

**2009 NEHU Folkestone Classic 09/05/2009**  
**Provisional Top 10 – 36,790 pigeons**

Sponsored by Unikon & GARVO Corns

1 Donaldson & Son	Chevington Drift – 1737.36
2 P Stobbs & Son	Consett - 1734.00
3 Donaldson & Son	Chevington Drift – 1733.23
4 Donaldson & Son	Chevington Drift - 1732.68
5 M Straughan	Alnwick - 1732.64
6 W O Gray	Amble - 1732.35
7 P Stobbs & Son	Consett - 1730.86
8 Mr & Mrs Smails	Holywell - 1729.58
9 Graham, Gilchrist & Brennan	Boldon Colliery - 1727.92
10 J Gallagher	Jarrow - 1727.05

Since its inception in 2006 the NEHU Folkestone Classic is now rightly acknowledged as the largest entry UK Classic Race on the Calendar, its importance in the UK pigeon sport has also been recognised commercially as our existing Sponsor UNIKON (Deister Electronics) who have again provided an ETS system for first open have been joined by GARVO Corns from the Netherlands (thanks to the main UK distributor Jonathan Sage), who have come up with Prizes from their range of Corn and By Products for the Fanciers taking the first Ten open positions. The Officials of the NEHU thank them for supporting both our membership and the Folkestone Classic.

Entry to the race is open to any NEHU member and a total entry of 36,790 pigeons were conveyed by the four racing organisations within the NEHU, the Up North Combine (25,446 Birds), West Durham Amalgamation (7,321 Birds), Durham Combine (2,463 Birds) and the New North Amalgamation (1,560 Birds).

The Liberation took place at 08:15 on the 9<sup>th</sup> May when the convoy was released into a South West Wind which turned Southerly as the pigeons journeyed up country to their home lofts.

Given the testing races in the fortnight preceding the Folkestone race and a forecast for blustery South West Winds the total entry was down by 9,199 pigeons on the 2008 race. If the Bookmakers had laid odds on the location of the First Open Winner there would have been plenty of money staked on East Cleveland, however that was not to be the case on the day and a loft 26 miles West from East Cleveland in Northumberland was 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Open and a loft even further into the West of the NEHU boundaries at Consett in County Durham was 2<sup>nd</sup> Open.

Taking First and Third NEHU Classic and also creating a piece of Up North Combine history is the loft of Bob Donaldson of Chevington Drift in the Coquetdale Federation who clocked a hen and two cocks to take 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> UNC from 25,446 pigeons and 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Open NEHU Classic. Although covering only the first 3 Open in detail, I feel I must give a quick mention to the two other lofts from the same Federation as Bob Donaldson who were all on the same Yard as Bob's third timer to be 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>

UNC and also 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> NEHU Classic - M Straughan of Alnwick and Wattie Gray of Amble. Well done to all three.

Back to the Open winner, “Young” Bob Donaldson is a master at racing pigeons and alongside “Old” Bob his father, the Donaldson family have a list of Combine wins to the wilds of Northumberland sixty plus miles further than the Combine’s first drop that stands comparison with any loft in the UNC.

“Young” Bob won 1<sup>st</sup> UNC Lillers in 1971 in a memorable year for the family as part of the partnership of Donaldson & Cracket and a few weeks later “Old” Bob won 1<sup>st</sup> UNC Beauvais in the partnership of Cracket Bros & Donaldson. “Old” Bob topped the Combine from Lillers in 1981 and “Young” Bob was 1<sup>st</sup> UNC and 1<sup>st</sup> NEHU Open from Bourges in 2008. Sadly “Old” Bob passed away a couple of years ago but even at 93 years of age the last pigeon he clocked for “Young” Bob was 17<sup>th</sup> UNC from Bourges as “Young” Bob was away at the Fed HQ reporting the lofts first two timers!

The pigeons taking first and third NEHU Folkestone Classic are related and also have a very important thing in common with the pigeon that is 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Classic for Paul Stobbs and Son of the Consett Federation, that is plenty of previous form, none of the pigeons taking 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Open are one hit wonders or lucky strikes they are all pigeons with an impressive list of previous performances.

Bob’s first two timers are related, having nestmates for the dam and sire respectively. This pair were obtained from the Ponderosa Stud of Hans Eijerkamp & Sons in the Netherlands in 2000 and have produced many good pigeons between them.

First Open is a four year old cracking blue hen “The 36 Hen” who has a list of prizes that includes Six First Clubs, Two First Feds and at least 20 Fed Cards with at least 3 of those as a Youngster. Bred from a Busschaert Cock from pigeons obtained from Gerald Thurston of Whitley Bay and Ali Bros of South Shields and the previously mentioned Janssen hen from the Ponderosa. So it is a mix of the old original West Durham Busschaerts tested for 30+ years in the UNC blended with the best of the performance Janssens from Holland.

A good consistent hen, she arrived a minute clear of Bob’s 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> timer but although normally a good trapper this time she messed around a little. She was initially not planned to be in the team for 2009 as Bob thought she was losing a little speed with age, but being short of yearling hens a vacancy arose and she was put back in the team, a Fed turn from Melton Mowbray and then 1<sup>st</sup> NEHU Classic may have taken the edge of Bob’s disappointment at the lack of yearling hens.

Third Open is a 3 Year Old Chequer Pied Cock “The 57 Cock” and again has plenty of previous form. Bred from the Ponderosa Janssen Cock (nestmate to the mother of 1<sup>st</sup> NEHU Classic) when coupled to a hen from Martin Ali bred direct from his 1<sup>st</sup> UNC Lillers x 1<sup>st</sup> UNC Maidstone.

Having met Bob before and spoken to him while gathering this information it is clear he is a 100% dedicated and only the best is brought in and he takes his sport seriously. Although having a history to be proud of Bob is forward thinking and is an advocate of ETS as he uses it as an evaluation tool (and has done so from training for 10 years with UNIKON), if fanciers appreciated the benefits it gives in loft administration they would realise it gives far greater benefit than timing pigeons in on a race day. A sheet is kept covering the team throughout the season and any pigeon scoring in the Club

gets a red dot and a Green Dot for a Fed turn. It is simple at the end of the year to select out the one hit wonders and duck eggs and only keep consistent good performers for the following season.

Taking First, Second and Fourth West Durham Amalgamation and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Open NEHU Folkestone Classic is a loft that has come back with a bang after a 19 year break from the sport, that of Paul Stobbs and Son of Consett Federation, competing in two Clubs (Leadgate H.S. & Medomsley Pretoria H.S.) the Stobbs family have been fortunate to have topped the Consett Federation 24 times since re-starting and have achieved more at Amalgamation level than the average member wins in a lifetime, this being their 3<sup>rd</sup> outright win since re starting in 2006 to go with 3 x 2<sup>nd</sup> WDA. The whole Stobbs family are involved with the pigeons, Paul, his Father Billy, Brother Mark & Paul's young Son, Paul Junior. For the Stobbs family pigeon racing is again like Bob Donaldson carried out professionally with nothing left to chance. On restarting the loft was designed with climate control in mind to prevent unnecessary draft and temperature/humidity fluctuation which of course make it difficult to keep our athletes in optimal condition and the best available stock was obtained from Nigel Laycock, Frank Sheader and Ian Stafford.

The winner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Open NEHU Classic is a Yearling Chequer White Flight Cock named the Gypsy after his habit of going travelling as a youngster (even going as far to visit two other lofts in the WDA). There is quite a story behind this young cock, early in 2008 a parcel arrived in the post at the Stobbs home containing 30 Maltese rings to be rung at the Stobbs loft and raced in Malta by a good friend of the family. However like a lot of plans made around that time they were thrown awry by Bird Flu restrictions and the pigeons were retained by the Stobbs family and raced in the UK. Last year the same pigeon topped the WDA from the Billericay Young Bird National against 6,944 birds and has since had the fastest velocity from the Ten Federations making up the WDA from Newark between his Amalgamation wins. Bred from the best descendents of the Original 1990 Jos Soontjen imports obtained from both Frank Sheader and Nigel Laycock, this cock goes back to the 601 on both sides, the Sire bred from a pair from Frank Sheader and the Dam bred from a pair from Nigel Laycock.

Congratulations to the Stobbs family for another outstanding performance into the most North Westerly Federation within the West Durham Amalgamation Radius and well into the West of the NEHU.

Winning the Durham Combine is the loft of Bamling & Earl from Coxhoe H.S in the Mid Durham South Federation doing 1707.12 ypm.

The New North Amalgamation topper is the loft of Graham & Son from the Northumberland Federation with a velocity of 1717.27 ypm.

Once again congratulations to all those lofts who scored from Folkestone throughout the NEHU and again a big thanks to our Sponsors for the Folkestone Classic UNIKON and GARVO Corn.

Next on the agenda is the Queens Cup from Clermont scheduled for the 6<sup>th</sup> of June when the NEHU will be competing in the biggest Middle Distance Channel race

within the UK with an expected birdage of around 15,000 pigeons flying a minimum of 370 miles to the first drop in the NEHU.

The NEHU