

## **NFC's Presentation Night 2022 in Buxton**

The first weekend in December saw the good and the great of national and classic racing descend on the beautiful town of Buxton nestled in the Derbyshire hills. The Palace Hotel was the venue and the occasion was the 2022 Presentation evening for The National Flying. This year the awards took on a more poignant meaning as it was uncertain whether we would get channel racing at all when the season kicked off. Indeed, despite the best efforts of many channel flyers to stay positive and hopeful, I think it is fair to say many were reconciled with the thought of not getting past Guernsey for our channel programme. The National flying club Committee entered the 2022 season positive and clearly focused on delivering a full, meaningful programme to its members including the most prized race of them all – the Blue Riband race from Pau or Tarbes. During 2022 every fancier who competed from France needed to jump through some convoluted administrative hoops including acquiring a CPH number, registering with DEFRA and a vet. Although the process was not difficult, the time frame for it was removed from our control and it became a bit of a lottery as to if or when you received your registration details. This put off a lot of fanciers but those with the drive and focus for French racing stepped up to the challenge and, as the presentation evening at The Palace Hotel in Buxton proved, many were rewarded for their efforts.



### **Ian Evans getting advice from his uncle Arthur**

The main guests of Honour for the evening were Mr Ian Evans, true gentleman who has recently stepped back from the very challenging role of CEO for The RPRA and Mr Marius Tunduc the owner of Cest Pharma International – his company makes a range of effective products for pigeons and is used by many household names on the Continent. On top of this Marius is also a top fancier himself.

After the traditional round of toasts it was on to the main event, with Mr Mick McGrevy undertaking the role of Master of Ceremonies for the night. Because of the disjointed nature of the start to the season we had the first 3 races from Guernsey as regulations at the time meant that we were unable to compete from French race points. However, this did nothing to dissuade our members from competing and as many fanciers know racing from The Channel Islands throws up its own set of challenges. The size of Guernsey leaves it exposed to the vagaries of the wind, and the birds have nowhere to hide once liberated as they have a quick turn and are out over the channel and immediately affected by the wind strength and direction.



**Mr and Mrs Buckfield –Guernsey 1 winners.**

The first of the three races from Guernsey was won over in the east of the Country in Rawreth, with the partnership of Mr and Mrs Buckfield claiming the spoils for Section P. Their winning bird clearly hit for home straight away and took advantage of the wind, leading a Cavalry charge in to that corner of the Country. The second National race from Guernsey saw the convoy pull up and round in to a straighter line and the winner was more central, flying to the lofts of Mr Jason Bowen from Waterloooville, topping Section B in the process. To prove the quality of the man and the birds and the form that the loft had he also claimed 2<sup>nd</sup> National as well, with everything in his favour on the day he filled his boots, and who can blame him.



**W Hollow -winning Guernsey 3 way out West.**

The third race out of Guernsey again saw the wind influence the line taken by the led birds, but on this occasion the national winner got their head down and headed West rather than East. The bragging rights were claimed by the Hayle loft of Mr W Hollow, and I would wager that this bird saw very little land until it dropped in off the Cornish Coast and cut up for home. As can be seen, the first three races from Guernsey saw the entire width of the club radius being represented – something that you often see in national racing from The Channel Islands.

The fourth race on the programme saw the birds being allowed in to France from the first time and as was to be expected the members relished the opportunity. It Also saw members competing from the new race point of St Philbert Du Peuple – at a distance than was comparable to the old Nantes race point but a bit more to the East. This time the convoy had a bit of thinking time as they travelled up through France towards the channel, allowing them the opportunity to split up and hopefully fall in to their own line for home. Of course this is all theoretical, but some birds clearly took the opportunity to lock in including the national winner. Again it was Section P who benefitted from the wind and the white hot loft of Gladwin, Jarvis and family. This partnership is one half of Formula 1 Lofts an each week they put the reputation of the stud on the line by racing the off spring. The Leigh on Sea loft had a cracking pigeon on the day, and the latest national winner led the field in what was tumble of leading birds in to that part of Section P.



**Gladwin, Jarvis and Family - 1<sup>st</sup> Open St Philbert.**

The National once more returned to Coutances for the last races of the season – the Young bird and Old Hens national. This race proved a great days racing for the Bromley loft of P Jackson and Son who won both races, and I believe that in so doing have become the first loft to win 2 nationals on the same day. I could be wrong on this – it has been known – but I do believe that the partnership hold that record. This loft has been a force for many years right along the line from club and Federation level, and have left their stamp on national racing, with this incredible performance highlighting the ability that the fanciers and the birds possess. Well done gentlemen, a great day at the office and welcome to the history books.



### **P Jackson and Son – Double top from Coutances**

The final race presentation was for the race guaranteed to give the long distance boys sleepless nights and sweaty palms - the Blue Riband race. This year we were back in Tarbes after having had the chance to revert back to Pau last year, but regardless this is the race that many dream of winning and this year provided another fairy tale outcome. The crowning glory of national racing was bestowed upon a pigeon flying right up in to Liverpool, proper flying from a proper pigeon! As is often the case in long distance national racing it tends to be a real family affair with the efforts and resulting elation shared. This was the case with Tarbes this year and was evident when Ronald Pendleton and family stepped up to receive their silverware and the admiration and congratulations of the gathered fanciers. George accompanied by several generations of his family, including his grandson, who came along to savour this very special occasion. George had mentioned how this race was the one he had always wanted to win and had probably thought the chance had passed him by, but later libs are curious beasts and makes individuals out of the convoy. Late liberations from Tarbes and Pau are an opportunity for exceptional birds to put up exceptional performances and this year proved just that, with the winning bird drawing on all their experience, breeding , preparation and drive to drop in to the Pendleton loft to claim the top accolade in British distance racing. This story shows that if you keep competing, and with the drive and energy of youth in the team anything can be achieved. Well done Ronald and all the team, you waited a while but I bet it was worth it – and well done in not giving up.





**Ron Pendleton and grandson – well worth the wait.**

Alongside the national and section winners the Presentation is peppered with the awarding of a wide array of Averages trophies. Some of these are for specific sections and some are open to competition across all the membership. These trophies highlight a consistency across an entire season – usually based on a lofts average but a very special few reward the efforts of a super pigeon across a series of races. Some of these averages and Specials stretch back through the history of The National Flying Club and reading the names on them will give you goose bumps, like The Lancashire Rose Bowl, The Oliver Dix Trophy, The Langstone Gold Cup, The FG Wilson Challenge Trophy and The Mark Gilbert International Trophy. Each of these trophies is difficult to win in its own rights and success in these is duly and rightfully celebrated. Each winner has a story behind it and I hope to contact the winners to get more information on the winning birds – but feel free to send me details and a photo if you won one of these trophies this year. Amongst the winners in 2022 were Johnny Haynes who won the magnificent and much coveted Langstone Gold Cup, BP Lee winning The Lancashire Rose Bowl, D and J Staddon who lifted The Oliver Dix Memorial Trophy. Other notable winners were R Rome who won The FG Wilson Challenge Trophy with a grandson of his good hen Fabia – his car winner from Tarbes – who was runner up for the same trophy the last year he flew in Gloucestershire. Finally ( for now) the loft of D Clarke from Reading who won The Mark Gilbert International Trophy awarded to the loft with the fastest velocity over all old bird races in the old bird programme – now this is the trophy that reflects best a loft at the top of its game. As I said I will aim to contact all these fanciers to get more information on the birds and performances that claimed these trophies for 2022.



**The main grafter at Steventon Marking station.**

Once again, The National Flying Club ran an Ace Pigeon Award, with the club split in to two sections and an overall winner. The competition was kindly sponsored by Marius Tunduc of Cest International Pharma, one of our guests for the evening. The North Section Ace Pigeon was won by Jonathan Hamplett – a young fancier from a national winning family who is carrying on the tradition.—. Winning The South Section and overall NFC Ace Pigeon for 2022 is the all-conquering Roger Lowe from Reading - a loft that is the very epitome of successful and consistent.



**Roger Lowe with Chris Gibson and Marius Tunduc.**

Alongside this we also ran the Champions of Champions kindly sponsored by Chris Gibson of NPH Auctions. This was also won by Roger Lowe to underline his national pedigree. Well done Roger.



### **The Crick Family – all conquering in section H**

That brings to a close the 2022 NFC Presentation, and I think it's fair to say a great night was had by all. I have said it before - but this is truly a great night where you will be in the brilliant company of brilliant pigeon folk. Don't think that you need to have won some Silverware to attend – if that was the case I wouldn't have been to any!



### **Some of The NFC ladies.**

A bit of housekeeping now – if you haven't yet paid your fees please note that this needs to be done by 1<sup>ST</sup> March. If you have paid your fees and ordered rings that have not yet arrived then please contact Gill Naum the NFC Office Manager – contact details are on the web site. It is also a good time to check that you have remembered your login details for the website rather than realising on the Sunday evening before the opening race.



**The Kenny Family – a top loft in Oxfordshire.**



**The Chambers family – looks and skills.**

Finally, can I just say it's really nice being back as the NFC PO again. I would like to wish my predecessor the very best in his new venture – I do not envy him the task he has taken on. I will tell you now that I do not take a photograph of the same quality as Chris, but I will endeavour to get to meet each National Winner in 2023 and shake their hands.

Please feel free to get in contact with information about your own birds or performances put up by a friend that you feel need highlighting.

As always I am on 01926 817796, or if you are shy then [weebu@hotmail.com](mailto:weebu@hotmail.com). Good luck each and every one of you for 2023 and I look forward to seeing a few of you some Sunday mornings.

Drew Callan

NFC PO