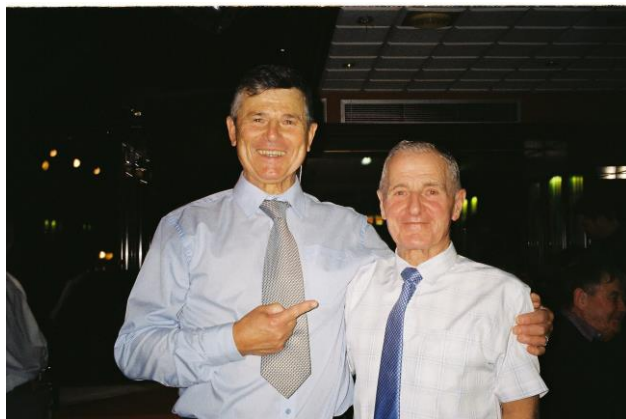


BLACKPOOL 2017 NORTH WEST GRAND NATIONAL PRESENTATION

Once more the North West Grand National Flying Club presentation was held at the Ruskin Hotel during the 2017 Blackpool Weekend. The occasion was a shared event in conjunction with the Bamford Gold Ring presentation

The hotel is a superb venue being centrally located, the staff are first class and as many of our regular guests will verify the food is outstanding. Yet again there was an excellent turnout and many of our guests commented it was the best presentation yet.

Rob Owen opened procedures and thanked club sponsors Bamford's Corn, Peter Bennett, and NWHU for their continued support. He went on to thank Keith Iddon, Diane Bonney and the team at B & I Transport for once again providing an excellent service to the club in this year's trying circumstances.



MC Rob Owen with Master Breeder Alan Hindhaugh

Also thanked were the clubs marking officers namely Stuart Culbert, Terry Phifer, Alan Bamford, George Hilson, Jim Sephton, Maurice McCartney, Dave Harrington, Jim Frost & Dave Moss. Where would we be without these wonderful volunteers?



Chairman Jim Frost with John Mills

The club's large array of trophies were displayed the icing on the cake being Peter Bennett's marvellously presented photographs and 'Bird of the Year' plate.

Rob went on to thank club secretary Niki Waterhouse and mentioned her husband John for all the work behind the scenes ensuring club rings are despatched, money banked, race distances and entries verified, and dealing with the constant stream of enquiries a bigish club needs to deal with on a daily basis.

It was time to introduce our guest to present the prizes. This year it was Fylde legend Brian Barnes. Brian now flies as Barnes & Walmsley and of course I can re-collect on many occasions when Brian has won some of the area's big races, and usually flying a lot further than most competitors. Indeed it was only two years ago we were applauding the partnerships performance in coming 2nd in the Bamfords Gold ring race.



Peter & Isobel Billington 1st Open Carentan with our guest, Fylde legend Brian Barnes

Now to the 2016 winners, First race was Carentan and winning of 1st Open and the Bamfords Corn trophy was Mr. and Mrs. Peter Billington. It was great to meet Peter and his wife Isobel again. I remember speaking to Peter two years ago at the 2015 presentation and he said to me 'I want one of those Peter Bennett framed pictures!' Well he did not take long to achieve that ambition. Carentan was a pretty tough race as is any race with a winning velocity of 1194 y.p.m. The winning bird now named 'Liza' is from a very in-bred Kannibaal pigeon bought from the late Jan Lotterman and a Van-de Pasch from Joop Merx. Best result as a young bird 12 open 1st section Bamford Gold Ring. The week before going to Carentan she was 1st club 9th N.W. Lancs Fed from Portland so certainly a good bird on top form. Runner up 2nd Open and 2nd section B at Carentan was C. Barlow of Lancaster. I had a word with Naylor Bros of Haydock who were 1st West Section and 3rd Open. Keen as mustard these lads and they have won well in the specialist 2-Bird clubs in the area winning 1st Warrington 2-Bird again and having a great YB season to boot, a rising force. I was a bit naughty calling them the Kray Twins but being good sports they took it in good spirit. Club champions Green & Hilson won 1st East section and fourth open just holding off Alan Barton and Liddle & Field two excellent Lancashire lofts particularly over the channel. Going to our A section into the Barrow area D.L. & T Fallows timed a cracking bird doing 1147 for the C. Wainwright trophy. 2nd section with their good hen was A & K Young closely followed by M/M O'Brien and Hambling & Culbert all these game birds breaking 1100 YPM. It was nice to see Keith Young and his wife at the presentation, what good sports and a happy couple they are.

Moving onto the Fougères race. This turned out to be a long and drawn out affair for both officials and competitors alike Due to persistent poor weather and forecast not improving in the end we ended up on the Tuesday at Cheltenham and even then the birds hit a belt of rain. The only good thing was that the birds lived to fight another day. Many of the clubs who liberated that weekend had disastrous losses. Winning the race was probably the clubs shortest westerly flyer, Liverpool loft John Tamman.



John Tamman 1st Open Cheltenham

I was speaking to John and he had decided to go for a different type of bird cutting back on his local club targets with more of a focus on the Midland National and the North West Grand National. He won the Section in the Midlands National last year and now wins 1st Open North West Grand national FC and Barrow Victoria Trophy. John was also 3rd open. So a very astute excellent pigeon man. Sandwiched in between John's two timers for 2nd Open was the Prescott loft of Newsholme & McArdle. No surprise as they had a superb season at club and fed level and race one of the strongest teams of the original Lambrechts in the country. It was nice to see Andrew Newsholme at the presentation and partner Pat. They seem to be enjoying themselves and we enjoyed their company. With the blustery east wind the west Section enjoyed a good race. In fact the next section winner was up in Millom, Cumbria and once again it was the A & K Young loft to the fore taking a great 6th Open. Tony Johnson and K. Charnley took the next two place in section A. It is I think Mr Charnley's last season racing and the club are sorry to see him go having produced many top class channel performances from his small loft. 12th Open and 1st Section B was Tom Jackson with D. Crowe, M/M B. A Moss (a well fancied bird) and Don McCartney taking the next positions in the section. Meanwhile section E so often providing the winners had a tough time. A blustery East wind and belt of rain meant members there facing the worse of the elements. Taking 1st & 2nd section and a tidy sum where the powerful Green & Hilson loft.

The third club race was Messac distances varying from 385 miles to around 450 miles depending on location. No holdover this time but still tough conditions prevailed and it took a good game bird to defy the elements. For the 2nd time in three years it was the loft of Newsholme & McArdle providing 1st Open Messac and the T O Burrows Trophy and Stewardess Cup.



Newsholme & McArdle 1st Open Messac

Not bad sprint pigeons these Lambrechts, doing 1191 y.p.m. for the 391 miles. The winner is actually a half-brother to their 2014 Messac winner. The sire a direct Lambrecht has sired many good fed winners and a section A NIPA winner. The dam of the winner was supplied by friend John Mathews of Whiston and is a direct Jo Vangeel (Soonntjens) The cock had raced every land race winning the 1st and 4th club in the process. It was sent on over the channel because it looked so good on landing in the harder land races. I race against these lads on a weekly basis and once again they were certainly on fire in 2016. These birds just love the head winds. Yes 2nd Open Cheltenham 1st Open Messac in only the two old bird NWGNFC races they sent. Meanwhile at the easterly side of the radius where Manchester loft of Winder & Thompson.



John Winder of Winder & Thompson 2nd Open, Messac 1st East Section

A very well fancied bird this and it is always a pleasure to see John and his party at the presentation. What a gentleman John is and a great patron of the sport. A lot of the clubs most successful flyers were well represented on this Messac result with another section winner in Tom Jackson taking third open just holding off one of my favourite fanciers Don McCartney of Bolton-le-Sands. Don was doing 1185 y.p.m. for the 435 miles and timing them in like clockwork. These were followed by the strong Southport area lofts of A. Crook & Son, Stephen Stringfellow and the prolific Liddle & Field, all these birds well fancied and good pool winners. Into Cumbria and 1st Section, 11th Open was A & K Young maintaining their great record in the race. I was talking to Keith at the presentation asking where son Adam was. He replied 'having babies'. Yes with a young family, it is tough to get away to these functions and I missed seeing him. 2nd East Section was Jim Hinchliffe.



Three generations. Jim Hinchliffe & his lovely family

Jim's family attended the presentation once more with three generations in attendance they are a credit to Jim and his wife. I noted his oldest son was missing I believe he is at university now such a nice group of people. Rounding off the old bird season Tom Jackson took the F. Wright Memorial Trophy for the club old bird averages and the Spillers Cup for highest point's old bird. Jim Hinchliffe the East Section old bird averages, Ste Stringfellow the West Section old bird averages and A & K Young the A Section old bird averages. Well done to all.



Mr & Mrs Keith Young

The young bird programme consisted of Bedhampton and Portland flown in the first two weeks in September. Usually Bedhampton is quite a test especially into Cumbria. On this occasion the weather intervened and low cloud and rain in the vicinity of Bedhampton hung about for days only clearing when too late to liberate. Very trying to say the least. The club would like to thank convoyer Ken Atherton for his dedication to the well-being of the birds. In the end with no improvement in the weather forecast the birds were brought back and liberated at Cheltenham on the Tuesday. The young birds actually arrived in superb condition. It was a full house for that man again Steve Maylett.



The one and only Steve Maylett 1st Open YB Bedhampton

Steve is one of the countries' top young bird specialist and proved that by taking the first four places. I think it is the fifth or sixth occasion Steve has won a NWGNFC young bird event. Normally they are tough affairs but Steve made it look easy in this case. The icing on the cake was that it was pooled to the knockers in section and open so a nice little pay day. These wins don't come by chance and Steve goes direct to the source for his birds in this case the majority of his birds where Stefaan Lambrechts. Steve sells all his winners after racing but makes sure he gets hold of the best available on the market for the following year. Money no object. Fifth open in the race was the ever present Green & Hilson. Tom Jackson had a field day in section B timing four together to take the first four taking 6th, 7th, 8th & 9th Open. This loft had been well there all year and indeed won the combined averages in the club as well as being runner-up highest Pools & Prizes. Whilst in the West Section super flyers R & B Smith won 1st West section. It was nice to see this good loft once again enhance its reputation. Amongst their many good performances in 2016. 9th Open NFC Ancenis, 1st Eccles 2 Bird, 1st Warrington 2 bird, 1st North Ashton 2 bird winning around £7000 this year alone. Taking the next three positions in the West Section were the prolific Arnold & Johnson. They took 3rd section MNFC Chale a few days earlier and of course were the highest prize-winner's in Merseyside Fed 2016. In around the 3 hours 30 minutes mark the Cumbrian birds began to time with the Askam loft of J. Walker holding off fellow Askam flyer Richard Parrington. The birds came thick and fast then in section 'A' who always give good support to these races and Millom's Newton & Oliver timed two to take 3rd & 4th Section. The club offer ring prizes for rings sold through the club returning all money made to the members on a sectional basis. Tom Jackson was 1st Section B, Alan Jones & Son 1st Section W, and K. Steven of Whitefield 1st Section E and J. Walker of Askam 1st Section 'A'.

The last race on September 10th was Portland and the birds were released after a one day holdover into a south wind. Would you believe it, after winning the same race last year it was that man again Craig Hughes & Son.

Of course Craig is the son-in-law of Steve Maylett and no doubt some of Steve's expertise has rubbed off. Every-time I meet Craig for some reason I have a mental blank and call him Chris Jones. So very sorry young man, senile decay has set in. They appear to have really enjoyed themselves at the presentation, what a great family

Second Open by the narrowest of margins was the formidable Green & Hilson. Pooled to the hilt in Open & Section. It was good to see George racing again after the tragic loss of his wife Little Mo and we sadly missed her company at the presentation.



The Master. George Hilson

When you realised George stopped racing for a while during the season yet was still the clubs highest pool & prize winner it makes you realise the calibre of the loft, one of the most powerful lofts in the country at all distances, young bird or old bird.

Third open and first section B was Mike Riding of Preston. This loft can be relied on and are usually well to the fore be it young bird or channel racing and a well fancied bird to boot. Peter Heywood took second section B. What a record Peter has in the club he is always thereabouts in every race, and 3rd section was Dave and Joan Harrington. 1st West section was Croston loft of Dave Brookfield. Dave has a tremendous record in the club but usually it is from the channel races. It came as no surprise to me to see Alan Bamford come second west section with a well pooled bird. I have noted a surge in his performances the last few years whether new birds or more time I will have to ask him. Southport loft Liddle & Field were 3rd section. Of course when Mick lays a bird out particularly at the distance he can match any one in the country. Meanwhile flying 278 miles into Whitehaven and new name appeared Rodgers & Benn. Terry Phifer our president recently moved into the area and has been busy recruiting. Well these lads can certainly fly pigeon's. First, second and third section A and also 6th, 7th, & 9th open some 75 miles further than the majority of competitors. What an introduction to the club. The birds where followed by a timer from G Best of Workington well done to all concerned.

The club Gold Ring scheme was flown from this race-point with prizes being allocated according to the sales in each section. As it was around £1100 was up for grabs on top of the guaranteed prize money to section and open winners. Club sponsor Alan Bamford had the 1st gold ring bird winning the west section prize holding off octogenarian Bill Dickinson. Talking to a fit looking Bill who had the first bird in the clock station I asked how he had prepared his youngsters this year. Same as the old birds he said. No training after the first race, I noted Bill had won the Wigan 2 Brid with his old birds. In section B ace flyer Jim Kenyon took the section gold ring followed by Peter Heywood, whilst in section 'A' they go to town on this and Askam in Furness loft Jefferson & Lloyd took the honours followed by Ron Lilleby. I seem to remember J Jefferson taking the gold ring prize last year so well done!

Some of the other members present to pick up their prizes where Robbie Brandon 2nd east section in the hard Carentan, MRAD Lofts these lads where 1st section Vire with the MNFC also having another 4 birds well up in the result, they took 2nd and 3rd in the Leigh arms gold ring race, Alex Smith the gold ring king, past dual winner, channel man Tom Smith, Mr & Mrs Tobias, John Waterhouse, M/M Walsh, millionaire Paul Dolan and last year's chief guest Maurice McCartney.

The 2017 race programme has been announced and the race dates are May 27th Coutances, June 10th Fougeres, July 8th Ansenis (Wednesday marking), September 2nd Bedhampton, September 9th Portland (Thursday marking). Good luck and good racing to you all in 2017

BAMFORD GOLD RING PRENTATION

Alan Bamford came out front to do the honours for the Bamford Gold Ring presentation and thanked Diane Bonney and the team for all their help. Diane of course is wonderful organiser and to publish a full result a few hours after the clocks have been processed is testimony to that. I note they call in the services of 'Sandy' of Mysoft result software who enters all the information at marking then produces the result later after clocking. I assume Diane propagates all the member and distance information prior to this. We should take time to thank Alan Bamford for providing such great facilities for the marking of the birds. He puts a lot back into the pigeon sport via sponsorship, is a fancier himself, sells fabulous products and worthy of our support. Once more with total pools & prizes totalling over £21,000 it proved to be one of the major Gold Ring races in the country.

Last year racing from Bedhampton it was the easterly based lofts which prevailed, Congleton, Manchester and Rochdale providing the early times. In 2014 it was the western lofts of the late Tommy Hawkins Liverpool and the Blackpool aces Barnes & Walmsley who took the honours. This year it was back to the central corridor lofts providing the winner so for me it is a very fair race-point which if conditions and your birds are right on the day you have a very good chance of prevailing.



Mr & Mrs Paul Taylor Bamford Gold Ring Winners 2016

The birds were liberated into a steady north wind so there was no hiding place for under prepared youngsters. With a good winning velocity of 1234 Y.P.M. you can say that only the best birds came to the fore. On to the winner Paul Taylor of Warrington. Winning this race is hard enough but to do the double in the space of three years takes some doing. Well pooled in the section and winning nearly £1400 it was lovely to see Paul and his family at the presentation. Some club members popped in as well to pay their respects so great support. In second place winning nearly £1600, as I have said his performances are certainly on the up, was the man himself Alan Bamford. I know when I nipped up to see him during the young bird season he was out getting the young birds basketed ready for training. Indeed the result highlighted many of the area's top lofts in the early times. John Winstanley of Orrell was third winning £1100. I recently presented the prizes at Merseyside Federation and John was successful there winning the Messac race. A good advertisement as his business is selling pigeon corn. So nearly £4200 in the first three birds. Martin Gorka £675, Derek Rooney £1035, MRAD Lofts £750, Arnold & Johnson £380, Alan Jones & son £750, Tom Jackson £325 took the next places and all of them are good racing



Diane Bonney driving force behind the Bamford's Gold Ring

lofts in their own right. 1st East section once more and 9th Open was Roger Sutton of Congleton. Everyone knows that Roger is one of the best flyers in the country I always look out for his Tarbes performances but this versatile loft is one to look out for whatever the distance. His section winner won nearly £1100. Second east section, another top loft Green & Hilson and £930. Curtis/Wall & Lunt, Michael Riding, Tom Jackson and Peter Forber were other top lofts well represented on the result with Mike Riding winning the north section from Terry Eves of Blackpool. Not the first time Terry has been well to the fore.



Alan Bamford 2nd Open Bamfords Gold Ring 2016

It was nice many of the Bamfords winners at the presentation along with team who transports them, B & I transport. Alan and Andrea were certainly in good form, they always have a smile on their faces, and of course their care of the birds is immaculate at all times. Those braces Alan would hold up the Forth Bridge.

The race is on again this year and of course the Gold Rings are in big demand. Alan mentioned that this year there would be a five bird championship open race on the same day from the same race point but separate liberation. Open only to fanciers precipitating in the Gold Ring Race they could nominate non gold ring youngsters for this race. Full details will be advertised nearer the time.

With prize winners and friends gathered in friendship and many other fanciers popping down for a chat the evening slipped away in pleasant conversation well into the early hours. Good food, great friends and a social able ambiance finished another great night in Blackpool. The meal is pre booked already for next year.

Rob Owen