

*Scottish National Flying Club*  
*Established 1894*

**YPRES 2009**

For our first channel race of the season; we again experienced a marvellous entry with over 1400 birds competing; In this Ypres race the 298 members entered 1243 birds; the remaining 200 birds were made up from federation who used the club's conveying facilities; The SNFC section birdage was as follows; Section A; 89 birds; B 139 birds; C 153 birds; D 61 birds; E 648 birds; F 77 birds; G 76 birds; broken down into the following Regions; North 76; South 89; East 353; and West 725 up 1035 birds on last years entry from the Commemoration Ypres Race. This year we were competing for £11,560.78p in pools and prize money.

The convoy were held over on the Friday due to weather conditions on the channel and the south of England; and were liberated at 06.30am on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July into a light west wind.

**Race controllers report Ypres 3rd – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July**

**05.00** Informed by Colin that visibility at Ypres was only around 3-5 miles.

**05.30** the race control team of myself, Raymond White and Richard Combe agreed that although there was very little chance of a liberation because of the bad weather moving across from the west to the east we would wait until 07.30 to see if things would improve with the latest forecasts.

**07.30** In the best interests of the convoy the decision was taken to hold the pigeons to Saturday were the forecast was to be fresher and cooler.

**Friday evening** phoned Colin to tell him that it was looking promising for a liberation and would be looking at a early liberation.

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July, 04.30** Checked various weather info and webcam sites along Belgium coast and on the line of flight in the UK and was extremely pleased at what I was encountering which was blue skies with the sun starting to come up with good visibility.

**04.50** Phoned Colin were because of the webcam at Ypres I was able to tell him that it was blue skies with a couple of white fluffy clouds to which he agreed, informed him how it was clear at the crossing point Nieuwpoort and all the way along the part of the coast, informed him that I was going to do the final couple of phone calls and would get back to him ASAP for a liberation, asked about the pigeons welfare to which he replied everything was good and that all the drinkers had been tapped up at 04.30. **05.00** Raymond White was happy with all the information that he had to hand and the info that I was supplying him with, and was happy whilst conditions were still cool to get these pigeons up ASAP as temps although cooler were still to be around 25oC. **05.10** Contacted UNC convoyer Steve Proffitt who was in charge of the liberation from Andrezel with the SNFC birds to which he told me that he was very happy with the line of flight and at the channel at Dover the visibility with the coastguard was good at 10 miles, he added that they were going at 05.45.

**05.15** Contact in Ramsgate TJ informed me that it was a lovely morning with blue skies with visibility 9+ miles. **05.20** Phoned Colin to tell him as long as he was happy at the lib site to get them ready for liberating **05.25** Steve Proffitt phoned to tell me that there were going to liberate at 05.30. **05.30** contacted Richard were he informed me that he was happy to go for a liberation; as his info was very good for a successful race. **05.20** At this point it was left with Colin to liberate the pigeons, Colin phoned

later and said the pigeons were liberated at 06.30 into a light west wind and that the pigeons turned once and headed in the correct direction and was very happy with the liberation.

**Gareth Rankin**

**SNFC Race controller**

**Convoyers Report – Ypres 2009**

On Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July after dropping off baskets at Fife; Dundee and Aberdeen; left Aberdeen on time picking up Dundee and Fife with no problems being experienced. Made way to Bo'ness and loaded Bo'ness and Easthouses baskets. On way to Uddingston stopped at Greengairs to drop off empty baskets and pick up feeding. Secretary was in attendance at Greengairs and after securing the transporter followed me to Uddingston. Baskets loaded and Andrezel baskets transferred to the Ballochmyle transporter. Left Uddingston with the President on board, we arrived at Greta marking station at approx. 11.30pm. Loaded baskets and were on our way by 11.50pm and travelled as far south as Lancaster Services where we had a 45 minute rest before continuing on to Dover arriving at 10am. Picked up our ticket and I requested an open deck slot for the sake of the pigeons as the temperature was 30 degrees C. This meant we would be among the last to board. I was then instructed to drive the transporter to a covered bay to await inspection by animal welfare. Three female officials arrived and asked us to remove the padlocks and seals and open rear doors of transporter. They looked inside but did not enter the transporter. They asked quite a number of questions which the President and I answered. They were very happy with what they saw and the answers we gave them. They wished us safe journey and left. I moved the transporter to our lane. Curtains were opened and drinkers put on for 1.5 hours. We boarded the ferry after closing the curtains but kept the drinkers on and drove very slowly up the ramp and onto the ferry at 11.30am.

Arrived at Calais at 1.00pm and the journey to Stefaan Van Moerbeke's Garage took over 1.5 hours. On arrival the curtains were opened. Drinkers removed for cleaning and while I fed the birds the president and Stefaan put the drinkers back on and refilled them from a water connection from the Garage. We felt that this was ideal as it was cold fresh water. Liberation site did not have this facility. We waited at the rear of the transporter and watched how easy it was for the birds to access to the water as each basket had 2 drinkers. After half an hour the drinkers were topped up.

At 6.00pm with the assistance of the President and Stefaan the drinkers were cleaned and refilled. This was repeated at 7.30pm.

Race controller Gareth Rankin phoned to say that prospects were not too good for Friday liberation and would phone again on Friday at 4.45am. When he contacted me, he reported poor visibility of 3 to 5 miles. He said there was rain over the east of England and little chance of a race, but to give it a while. He phoned again to say it was a holdover. Birds watered at 5.30am, 7.30am and again at 8.30am with the same procedure of cleaning and refilling the drinkers being used. This is an ongoing requirement to prevent a build up of shavings in the drinkers. Gareth phoned later to say prospects were looking good for Saturday and would phone at 4.30am.

On Saturday morning, the drinkers were cleaned and topped up with fresh water from the garage supply. Liberated the birds at 6.30am into a light west wind; with the birds clearing immediately in the direction of Calais as the Belgian fanciers had predicted; I contacted Gareth with the President and two Belgian fanciers at my side, confirmed liberation; On our return crossing, we ran into low lying dense fog which persisted all the way to Dover.

Colin Gray – SNFC Convoyer at Ypres.

## Section & Open Race Winners

### Section B

|  |                                      |        |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> section 1 <sup>st</sup> open | Willie Kinnear & son Barry Edinburgh | 1368   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> section 2 <sup>nd</sup> open | J & G Whitson Pencaitland            | 1323   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> section 7 <sup>th</sup> open | Willie Kinnear & son Barry Edinburgh | 1287.4 |



*Young Reekie winner of 1<sup>st</sup> open SNFC Ypres 2009*

1<sup>st</sup> section 1<sup>st</sup> east region 1<sup>st</sup> open are the father and son partnership of Willie Kinnear & son Barry from Gilmerton in Edinburgh; they timed in a yearling blue chequer cock now named Young Reekie. Fanciers may remember the partnership won 1<sup>st</sup> open SNFC Gold Cup race from Le Farte Bernard with Auld Reekie named after Scotland's capital city. Young Reekie was born a first round youngster in February 2008; he raced as a darkness youngster and completed in all 8 Pentland Hills federation young bird races from Otterburn 61 miles through to Newark 216 miles.

This year he was paired up on the 10<sup>th</sup> January and reared two youngsters and allowed to sit his 2<sup>nd</sup> round of eggs for 10 days before being put on widowhood on 18<sup>th</sup> March. He participated in the entire federation programme this year a total of 10 races from Otterburn 61 miles on the 18<sup>th</sup> April, he competing weekly through to the Eastbourne

race 384 miles on 20<sup>th</sup> June being 5<sup>th</sup> bird home returning at 20-15 hours very fresh for his 12 hours on the wing. After Eastbourne he was given 2 training tosses, one from Ponteland on the east coast and another from Carlisle on the West coast along with the partnerships other candidates for Ypres, Andrezel & Falaise. Both training toss locations are approx 80 miles from our loft and on both these tosses the birds took just over two hours to complete. He was left with his hen and she laid the day before Ypres basketing on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June; Young Reekie was originally one of the candidates for Falaise until a few days before the Ypres basketing when senior partner Billy pulled rank and told son Barry the chequer cock should go to Ypres and be their pooler; and he was proved right as he won 1<sup>st</sup> open and won nearly £2000 for his efforts.



*Barry Kinnear holding the 1<sup>st</sup> open Ypres and Willie Kinnear holding 7<sup>th</sup> open Ypres*

Young Reekie is bred in the purple direct from the stock loft; the sire is a blue cock direct from Champion Auld Reekie whom many of you will know won; 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> open in the Scottish National Flying Club with the ultimate prize winning the Gold Cup in 2004. I was instrumental in using a photo taken of the Gold Cup with Willie and Barry's loft in the back ground and any fancier who uses the SNFC web site will see this picture.

The dam of Young Reekie is a blue chequer hen bred by the late Dale Newcombe of Macmerry being a daughter of his SNFC Gold Award winner Kardale Style who won 15<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 55<sup>th</sup>, 84<sup>th</sup> & 113<sup>th</sup> open in SNFC channel races; you cannot get any better breeding!!!

The partners second pigeon won 3<sup>rd</sup> section B 7<sup>th</sup> open and like Young Reekie he is also a yearling, being hatched a month later in March out the racing loft. The sire also

a red cock won 127<sup>th</sup> open SNFC Maidstone and 27<sup>th</sup> open SNFC Eastbourne in 2007; the sire of this cock being a different cock direct out of Auld Reekie.

The dam of the 7<sup>th</sup> open cock was a blue hen bred down from the original Innes Brothers pigeons. Like Young Reekie the 7<sup>th</sup> open cock had exactly the same preparation, flying the complete young bird programme last year on darkness, being paired this year also in January and competing weekly in every old bird race from April. In the Eastbourne race the red cock was timed in at 19-21 hours after 11 hours on the wing to win 243<sup>rd</sup> open in the SNFC, - Like all the yearlings he was left with his hen immediately after Eastbourne and his hen laid on the Monday 2 days prior to Ypres basketting. Again this cock was part of the team that had the two training tosses post Eastbourne and was going to be our No1 candidate for Ypres had Billy not identified the form that Young Reekie was in; and this is down to observation which is in abundance with two quality fanciers.

Getting notification of our second national win is the perfect birthday present for Billy who celebrates his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July and you could not have found to happier fanciers anywhere in Britain.

In recent years the following first five SNFC open positions have been won along with many other prizes – 1<sup>st</sup> open La Ferte Bernard; 1<sup>st</sup> open Ypres, 2<sup>nd</sup> open Falaise; 2<sup>nd</sup> open Sartilly, 2<sup>nd</sup> open Nantes, 5<sup>th</sup> open Tours.

My thanks to Barry for supplying the information on their two pigeons and also some photographs; I must also thank Tom McEwen for supplying photos after going to verify the winner and his son Scott who emailed them to me; much appreciated



*The Whitson Family holding their winners in the SNFC George with the 2<sup>nd</sup> open Ypres; Maureen with 21<sup>st</sup> open Ypres and James with 20<sup>th</sup> open Andrezel winner*

2<sup>nd</sup> section 2<sup>nd</sup> open are the father and son partnership of **James & George Whitson of Pencaitland** however I must stress that **Maureen**; James wife also plays a large part in the partnerships success as she assists around the loft helping her husband and son out; so you will see this is a family affair. I have attached a photograph of George holding the 2<sup>nd</sup> open winner; Maureen holding the 21<sup>st</sup> open winner and James Whitson holding the 20th open SNFC Andrezel winner all bird clocked on the day.

George phoned me to say they had timed in a 2 year old black cock sent sitting 15 days on eggs; he was mated in January and reared one young bird and was then celibate for the year. He was raced from Witton Castle 96 miles; Catterick 116 miles; Wetherby 149 miles; Selby 164 miles; Newbury with the SNFC 318 miles returning after 10 hours on the wing; He then went 4 days later to the comeback Selby race with Almond Valley who allowed the partners to send their national candidates as trainers. The channel team then received 6 training tosses from 20 miles along with the Whitson young bird team who were being trained at this time. The black cock was then sent sitting 15 days and his first flight was ½ way up on going to Ypres. As a youngster the black cock flew the full federation programme out to Newark; then as a yearling was raced to Newbury with the SNFC.

Sire was bred by Johnstone & Knox of Prestonpans who are cousins and was direct from 'Gandy' their sporting challenge pigeon. Unfortunately George is on holiday and we cannot obtain his breeding details; the information I have on my old challenge pigeons will not open on this newer computer sorry. Dam was a black stock hen purchased from Mr & Mrs Cobbold of England she has turned out to be a good investment as she is the dam of the partners 'Domino' winner in 1999 of 1<sup>st</sup> section SNFC Frome. The partners had a good week end as they also timed in from Andrezel at 21.59 on the day; and from this years channel racing they have entered 11 pigeons and have 10 home. They had 2 out of 2 from Alencon just off the result; timed 5 out of 7 on the day from Ypres with the other 2 coming the next morning and have 1 out of 2 from Andrezel so not a bad season when you also consider that they won; 5<sup>th</sup>; 21<sup>st</sup>; 49<sup>th</sup> & 63<sup>rd</sup> section B; 68<sup>th</sup>; 192<sup>nd</sup>; 336<sup>th</sup> & 418<sup>th</sup> open SNFC Newbury 2009; and from SNFC Eastbourne 2009 they have won 241<sup>st</sup> & 387<sup>th</sup> open; a good season all round and I wish them well in the last old bird race from Falaise on the 17<sup>th</sup> July and will be looking out for their name on the result. James asked me to thank the race control team and convoyers who have looked after our pigeon's this year as the returns have been excellent and the birds have returned in excellent condition so much so that they have been able to go back into the channel races. George finished off his phone call by asking me if I would congratulate all his club mates in Traprain club who have had an excellent season in the SNFC races this year. You virtually have to win the section or open to beat many of them now the competition is so competitive and this ladies and gentlemen is the name of the game; well done to the Whitson partnership once again.

## Section E

|   |                        |        |
|---|------------------------|--------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> section 3 <sup>rd</sup> open  | W L Bilsland Lenzie    | 1316   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> section 5 <sup>th</sup> open  | George Harris Dunipace | 1291   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> section 12 <sup>th</sup> open | Alex McInnes Blantyre  | 1265.9 |

1<sup>st</sup> section 1<sup>st</sup> west region 3<sup>rd</sup> open is Billy Bilsland from Lenzie who timed in his hen now known as 'Greer's Girl'; management committee member Derek Hay forwarded the following report on Billy;



*Billy Bilsland with his 1<sup>st</sup> west region 3<sup>rd</sup> open Meafy*

‘Hi Joe, Billy Bilsland is the winner of 1<sup>st</sup> section E 1<sup>st</sup> west section and 3<sup>rd</sup> open from SNFC Ypres timing in at 16.39 from a 06.30 am liberation and flying 455 miles. Billy is from Lenzie near Glasgow had a phenomenal race from Ypres in Belgium. He timed 10 birds on the night and ended up winning SNFC diplomas with 6 of them. This is the kind of stuff we dream about and I must say this performance must rank as one of the best EVER from a west section member of the SNFC. Billy is well known as a former professional cyclist who represented Britain at the Olympic Games, but his real passion is racing pigeons. He approaches the sport with the same determination and tenacity as he did as a professional cyclist. He is a hard trainer and his pigeons respond very well to his methods. Billy is a real gentleman of the sport, a man that says very little in victory and never seeks publicity like so many do, but believe me, I’ve flown against this guy, at all levels and he is very hard to beat. Billy’s first 5 pigeons were yearlings which is quite unbelievable. The west region winner now named ‘Greer’s Girl’ after Billy’s daughter, she is a lovely mealy hen, sent on hatching eggs day of basket, with her 2nd flight half up. On verifying this bird I noticed she had very silky feathering with a massive amount of mascara around her eyes. In fact Joe the easiest way to explain this was ‘her eyes were on fire’, a sure sign of top form. Small to medium build but looked bigger when out of hand. The birds were flown on roundabout this year and mated up for their desired National event Greer’s Girl; flew the full Lanarkshire fed programme last year as a young bird and this year, every race to Newark 238 miles. When she went down on eggs again, more serious training began and she received at least 6 x 65 miles tosses from Dunbar up to

4 days before basketting. No stone was left unturned to get the best out of his birds and success inventively followed.

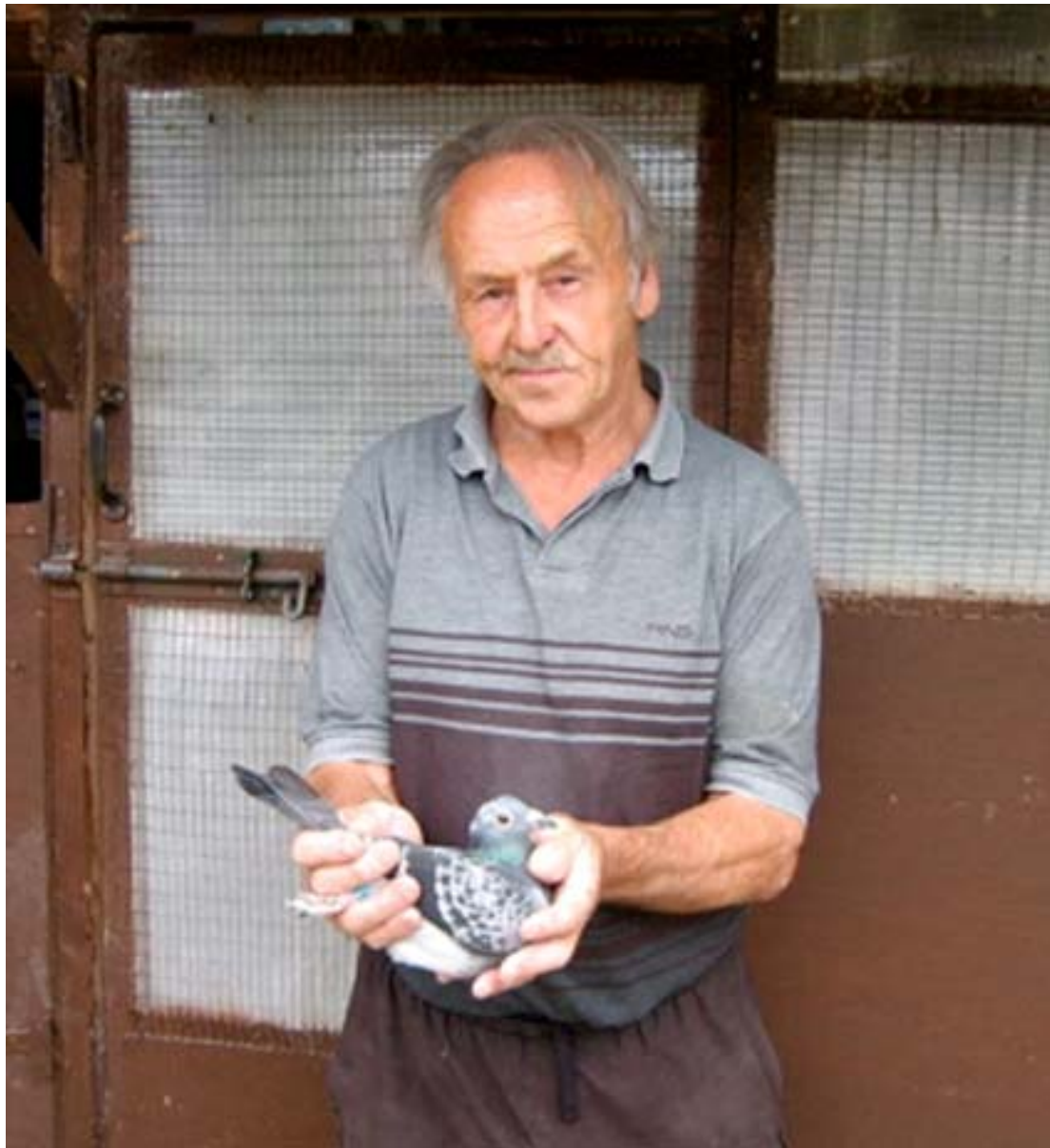


*Billy Bilsland 1<sup>st</sup> section E 1<sup>st</sup> west region 3<sup>rd</sup> open Ypres winner*

Both sire and dam were bought at the late Andrew Deans dispersal sale and they contain all the very best of West section distance blood including top Lanarkshire federation names like, Hannah; Rankin & Cullen. Billy stays in a beautiful house with massive gardens, ideal for as many lofts as you want. He has recently retired and has put his house on the market, therefore did not breed young birds for himself this year. Billy also would like to mention his friend Jackie Herd who helps him out from time to time. Jackie does not keep pigeons anymore but was once a very successful fancier in the west section of the SNFC and his opinion is invaluable to Billy; well done Billy and my thanks to Big Derek for his report and photographs of Billy and his pigeon cheers.

2<sup>nd</sup> section 5<sup>th</sup> open is past SNFC winner **George Harris of Dunipace** near Denny in Stirlingshire; management committee member Andrew McKee verified the bird and forwarded this report. 'Not for the first time did I have to visit George Harris on National business. There are few more consistent lofts in Central Scotland than George's, and he has taken prominent positions many times, including winning the inland National a few years ago. This year he timed his yearling chequer pied hen at 16.50 to take this exceptional open position. The sire of this hen was bought by George from Dale Newcombe, and was bred from a cock that won 111<sup>th</sup> open Reims, when mated to "Esk Valley Pat" Ralston Graham's great hen which won the Dewar Trophy in 2002 and the BHW Sporting Challenge in 2003. The dam of this year's winner was purchased at Robert Cormack's sale. Robert had no details of this bird except that it came from Freddie Broadbridge of Bromley in Kent. As a young bird

she had 4 races, and this year had every race to SNFC Newbury as a widowhood hen. She was then paired for Ypres and given 5 tosses from 35 miles in the week prior to basketting, and then sent sitting 12 days when sent to Ypres. George had an exceptional race with 7 of his 10 entries home on the day, and 2 more early the next morning – not bad at 460 miles’ well done George and my thanks to Andrew for his contribution.



*George Harris holding his 2<sup>nd</sup> section 5<sup>th</sup> open Ypres winner*

3<sup>rd</sup> section 12<sup>th</sup> open is **Alex McInnes of Blantyre** who timed in a 2 year old blue hen sent sitting on 12 day eggs; she was paired up in March and while rearing a single youngster in the nest was injured; she hurt the butt of her wing and could not get off the loft floor so Alex put the youngster under another pair. It took the hen 2 weeks to get back up to her box and she was left alone to recover. Once down on pot eggs she was slowly built up by daily exercise round the loft morning and evening for an hour. As soon as Alex thought she was ready he introduce her to 2 x 40 mile training tosses until she reached peek fitness and was entered into the Leicester race a distance of

250 miles and she was his 4<sup>th</sup> bird home showing no effects of her injury. She was then entered into the comeback race from Louderhill a distance of 50 miles and again homed ok; she was then prepared for Ypres having the daily morning and evening exercise round the loft.



*Alex McInnes of Blantyre with his 3<sup>rd</sup> section 12<sup>th</sup> open Ypres winner*

As a young bird she won 9<sup>th</sup> west section; Then as yearling she won 1<sup>st</sup> club 4<sup>th</sup> section Ripon plus 4 or 5 other good performances.

Her sire and dam were purchased at Cosworth Stud sale held in Newmains club rooms and are from Van Beek De Klak Janssen down from the 613 and other champions bloodlines. However Alex told me 'Joe the basket is my pedigree'.

Alex is another fancier whose loft is showing a bit of form this year as he has already won 7 x 1<sup>st</sup> prizes in the club so far; plus he won 4<sup>th</sup> west region 17<sup>th</sup> open SNFC Newbury this year.

To be continued in Ypres Report 2

Joe Murphy  
SNFC Press Liaison Officer