

North of England Homing Union Folkestone Classic 2010

Wade Brothers of West Auckland strike Gold!

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| 1. Wade Bros – West Auckland WCHS (WDA) | 1316 YPM |
| 2. Linsley & Watson – Cockfield HS (WDA) | 1299 YPM |
| 3. Myers Bros – Great Ayton HS (UNC) | 1295YPM |
| 4. B Long Middlestone Moor HS (DC) | 1294 YPM |
| 5. Morton, Son & Hodgeson – Hamilton & Dist (WDA) | 1293 YPM |

Monday the 10th of May 2010 saw approximately 26,550 pigeons belonging to members of the North of England Homing Union liberated at Folkestone in Kent to race back to lofts competing in the four racing organisations affiliated to the North of England Homing Union.

The membership of the Durham Combine, New North Amalgamation, Up North Combine and the West Durham Amalgamation were also competing for an array of prizes & specials including the R Patterson Trophy for 1st Open, as well as the Trophies up for competition in the four individual racing organisations, Federations and Club's along with prize money and pools and a £50 Special for the first FUT rung yearling on the result. In addition the race was Sponsored by UNIKON (Deister Electronics), GARVO Corns, The Racing Pigeon and Tauris UK.

Following an inclement forecast which pointed to a delayed liberation the birdage was significantly reduced on 2009 with a drop of 10,000 pigeons. This can in part be explained due to members of the WDA, NNA & DC basketting on the Thursday and a number of members sending a reduced team or missing the race as there was little chance of a race until the Sunday at the earliest. The UNC postponed race marking until the Saturday, however the testing Rivenhall the previous Monday also reduced the send from the UNC as members in some cases only sent part of their teams back to Folkestone.

However the race itself was a resounding success with early pigeons being timed throughout the boundaries of the NEHU but none could touch the Yearling Blue Pied Widowhood Hen owned and raced by Martin & Richard Wade of West Auckland WCHS, Cockfield Federation and the West Durham Amalgamation.

The morning after the race I had the pleasure of going to visit Richard and Martin to verify their winning Yearling Hen, now named "Jean" in honour of their Mother and as a reference to the help from Fred & Jean Gray of Newbiggin who loaned one of the Grand Dam's of the winner to the lads.

Jean is a Widowed hen and is bred from a Half Brother & Sister mating, with both parents being bred in Martin & Richard's stock loft from a Son of 36 Cock of Andre Roodhoft when paired to a top racing hen on loan from Fred & Jean Gray through their Andre Roodhoft lines to produce a Chequer Cock and to a Dtr of the lads own "Skull" Cock to produce the Dam.

Jean raced consistently as a Youngster and for the first 5 races of the season before claiming the big prize, but she is not resting on her laurels as she has already raced since the open win and is now being aimed at the WDA Maidstone race at the end of May.

A half Sister to Jean already has 2 x 1st Feds, 2 x 2nd Feds and 30th WDA Billericay YB's and 5th WDA Arras.

Another youngster of the Sire to Jean won £1000 in the Cockerton Breeder Buyer for the lads.

The only 2 youngsters to leave the loft of the parents to Jean went to Young Bros & Dowson of New Brancepeth and both are 1st prizewinners and one was responsible for the Best Youngster in the Club in 2009.

Martin & Richard are currently enjoying a rich vein of form in a big competitive club with up to 600 pigeons away a week they have won 4 x 1sts Club and 3 x 1sts Feds from 7 races. In fact the lads were 2nd & 3rd Fed the weekend after Folkestone.

Martin and Richard fly to the garden their father kept pigeon on and in fact Martin is celebrating his Golden Jubilee on the site having started helping his Dad while in short trousers! Martin at 56 is retired and Richard a youthful 47.

A third Brother Russell also competes in West Auckland in the partnership of Wade & Hogg.

The lads have a L Shaped set up consisting of a tiled roof widowhood & YB loft facing South and a easterly facing pent roof hens loft facing East separated by a sitting cabin/corn store.

Following a cowardly theft a few years back the stock pigeons are now located elsewhere.

The team is now predominately 90% Andre Roodhoft, with the odd Van Reet, Vand De Rhee & Van De Heuvel Brothers contributing to the success.

A team of 20 Widowhood cocks and 14 Widowhood Hens is raced with Richard being in charge of the Cocks and Martin concentrating on the hens due to Richard's work commitments, but each can cover the others team as necessary and both partners discuss what is happening with each team. The partners to both teams are at home to greet their mates at all times.

A team of approximately 45 youngsters is reared to be selected down to 40 for the race team. It is worth pointing out West Auckland has a 20 bird limit and can still send 600+ pigeons week!

The lads do train but not as heavily as they used to as they usually manage to whittle the team down themselves with injuries from training as the pigeons go wherever Richard is working from. Be it North, East, South or West!

Feeding is certainly different in that the whole team has a hopper in front early week containing a mixture of Beans/Barley & Breed & Wean. The last 3 to 4 feeds is made up of Widow Mix blended from 3 different widow mixtures the lads select from the local suppliers, choosing the best available within their budget. £5 Beans make up the bulk of the corn purchased.

The old bird team are treached for Canker every 3 weeks and if necessary treated if not felt to be performing correctly.

The lads are using more cider vinegar this season to acidify the crop and reduce the Canker count and it is certainly not hurting!

The Young Bird team are in the main bred from the stock team and such is the strength in the stock loft only one round is taken. Fed on the house mix until a couple of weeks before the first race they are then fed house mix early week and Marimans Super Winner for the last few feeds but measured feeds. Again the Youngsters are worked hard, having 2 x 17 mile tosses a day from a week before the first race until the end of the season, and it has to be extreme weather for them not to go.

Richard & Martin compete wherever they can in Breeder/Buyers, Show Races etc., it is noticeable that when speaking to Robert Linsley (2nd Open) he complimented the lads as good workers for the sport/their Club & Fed by helping to promote and organise the West Auckland Show Races each season.

Introductions on the whole come from racing fanciers and they have to be result focussed, not paper pedigree's.

Both lads keep their eyes and ears open and are always looking for an edge to keep in front on a Saturday. Having previously topped the WDA from Beauvais, Brands Hatch and Arras they are obviously paying attention.

The £500 Cash prize from the Racing Pigeon, A new Unikon Champ, the GARVO Products won and the Gold Medal from Tauris UK will certainly give them something to smile about for the future. Well Done again Lads.

Second Open goes to the partnership of Linsley & Watson of Cockfield H.S. in the Cockfield Federation and West Durham Amalgamation.

The partnership is formed of Robert Linsley & Lenny Watson. Robert previously competed as Eric Dent & Partner to the current loft on Cockfield Fell and the loft was 1st, 3rd & 4th Open NEHU Queens Cup back in 1995 from 17,487 pigeons. Robert has 4 x 1st WDA in partnership with Eric and one First with Lenny in 2008 from Arras. The lads were also 2nd NEHU Queens Cup from Eastbourne a few season's back when Bird Flu stopped Channel racing.

Lenny also is a long standing Cockfield member and after his previous partnership was dissolved he was approached by Robert as now suffering from Asthma the time in the loft had to be reduced.

The Second Open winner is a Widow Cock, 2 years old and a winner from day 1, he won the 1st YB race, had a first from Billericay as a Yearling and has been consistent all this season. He was bred by Dave Dockray of the Cleveland Bridge H.S. from one of his Ad Schaerlaeckens stock cocks when coupled to a Vandenabeele hen on loan from Robert & Lenny.

Robert & Lenny race a team of 32 Widowhood Cocks, paired up Blackpool weekend and split after sitting the second round of eggs for a short time. Feeding is Gerry Plus on the spoon early week and Super Widowhood for the last 3 feeds.

A team of 40 Darkness youngsters is raced through the whole programme.

Like the open winner the 2nd Open winner was timed on ETS and Robert was most appreciative of its introduction within the NEHU and the benefits it gives the pigeons and the fancier.

Robert complimented Richard & Martin on their win as they are good Club & Fed members and work hard for their success.

When Robert joined Eric in 1969 he was advised to have patience and to congratulate the winners and that advice has never left his thoughts.

On learning that Eric was retiring Robert approached M & D Evans for some Vandenabeele pigeons and they certainly have been a good pick as the lads 1st WDA Arras was bred through these pigeons and now the 2nd Open Winner is 50% Vandenabeele.

Taking Third Open NEHU Folkestone Classic and 1st Up North Combine is the partnership of Myers Bros (Roseberry Lofts) of Great Ayton H.S. in the Teesside Federation.

Mick and Chris have returned to the sport 2 and a half years ago after competing in Great Ayton as young men before concentrating on their careers/business/families.

On restarting the lads purchased John & Jamie Tranters racing loft and what a lovely set up, in a cracking spot.

Due to Chris having a broken leg, his wife Nichola timed the winner now named "Roseberry Queen" in.

Having restarted recently the lads are racing a larger team of around 100 old birds, larger than they would like but they are currently going through an evaluation phase to test the different lines they have. The team is raced on Roundabout/Total Widowhood and were paired up in early March and raced dry.

The hens are kept on perches in the week and the cocks have the nest boxes.

The lads winning hen "Roseberry Queen" is a 2 year Old Dark Hen of Louis Van Leemputten lines from Roy & Mally Wright of Dunsville, Doncaster. She has scored before and in fact was 2nd Club, 11th Fed Rivenhall the Monday before the Folkestone race.

The lads currently have 23 pairs at stock and these are a mix of Louis Van Leemputten, Koopman, Van Loons and Ron Williamson Busschaerts. All families are throwing winners and Chris intends to reduce them to 15 couples at the end of the season as he needs to concentrate on work again!

Day to day management is shared between Chris & Mick and Nichola is the look out on race day and assists timing in.

Again like the first two open winners the lads compete in a big strong Club & Federation and with the likes of Trevor Taylor on their doorstep (Marsay, Taylor & Robinson) any prizes are hard won.

The youngsters are darkened down and raced down the whole programme.

Feeding is simple, Versele Laga and good racing mix all week.

The team is exercised around home and trained whenever it is felt appropriate.

Congratulations Chris, Mick and Nichola and what a comeback.

The NEHU would like to thank their Sponsors for the 2010 Folkestone Classic UNIKON (Deister Electronics), Garvo Corns "The Racing Pigeon Weekly", the UK's oldest pigeon and also TAURIS UK and Gary Tomlinson, their UK.

Thanks are also due to the Editors & Staff of the British Homing World, The Racing Pigeon Weekly and The Australian Racing Pigeon Journal for the publicity they continue to give to the North of England Homing Union and its members.

The next race on the Calendar for all the members of the NEHU is the Queens Cup from Clermont due to be flown on the 5th of June.

The NEHU