



"Swallow Brae Star"

Bred & Raced by Alan Darragh, Cullybackey
 Winner of 1st Open INFC Yearling National Sennen Cove 2010

Swallow Brae Star.



"Swallow Brae Warrior"

Bred & Raced by Alan Darragh, Cullybackey
 Winner of 2nd Open INFC Yearling National Sennen Cove 2010

Swallow Brae Warrior.

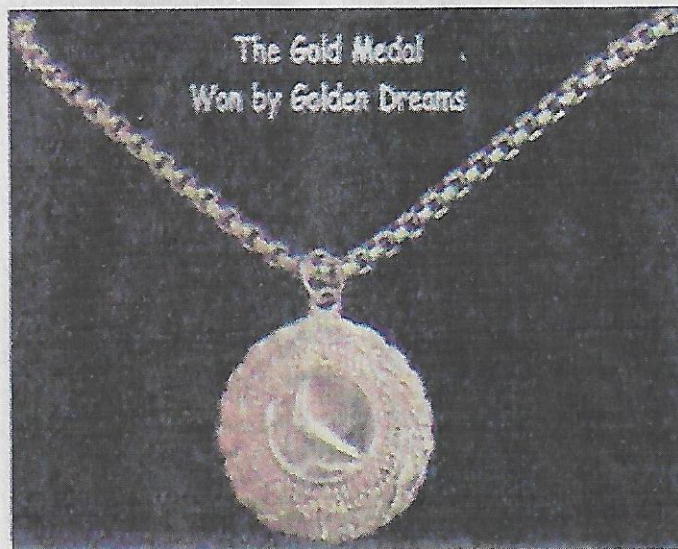
days old. At this stage all the young birds are moved to the young bird loft. The cocks go on to widowhood and the widowhood hens are kept at home for the rest of the year. In the first week of March, approximately one month before racing starts, the birds are mated again and the cocks trained every day until the hen lays. They are then flown around home for 8-10 days, after which the hens are taken away and the cocks left on the eggs overnight. In the morning they are given their last training toss. When they leave the eggs the flag is put up and the birds encouraged to exercise for one hour, morning and night, before being brought in and fed. For the inland programme, the birds go on a Friday so the widowhood cocks have barley in front of them all the time in the hopper and are fed one teaspoon of widowhood mixture in the morning and two at night. If the forecast for the race is giving a south wind, the cocks go to the race like this and if they are going to get a head wind they are given extreme energy mixture from Wednesday evening and as much as they want on Thursday. On Friday the pots are still full of the high energy mixture but usually they don't eat it so they are given hemp seed at lunch time. I also give them a few peanuts when I go into the loft at night, these help to tame the cocks and they fight with me in their boxes for the nuts. The roundabout pigeons are treated the same way, except they are only given barley on Saturdays and Sundays, they get more mixture as they are the pigeons that might be going to France. When the birds are going to the Channel, they go on a Thursday so the mixture is introduced a day earlier. The barley is now coated with lemon juice, brewer's yeast and Norban Essential.

I don't believe in treating my pigeons for everything, the only treatment is for canker. This I do 10-14 days before the racing starts and then every fortnight using a different treatment each time. I use Flagyl S, Ridzol or Tricho Plus. Apart from the times they are being treated for canker, the birds are on clean water, changed twice a day, and when they come home from the race they are given Norban's Garlic & Honey and Norban's Bio Mate in the water at the same time. The Bio Mate is an antibacterial probiotic and electrolyte supplement. I have a lot of faith in the Norban products.

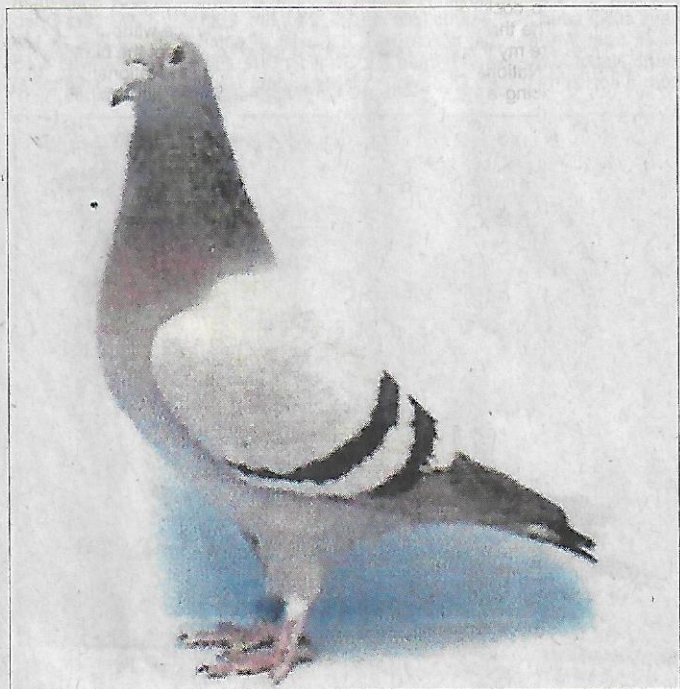
I love to see the loft tidy, so I scrape them out twice a day and put a small

coating of sawdust and shavings on the floor. My young birds get every young bird race up to the Nationals, as I am a great believer that whether it be pigeon, human or anything else, the best time to learn anything is when you are young. Although I have two larger tiled roof lofts, the three National pigeons were all racing to a small 10ft wooden loft I built many years ago. This is making me think, if I had to start again I would probably build more of the wooden lofts which I find warmer and easier to get form in.

My yearling pigeons got every race of the inland programme and one from Talbenny in Wales before being basketed for the INFC's Yearling National from Sennen Cove on 11th June, where 843 members sent 4,337 pigeons, competing for £36,697 and the Nelson Corry Trophy. The birds were liberated at 8am in a light north east wind for the 332-mile journey to my loft in Galgorm, Cullybackey. In some National races you have an idea if you are early by your time, but in this race my first pigeon arrived with another bird along with it, which had no metal ring on it. He landed straight onto the trapping board but on realising that the other bird was not with him, he flew out again landing on the other loft before flying back to the trapping board, but this time another racer landed beside him and both went in the trap to be clocked with only three seconds between them. Another bird arrived in 13 minutes, so when this happens you think everybody is getting pigeons and I didn't realise that the birds were very early. It transpired that these were the first three birds in the result, something a fancier can only dream about, and when I consider the number of great pigeon fanciers there are on the island of Ireland, I think that I am still in a dream, especially with the wind in the north and the velocities down to 958ypm. The winner of the Yearling National, now named Swallow



Gold Medal won by Golden Dreams.



Golden Dreams.

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