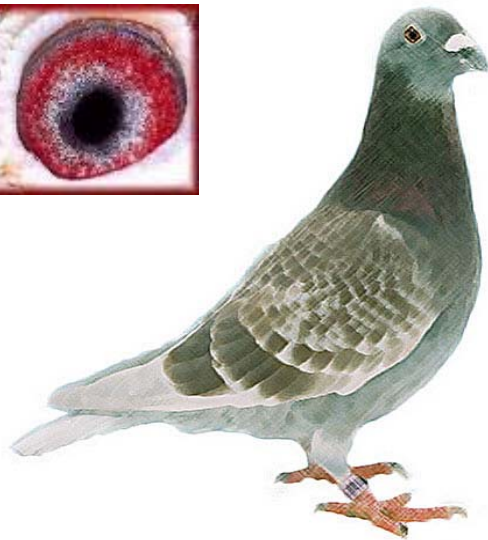


# MONTH BY MONTH with Chris



Champion "Tracey's Red" winner of the N.W.C.C. Hall of Fame and over £5,000 in his racing career, for Chris Knowles of Woodley, Stockport.

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## November : The Guy Fawkes Plot!

For all the happenings throughout history, during the month of November, perhaps the most famous is the plot to blow up the houses of parliament.



From being a child I grew up to look forward to 5th November and Bonfire night as I enjoyed the thrill of fireworks and all that went with that evening. The history at the time meant little to me.

In 1605, thirteen young men planned to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Among them was Guy Fawkes, Britain's most notorious traitor.

After Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, English Catholics who had been persecuted under her rule had hoped that her successor, James I, would be more tolerant of their religion. James I had, after all, had a Catholic mother. Unfortunately, James did not turn out to be more tolerant than Elizabeth and a number of young men, 13 to be exact, decided that violent action was the answer.

A small group took shape, under the leadership of Robert Catesby. Catesby felt that violent action was warranted. Indeed, the thing to do was to blow up the Houses of Parliament. In doing so, they would kill the King, maybe even the Prince of Wales, and the Members of Parliament who were making life difficult for the Catholics. Today these conspirators would be known as extremists, or terrorists.

To carry out their plan, the conspirators got hold of 36 barrels of gunpowder - and stored them in a cellar, just under the House of Lords.

But as the group worked on the plot, it became clear that innocent people would be hurt or killed in the attack, including some people who even fought for more rights for Catholics. Some of the plotters started having second thoughts. One of the group members even sent an anonymous letter warning his friend, Lord Monteagle, to stay away from the Parliament on November 5th. The warning letter reached the King, and the King's forces made plans to stop the conspirators.

Guy Fawkes, who was in the cellar of the parliament with the 36 barrels of gunpowder when the authorities stormed it in the early hours of November 5th, was caught, tortured and executed.

**Lancashire Social Circle:** Once again the LSC November gathering was a great weekend and it was good to meet with friends again from all over the UK and share a few drinks and exchange stories, ideas and theories.



Above left are Brian Denny with Keith Turner and right is myself and Rod Adams putting the world to right whilst Keith Turner masters his new camera. Below Brian and myself try to hold the smiles whilst Keith gets the shot!



Unfortunately I can't include pictures of all the friends that were there or I would. The ones that I have included are friends who don't live close to me and I only see at such gatherings or like Brian were at the LSC as a guest on this occasion. Each of these three guys are great fanciers but more importantly they are great people to spend your social time with! It is gatherings such as this, that make pigeon racing a special part of my life and without such I don't think that racing and winning etc. Would be sufficient stimulus to keep me in the sport. I hope that the future of our sport brings with it a return to the values held in years gone by when getting together and sharing each others company and success, was the norm. Fanciers look upon it as a pleasure and an honour!

There is a connection between the history factor of Guy Fawkes etc. and the LSC. Maybe not so obvious but never the less very significant. We learn from history and we learn from other fanciers. For me one of the most intriguing aspect of this sport, despite having been involved from the age of 5 years old, and that is that I never stop learning. Every season racing is a test of what I have learned both over the years and over the previous winter. Now I think more than ever, with the ever changing weather and seasons, affected by global warming, we need to constantly re-evaluate the whole process of pigeon racing. In my part of the world for example, we get far more races of high velocity between April and late May than ever we did. This means less opportunity to give your distance pigeons that all important time on the wing as preparation for their channel program. Inevitably unless you plan to offset this in some way, then the losses will be greater and the results not so good. Now is the time of year to rethink race programs and start dates of race seasons etc. If we are to manage change and keep the cost to a minimum.



The above four race cocks are housed in two different lofts, the three on blocks are in an East facing loft and the red in a South facing loft. Both lofts have daily aviary access and are closed up at 16.00 Hrs each day and opened at 09.00 Hrs. As you can see from these recent photos (14/11/2009) all are ½ way up on their 10th primary flight.

The most significant point for me is that the moult is the same for the chequer cock as it is for the other three. The reason I say this is that he raced 4 times from France at 291 miles, 387 miles, 387 miles and 535 miles. The other cocks only flew races up to 188 miles and all four cocks reared a youngster before racing. The moult is telling me that all four pigeons are in good health and have a good constitution and that their respective loft environments are also good. These four have not been hand picked and they are the same as birds in other sections with the exception of the Ybs which were on a light controlled system for racing and they have 2 or 3 primaries still to cast. Summer bred youngsters that have not raced are virtually through their moult.

All birds have been receiving good supplies of vitamins and minerals with plenty of garlic in their water. Their diet now contains 50% of a good quality barley and 50% of a good all round mix with a protein content that would be OK for breeding. The feather quality is very good and their wattles snow white as they should be and this I attribute to the use of natural products like garlic and herbal teas which I use extensively at this time of year. All birds will soon be given a fourteen day course of parastop and then the breeders will have lights on until 22.00 Hrs for two to three weeks before I pair them up.

**Good friends are like stars.....  
You don't always see them,  
But you know they are always there.**

Until next month, Enjoy your pigeons! **Chris K**