



KEITH MOTT

July 27th 2015

Three Borders Federation (Yelverton Race)

Midway through the 2015 racing season and the Mitcham & Morden club are leading for the 'Federation Points Trophy', with 98 points, with the Esher club chasing in the runner up spot, on 87 points. Federation members sent 887 birds to race number ten (Yelverton) and the mighty Mitcham made a good push forward by recording 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th in the Federation result. Fantastic pigeon racing! Major Honey and his pigeon partner, grandson Jamie Law, seem to like the Yelverton race point, winning the Combine from there a couple of seasons ago and on this occasion recording: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 13th and 17th Federation.

The first ten in the Yelverton Federation result were: 1) Honey & Grandson 1840: 2) Honey & Grandson 1839: 3) Honey & Grandson 1837: 4) Honey & Grandson 1837: 5) Honey & Grandson 1837: 6) Mr. & Mrs. David May 1822: 7) Frank & Sue Carson 1820: 8) Bobby & Danny Carter 1819: 9) R. Harper & son 1813: 10) Honey & Grandson 1806.



The Honey partnership

Major Honey first had racing pigeons on leaving the armed forces in 1947 and this came about when his younger brother brought some birds in to the family garden, and they raced as Honey Brothers. The Major won his first race from Dorchester and has had a lot of success through the years with the Cattrysse pigeons. Going back a few years I can remember him winning many good races, the best probably being his big Nantes win in 1987. The annual Cancer Research Amalgamation race was the idea of Croydon fancier and then RPRA London Region secretary, Vic Farrant. When his wife died of Cancer she left £2,000 and instead of giving the money direct to Cancer Research, Vic decided to start a fund for an annual Cancer Research race. The Amalgamation was formed from three South Road Combines, the SMT Combine, London & South Coast and

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Middle Counties, with 8,614 birds being entered in the first Nantes race in 1985. The first event received TV coverage with Gil Duncan of Thanet in Kent, winning velocity 1688 ypm. The 1987 event from Nantes saw 5,420 birds entered and because of adverse weather in the English Channel the convoy was held over until the Monday. In spite of a light south west following wind returns were very patchy, with some members not clocking in. Winner was the popular Major Honey of Mitcham, with his yearling gay pied hen, '45', bred by his good friend Danny Moulton from his Cattrysse bloodlines. At that time the Major had been in the sport over 35 year, but told me he had won a few good races, he really just enjoyed his pigeons. He was loft manager for the late, great Alf Pays of the 'Bee Hive' PH in Mitcham for seven years and Alf won the NFC Nantes National. The Major had won several good races in his time including 1st Surrey Federation Avranches (Young Bird) in 1978. He clocked a bird on the day from the NFC Pau National in 1964 and was very upset when a cat killed the pigeon the following week.

Jamie Law, the Major's grandson has always been close to his grandparents and they formed a pigeon partnership about five years ago. When Jamie was a lad he spent most weekends with the Major and his late wife, ETTY, and they spent most of that time with the pigeons, visiting the racing pigeon club HQ at the 'Bull' PH, or on the local lakes fishing. Jamie says they were the best grandparents ever! Jamie says at that time the top local fanciers were Terry Goodsell and Frank Carson, and they are still brilliant pigeon racers today. A few years ago after returning from a trip away, the Major was devastated to find a Fox had entered his loft and killed all his pigeons. This shocking

experience really knocked him back and he was on the point of packing the sport up, when Jamie purchased a new loft and pigeons for him, to rekindle his interest. The Fox episode stoked up Jamie's interest in pigeon racing and in 2011 formed a partnership with his grandfather and erected another loft in his own garden in Mitcham.

The Honey partnership have a third partner in the form of Lennie Graham, who has been a premier pigeon racer in the Surrey area for many years and he helps Jamie out with the training and loft management. They had their first proper racing season in 2012 and raced five old bird widowhood cocks with good success, but their young bird success must be described as fantastic. The Three Borders Federation 'Individual Points' Trophy was won in the 2012 season by Major Honey and his grandson, Jamie, in the Mitcham & Morden club, with a bit of back up from the 'master' Lennie Graham. The Major, who is now in his eighties, has been a brilliant fancier in the Mitcham area for many years and the pigeons these days are mostly managed by Jamie and Lennie. The partners had a wonderful 2012 season, especially with the young birds and finished by winning 1st SMT Combine Yelverton, with pigeon purchased at the Three Borders Federation Breeder / Buyer sale. The Combine winner was a Van Reet / Lindelauf bred by Paul Arnold of North Cheam and Paul tells me the Staf Van Reet sire has won three firsts in the club and three top positions in the Federation result.

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The Combine winning pigeon, now called 'The Arnold Cock', was also 3rd Federation Newton Abbot (1,145 birds) the week before topping the SMT from Yelverton. Paul Arnold has probably one of the best lofts of all round Staf Van Reets in Europe today, winning a long list of premier positions in the Three Borders Federation in the 2011 and 2012 seasons, including 1st SMT Combine Bergerac (450 miles), with him clocking his sole entry on the day and 2nd SMT Combine Messac. Paul has now bred 1st SMT Combine Yelverton in 2012! Honey & Grandson won the Federation Championship with 54 points and won well over £2,000 with their young birds in 2012.

The Honey & Grandson's 'Federation Championship' performances in the 2012 season are: (OB) 15th Federation Yeovil (2,055 birds), 18th Federation Honiton (1,286 birds), 18th Federation Tours (532 birds), 6th Federation Honiton, (YB) 5th, 11th, 12th, 22nd, 23rd, 25th Federation Blandford (1,001 birds), 4th, 5th, 9th Federation Wincanton (1,228 birds), 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 16th, 17th, 25th Federation Yeovil (1,047 birds), 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd Federation Blandford (1,286 birds), 2nd, 4th, 5th, 13th, 18th Federation Taunton (1,272 birds), 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 17th Federation Newton Abbot (1,145 birds), 1st, 2nd, 4th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 14th Federation (851 birds), 1st, 3rd, 5th, 11th, 13th, 18th

SMT Combine Yelverton. Young bird racing at its absolute best!

I visited the partners' loft and I must say the loft set up and garden is a credit the Jamie! The 18ft x 7ft loft has a pitched tiled roof, two sections with grilled floors and Jamie is an electrician by trade, so is kitted out with heaters and extractor fans. He maintains that he is a great believer in 'all roads lead to Rome', but thinks the most important factor in good loft design is good ventilation and dryness. On race days the birds alight on to two big landing boards before going through on to the ETS and during the week metal flights are placed on the boards so the inmates can come out of the loft for some fresh air. The old bird section is kitted out with 20 widowhood nest boxes and two electric roller blinds are fitted to the front of the structure, too close the loft up at night and too 'darken' the young birds section during the season. The partners race 20 cocks on the widowhood system and after being fully treated they are paired up on 10th January, with Federation racing in mind. The system the partners practice is pretty basic, with hens and first round youngsters being taken away at seventeen days and then the racing cocks get several short training tosses. About five weeks before the first race Lennie gets his magic pole out and the birds are flagged around the loft for an hour twice a day for exercise. All the widowhood hens are well raced as young birds so the partners are satisfied that they are sound and these are shown to the racing cocks on marking night. Jamie tells me the cocks get the hen for about 10 to 15 minutes on their return and all the birds are broken down after the race. He feeds three widowhood mixes of the very best quality and brake down with 'diet 200'.

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On starting up, Jamie had heard great things about Darren and Jason Catterson's 'Foxwood Lofts' in the North East of England and decided to purchase the best Baertsoen and Geerinckx stock birds possible from him, and what good move that turned out to be, with most of his success so far coming from those birds. The eight pairs of stock birds are housed in a stock loft at the rear of the main loft and this has eight 'up and over' nest boxes and grilled floor. The 20 widowhood hens' boxes are also set up in the stock area. The stock birds are paired up the same time as the racers in January, so the breeder's eggs can be floated in the race section. I spoke to Darren Catterson of Foxwood Lofts and he told me, 'I met Jamie about four years ago, when he was seeking to purchase stock birds bred from our very best and I told him quality is our priority at Foxwood Lofts UK. Jamie only purchased the very best direct children, at no expense spared, from all our champion racers and breeders. His stock loft is based on Baertsoen and Geerinckx, two of the most outstanding families in the pigeon world today'.

The Honey partners breed 50 young birds each year for racing and these are put on the 'darkness' system just after weaning through to mid-June. The babies are fed on a good '50/50' mixture which is knocked by the lads themselves. They race the Federation programme to the perch and Lennie trains them hard every day,

sometimes twice a day prior to the first race. Once racing starts they get two training tosses every week, with the flag around the loft and once racing is over, the priority is to get the moult going with rest and the appropriate feeding. Jamie is a great believer in treating his pigeons and they are tested and treat regularly for everything, and has his own big cupboard in his kitchen for all his pigeon treatments. He says Lennie Graham is a great help around the loft and a brilliant trainer of pigeons. He known by name by most of the dog walkers along the A3 training points! Jamie tells me the Mitcham club buzzing with competition and has a lot of good keen young fanciers in its membership. Everyone is hands on with the work at the club house and the banter is second to none. The Major is very proud of his grandson, Jamie, and maintains his racing performances in recent seasons have been second to none! Congratulations to the three lads on their Yelverton Federation success!

That's our article for this week! I can be contacted with any pigeon 'banter' on telephone number: 01372 463480 or email: keithmott1@virginmedia.com

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