



Alan and Yearling National Winner.

Single Bird Challenge. He was bred from the McCartney lines with a cross from Robin McIlvenna's Hall of Fame winner.

A year later in 2003, I was delighted to get my third National success when a blue cheq cock, Swallow Brae Surprise, was timed from Fougères, 513 miles, with a velocity of 1374ypm. This was a great race for me as I was also 3rd Open. Surprise was from a son of Swallow Brae Lad, my Yearling National winner, and his own niece. A lot of my good pigeons come down from uncle to niece and aunt to nephew matings, so again from the McCartney line.

In 2004 there were a lot of positions won in both NIPA and the INFC, but it was in the Young Bird National that I was close again, being 2nd Open with a young Wildemeersch hen. I mention her because she went on to breed me a lot of prizewinners.

In the 2005 Friendship National the loft was 5th and 7th from Picauville, but a new challenge was now introduced to the INFC members with the addition of an Old Hens National which was to take place along with the Young Bird National. Although some fanciers didn't like the idea for different reasons, I saw it as a challenge, holding back the moult for a September race and I must have succeeded as the birds finished 1st, 2nd, 6th, 26th and 40th in the Open result from Wadebridge, which gave me a lot of satisfaction as well as my fourth National win, and I named her Swallow Brae First Lady. She was bred from a son of my King's Cup winner, Independent Ranger, and a daughter of



Swallow Brae Lad.



Swallow Brae Surprise.

Noel, a red cock gifted to me by Noel Higginson. He flew France four times for me, 13th, 31st and 33rd Open in NIPA Derbies, the fourth time he came home hurt.

In the 2006 season the Friendship National race was from Portland and I managed to win 1st, 25th, 43rd and 139th Open. My winner was named Swallow Brae At Last. This cock was from Andre van de Wiel pigeons brought over by me when I visited Belgium and Holland. The dam, known as The Andy Hen, is also the dam of '123' Cock, NIPA Bird of the Year 2003. This cock was a Bronze Award winner with the NIPA. This was my fifth National winner.

The 2007 season brought another Gold Medal success with Betty's Girl, a granddaughter of Ranger, my King's Cup winner. She was a full sister to my Lamballe Hen, breeder of many great pigeons to fly France.

In 2009 the King's Cup race was from Plaudren-Vannes, where I was 11th Open and also 2nd in the Single Bird Challenge with Betty's Choice. This was another good race for the birds as they were 11th, 77th, 141st and 221st Open.

The year 2010 was to bring a Yearling National beyond anything you would expect in pigeon racing. I wrote an article at that time, with the headline 'Sfill in a Dream', and I ????? it again, as it is the nearest to my pigeon racing ideas that I could ever write.

To start with, I would like to say I don't believe there are any infallible secrets in being successful with racing pigeons, or any magic potion to my knowledge that guarantees winners. Any success I have had, has been achieved through my great love for racing pigeons and the determination to succeed in our sport. I will try to give the methods and preparation which helped me take the first three positions in the INFC's 2010 yearling race. I suppose I am fortunate in being one of those people who don't need a lot of sleep, so I am in the garden every morning at 5.45am, with the pigeons exercised and fed before I go to work at 8am.

My season starts with the birds being mated around 4th/5th December, and they are allowed to lay and hatch their youngsters. When the young birds are 14 days old the hen is taken away with one of the squeakers to the hens' loft, where they are placed on the floor with the other youngsters. I find this a great way to rear the young birds as they get fed by all the hens and are never hungry. The other squeaker is left with the cock and stays there until it is 21



Swallow Brae Prince"

Bred & Raced by Alan Darragh, Cullybackey  
Winner of 3rd Open INFC Yearling National Sennen Cove 2016

Swallow Brae Prince.

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