 93500 "the 500 hen". This same pigeon was also 99th Open 13th Section BBC Bordeaux. 2011 saw "Bill's Boy" (GB 07 C 24513) win 2nd Open 1st Section BBC Palamos he also flew BBC Messac the previous year taking 8th Open 1st Section.

2015 it was "Dave's" (GB 12 N 02485) turn to shine. He won 6th Open 1st Section BBC Palamos going 3 positions better in 2016 to take 3rd Open 1st Section BBC Barcelona and also 2nd Open 1st West Section BICC giving a fantastic performance in a very hard Barcelona race, with the wind a very strong west and the birds arriving from the East side of the country, this pigeon put up a brave fight to make it over to the west side flying 729 miles only 2 yards behind the winner in Fontwell, West Sussex and 1 yard behind 2nd place in Newhaven. Hopefully 2017 will see "Dave" winning another Spanish Diploma for Bill.

When asked who Bill has admired over the years and in the present time he replied; In the early 80's it was Sam and Roly Fear, Jim Hooper who flew a good pigeon in them days when he had more time, and most recently Vince and Dave Padfield who are located in a bad position flying over 750 miles but still getting the results.

Finally, Bill's main aim has always been quality not quantity and would like to see birdage limits on races. He feels our wonderful hobby is being killed by greedy fanciers "he hopes only a few". How can a new young fancier ever afford to buy a loft, ETS and enough birds to be able to compete with the rest.



Bill at the BBC Presentation 2016.



Taken in 2011.



Bill's first Spanish Diploma Winner



Bill's collection of trophies collected in 2016.