

WELSH SOUTH ROAD NATIONAL FC

CARENTAN YOUNG BIRD NATIONAL

Gareth and Stuart Treharne likely to take the first 16 positions

The final race of the Welsh South Road National's race programme was flown on Friday 23rd September from the French race point of Carentan, a small town situated on the Cherbourg peninsular in North West France. Once again the race controllers had to juggle the race programme due to inclement weather forecast for the appointed day Saturday 24th September and so the convoy was basketed on Wednesday 21st for this 180 mile young bird channel race.

The birds were liberated at 9.20 am on Friday 23rd, into blue skies and a helping south, south westerly wind. Soon after becoming airborne they would have been out over the English Channel and facing a hundred miles of open sea. That the leading pigeons took this direct route for home is clearly shown by the winning velocities of 1470 ypm recorded by the Nantyglo partnership of Gareth Treharne and son Stuart who had an amazing race with ELEVEN of their entries dropping together with a further five pigeons close behind that will in all probability take the first SIXTEEN positions in the Centre Section and Open!!! I cannot recall such a performance being achieved in a young bird, or for that matter old bird National race flown into Wales – absolutely astounding not to say outstanding. The first bird over the sensor pad was the same Jan Aarden x Lefebre Dhaenen blue cock that was clocked from Eastbourne the previous week to take 2nd Centre section 8th Open National. In that race the partners had a batch of eight young birds milling around the loft at the same time and when eventually clocked they recorded 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th section and 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, & 15th Open. Like all the early bred young birds in the Treharne loft the blue cock was raced on the darkness system with the parents being mated in mid January. The young birds are exercised twice daily for one hour on each occasion and are fed in after morning exercise with a mixture of Red Band and widowhood mix. They are then fed the same widowhood mix with added peas after their evening exercise. The winning pigeons had competed in most, but not all of the Welsh South Road Fed young bird programme as Gareth and Stuart like to split the young bird team in the early races just in case they come a cropper. However, in the Carentan race they emptied the loft as they had so many young birds left after an excellent young bird

season. Well done Gareth and Stuart, I think it will be a long time before this demolition job is repeated – if ever.

Well that just about wraps up the Centre Section result so I'll move on to the winners in the other sections.

The Six Bells partnership of John and Pat Webber have an enviable record in Welsh Nationals having won no less than eight 1st Nationals plus scores of other top ten finishes in the past ten or so years. In the Carentan race they clocked a Lambrecht x Van Reet darkness hen to win 1st Section. Hatched in mid March she had competed in most of the South Road Fed's young bird programme and because of persistent falcon attacks had not received any road training for some weeks. Home exercise of one hour twice daily was enough to keep her and the rest of the team close to the mark. Feeding is a mixture made up from two Versele Laga widowhood mixes hand fed after each exercise period. John and Pat asked me to pass on their congratulations to the Treharnes on a truly magnificent performance.

Alan Webber of Llanhilleth [no relation to John and Pat] comes in for 2nd East section timing a blue hen bred down from birds obtained from Ken Cadwell and "Slapper" Parfitt of Crumlin when Alan entered the sport just two years ago. As with the rest of Alan's young bird team she has been raced on the natural system and enjoyed an open loft for most of the day from early morning with a regimented exercise period each evening. Feeding here is a good widowhood mixture to which Alan adds peanuts and Red Band Conditioner.

`No race organised by the WSRNFC this season would be complete without the name of Mark Sparey appearing somewhere near the top of the result. The Carentan race saw Mark time one of his Deweerdt x Laermans to take 3rd East section. This hen had raced in most of the Fed young bird programme prior to basketting for Carentan. Mark would also like me to pass on his congratulations to the Treharnes on their record breaking performance.

Next we move over to the West section where the Watkins Brothers of Neath timed the winner. Len only entered two pigeons and his timer, a blue cock was bred from a stock cock loaned to Len by the National winning partnership of A & I McFenton of Swansea. This cock contains all the best of Andrew McFenton's top class Grizzle family that have won scores of club, Fed and National prizes over recent years. The section winner's dam contains all the Watkins Brothers Bergerac Family of "Heinz 57" bloodlines. He had been flown on the natural system all season but Len decided to "tweak" the system a bit in the few days before

basketting and left the blue cock run with an old hen. This certainly did the trick as he also won 1st 2 Bird Championship. Well done Len on yet another top class performance.

The partnership of Phil Fishlock and Hilary Roberts come in next for 2nd West section timing a red hen of Jan Theelen bloodlines closely related to their section winner in the Bergerac old bird race. She was raced on the darkness system and had competed in most of the young bird race programme prior to going to Carentan.

J.Bradley takes 3rd West section with a blue hen flown on the natural system bred from local bloodlines. She is a daughter of the loft's top winning hen and "had been consistent but not spectacular" in her preparatory races.

Well that's the end of a very successful season's racing for members of the Welsh South Road National Flying Club. This has seen increase in entries and, on the whole, good racing, in a year dogged by poor weather. Nevertheless, the convoyers and race controllers have done well to conjure up good races under extremely trying conditions and should be thanked for their hard work and dedication to the cause. My personal congratulations go to all the successful fanciers in achieving their ultimate goal of winning a National race. Good luck for the future and let's hope that you all continue to enjoy your sport.

Gareth Watkins