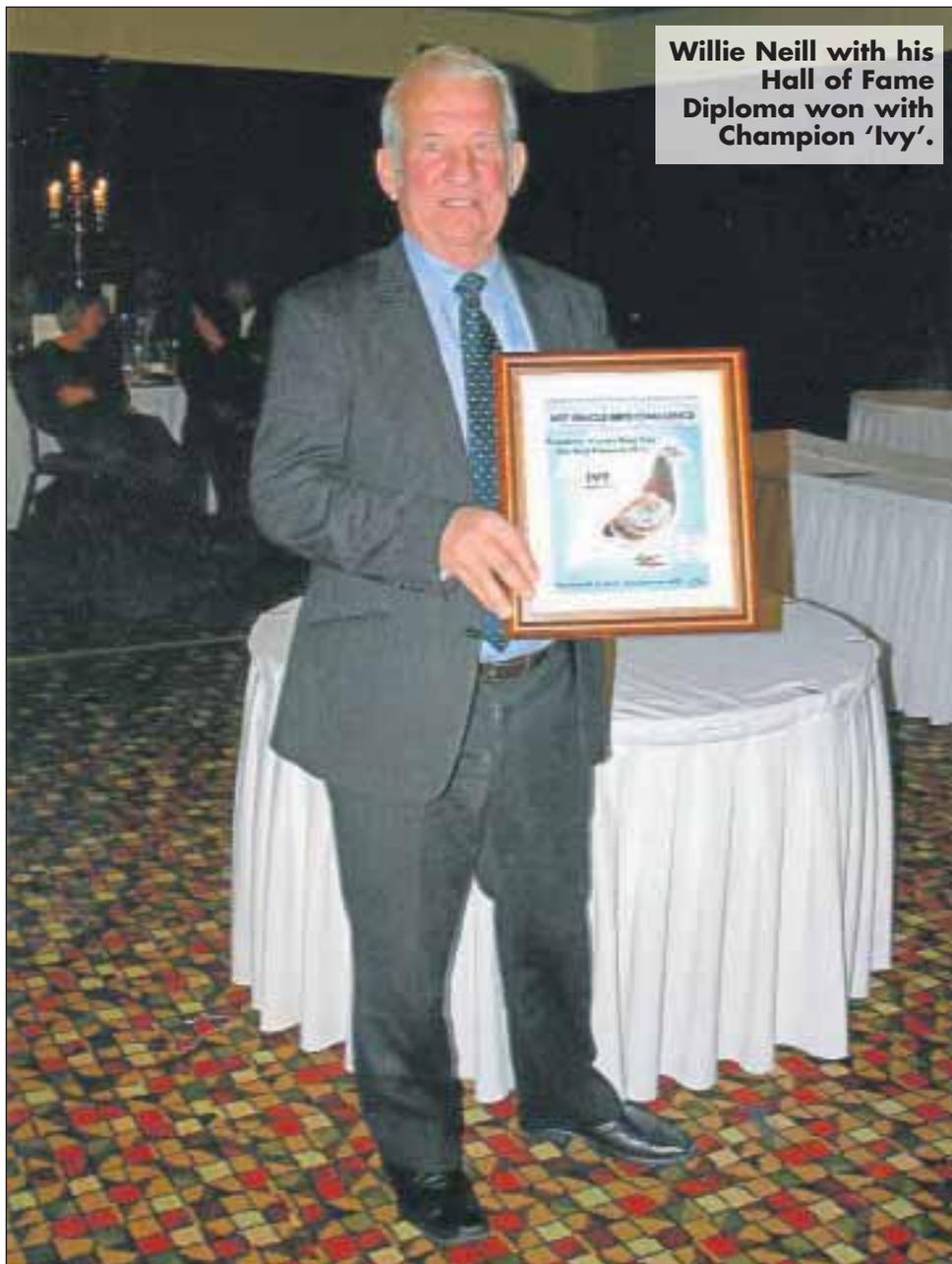


# THE NATIONAL WINNING LOFT OF **WILLIE NEILL** ANNAGHMORE

by Ronnie Johnston



**Willie Neill with his  
Hall of Fame  
Diploma won with  
Champion 'Ivy'.**

**T**he Irish National Flying Club first introduced the Single Bird Challenge in 2003 and the award was sponsored by Sawyers & Co Estate Agents, Banbridge. David Black, former Kings Cup winner, has organised this award since 2003 and the nominations need to be with David before the old bird season gets underway.

The Kings Cup Grand National was flown from Messac in 2003 and the Single Bird Challenge was won by a brilliant hen, 'Lucy', bred and raced by Raymond McCracken of Banbridge. 'Lucy' had been 15th Open in 2002 and in 2003 finished 3rd Open collecting the Single Bird Challenge Award and the Joe Dohoney Challenge Cup presented to the INFC by the double Kings Cup winner.



**W G Neill collecting the Gold Medal & Diploma at the recent NIPA Ladies Night.**

'Lucy' remained the highest placed pigeon in 3rd Open until 2012 when the Annaghmore loft of Willie Neil won the Challenge with his champion red chequer

hen 'Ivy' who also collected the coveted Hall of Fame Diploma in 2012. 'Lucy' went on to win her Hall of Fame Diploma in 2004.

Willie Neill has always maintained a strong loft at Annaghmore but since the new millennium in 2000 his loft has raised the bar to a new level with a host of outstanding results. 'Ivy' would be the star winning the Single Bird Challenge and Hall of Fame Diploma in 2012, her Hall of Fame record 2010 82nd Open, 2011 111th Open, 2012 2nd Open. In 2012 only 71 birds were recorded in race time (three days) and 'Ivy' won in pools and prize money just over £3,000.

Here breeding is immaculate, on one side the Tommy Cairns pair, 3rd & 7th Open





Kings Cup. Tommy being a former winner of the Kings Cup. On the other side a Ronnie Williamson pigeon and as you know Ronnie won the Kings Cup this year.

The North Coast Classic One Loft race is one of the best run and most competitive in the whole of Europe, and in 2012 this race was won by Willie Neill of Annaghmore

**Willie Neill being presented with the Single Bird Challenge Cup at the INFC dinner.**

collecting £12,000 and for good measure the Neill loft also won the Best 2-Bird Average and collected another £3,000. The winner was a lovely slatey blue cock containing mainly Janssen breeding. The two Grand National races are the Kings Cup and Penzance Young Bird.

Penzance Young Bird Grand National is another National that the Neill loft has finished 2nd Open. The loft has a super record from the Young Bird National – 2005 3rd, 13th & 18th Open; 2006 10th & 16th Open; 2008 2nd, 11th, 15th & 17th Open.

The Talbenny Young Bird National (NIPA) has been won twice by the Neill loft in 2002 and 2006. Willie Neill of Annaghmore is one of

The National Flying Club introduced into its programme a new Championship award to be known as the Triple Crown Diploma, the criteria being an Open prize winner as a young bird, Open prize winner as a yearling and finally an Open prize winner from the Kings Cup in successive years. The Neill loft collected this award in 2010 with a blue hen, her record 89th Open Young Bird National 2008, 62nd Open Yearling National 2009, 53rd Open Kings Cup 2010. Geoff Cooper presented this award to Willie Neill at the National Dinner in 2010 and was very impressed with her record having been placed in the top 100 in all three races.



Photography by:  
Adie McCormick  
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**"Jessie"**  
Bred & Raced by W G Neill, Annaghmore  
N.I.P.A. Silver Diploma Winner 2010  
56th, 120th & 18th Open N.I.P.A. St Malo OB Nat.

only a handful of fanciers who have won both the NIPA Young Bird Channel National and the NIPA Old Bird Channel National from St Malo. The Old Bird National

Going one better is another blue cock 'Gerald's Pride' 1st Club, 1st Section, 1st Open NIPA Talbenny 2008 and then 2nd Open NIPA Tullamore in 2009. As his

the Silver Dollar'. The blue chequer cock that won the NIPA Talbenny Young Bird National in 2002 is of Soontjen breeding and named 'Willie's Delight'. This

**"GERALD'S PRIDE"**  
Bred by W.G. Neill, Annaghmore  
1st Open NIPA Talbenny 2008  
2nd Open NIPA Tullamore 2009

**"MARKY"**  
Bred & Raced by W.G. Neill, Annaghmore  
1st Open NIPA Talbenny 2007

**"RAZZLE DAZZLE BILLY"**  
Bred & Raced by W.G. Neill, Drumcannon  
1st Open Talbenny Young Bird National 2002

**"WILLIE'S DELIGHT"**  
Bred & Raced by W.G. Neill, Drumcannon  
1st Open Talbenny Young Bird National 2002  
Sire of "Razzle Dazzle Billy"

**"BILLY BOY"**  
Bred & Raced by W.G. Neill, Annaghmore  
1st Open N.I.P.A. St Malo Old Bird National 2010

**"NORMAN"**  
Bred & Raced by W.G. Neill, Annaghmore  
2nd Open N.I.P.A. St Malo 2010

**"WISSIE"**  
Bred & Raced by W.G. Neill, Annaghmore  
N.I.P.A. Young Bird National Winner 2010  
1st & 2nd Open N.I.P.A. St Malo Old Bird Nat.

**"JOHNNY BOY"**  
Bred by W.G. Neill, Annaghmore

**"BILLY"**  
Bred by W.G. Neill, Drumcannon  
1st Open N.I.P.A. Young Bird National 2006

**"FRANK'S GRIEF"**  
Bred by W.G. Neill, Annaghmore  
2 & 4th National Old Bird National

**"GERARD'S GRIEF"**  
Bred & Raced by W.G. Neill, Annaghmore  
N.I.P.A. Young Bird National Winner 2010  
1st & 2nd Open N.I.P.A. St Malo Old Bird Nat.

**W.G. Neill ~ Annaghmore**

Photography by: Ailie McCormack. Design by: [www.catguidesign.com](http://www.catguidesign.com)

was won by the blue chequer cock 'Billy's Boy' containing the Van Loon lines of Norrie Sharpe. I was very much taken by the chequer pied hen 'Gloria' 3rd Open NIPA St Malo Old Bird National.

Another star pigeon is the blue cock 'Marky' 1st Club, 1st Section, 1st Open Talbenny NIPA in 2007.

name would indicate the blue cock was bred by Gerald Delaney of Oroory Hill Stud.

Geoff Cooper was impressed with the performance of the Triple Crown winner and I can tell you he would be more impressed if he handled the blue hen that won the award, she is known as 'Queen of

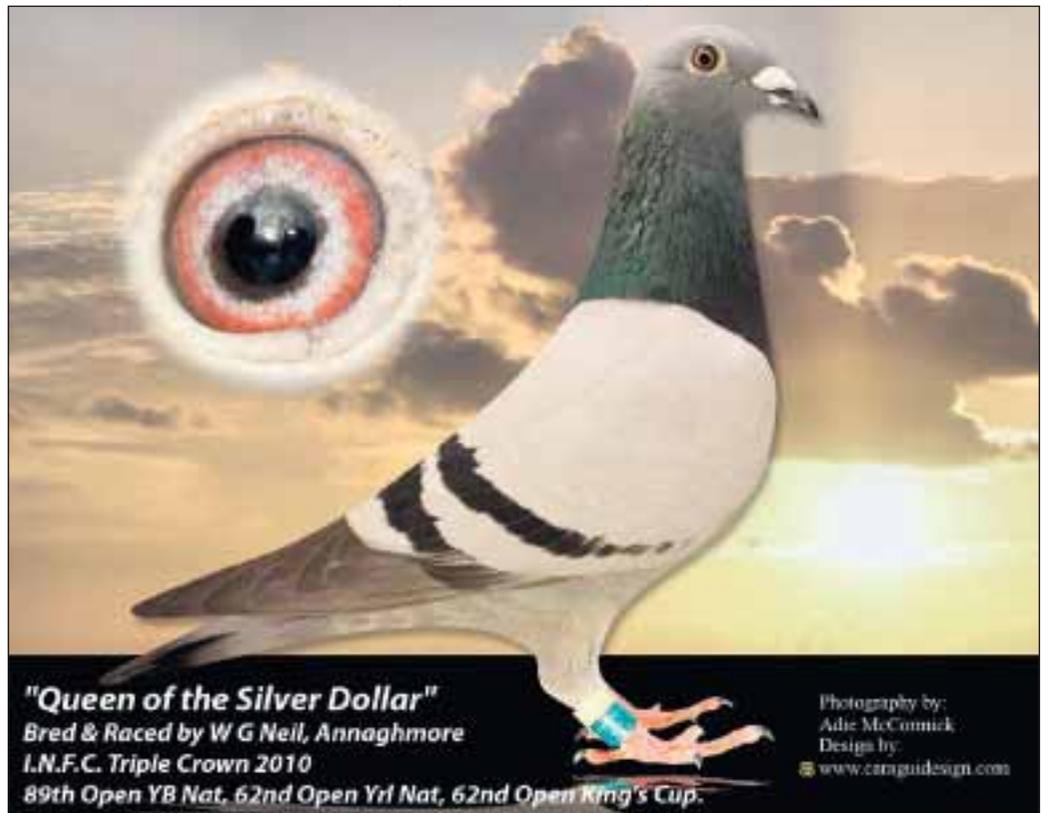
National winner then went on to breed a blue chequer cock in 2006 that also won the NIPA Talbenny Young Bird National just like his sire.

These top National performances have continued into 2013 with the Neill loft winning 5th North Section, 5th Open INFC Kings Cup

velocity 1167yph collecting £766. Quimper was the race point for the Friendship National and Willie was 25th Open, only 89 birds in race time (three days).

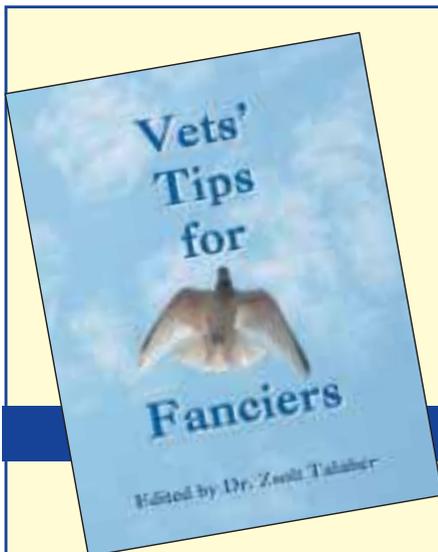
Willie has been racing since 1961 starting out as Neill Brothers and with a lot of hard work in his early years, he now has a major building business. With the volume of work he has and a fine range of lofts he is lucky to have Phillip Larkin helping at the lofts.

When in Belgium I was fortunate to visit many great lofts including Van Hee, Grondelaer and Denys. When shown the pigeons at these lofts they were always Van Hee or Grondelaer and that was because they bought only top pigeons to blend in and they became part of their own strain. This maybe the way Willie Neill is going as he only buys the best to make up the Neill family. A smashing team is housed at



Annaghmore and further National success will be in his sights. Feeding for all the race team is Beattie's Champion Supreme and all the pigeons young and old

are trained by Willie. He is one of those fanciers who has a very supported wife, Gloria, who encourages him in his hobby. A very lucky man indeed!



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