

Barry (BAZ) Ashcroft England - UK Loft Report

By Barry Trewin



Barry Trewin, Barry (BAZ) Ashcroft and Barry Leonard – photo taken while BAZ was in Australia visiting the Mallee Classic in Ballarat.

I contacted Barry on the Internet after a friend advised me he was looking for a contact as he intends to visit Australia later this year. So I asked him if he was interested in doing a loft report, he agreed, so I sent him a questionnaire, so I thank him for his time. I look forward to catching up with him face to face when he visits.

Name: *Barry (BAZ) Ashcroft*

Address: *Manchester,
ENGLAND.*

Name of Club: North West Classic club.
Eccles Two Bird Specialist Club.
National Flying Club.
Midlands National Flying Club

No. of Members: Each club has thousands of members, except Eccles 2 Bird which has about 80 members.

When did you start in Pigeons and how were you introduced?

When I was a young lad I kept a few homers in a small cote attached to the shed wall. When I got married I joined the local club, and I have kept them on and off ever since. But this is my third season back racing pigeons seriously. I was introduced to pigeon racing whilst at school, one of my mates took me to see his and his dads set up, which was on allotments and the bug bit and it has never gone away.

Strains of Birds Held: Brief about each Strain: e.g. Breeding, Performance, Distance, Sprint

All my birds are kept solely for the distance racing, they are mainly Janssen Bro's Arendonk, G & M Vanhee from Jean Luc Van Roy from whom I was lucky to obtain Belg 2000 4515868 Blue Cock, It was a

never to be repeated offer at a sale in England which I snapped up as he is a direct son of Superman Van Hette Belge 87 4048559 who if you read about his racing career you will realise what an outstanding racing pigeon this was, and then put to stock for Luc. I also have a pair of Fauche bros X Vanden Beele, some from Peeters Brothers Olympiad winners from Hoogstraten- Wortel, Belgium and Jozef Heist also from Hoogstraten - Wortel, Belgium, this area is a hotbed of pigeon racing in the Flemish part of Belgium.

No. of Stock pairs 7

No. of racing birds at start of year.

Total Y/B 30

Total O/B 30

Feeding:

Breeding Season:

Versel Laga. Breeding- Plus and Versel-Laga Sneaky- Mix.

Racing Season:

Sprint:]

Middle:] Versel- Laga. Champoin- Plus, Junior-Plus and Versel- Laga Sneaky-Mix.

Distance:]

Off Season:

Versel - Laga. Moulting - Plus

Versel- Laga. Winter- Plus.

Versel- Laga. Sneaky Mix.

Please list %, types of grains and any other information regarding your feeding.

All Versel-Laga Plus mixes have an added pre-cooked pellet, which is approx. 8% of the total mix that leaves a 92% mix of quality grain. I like the scientific make up Versele- Laga use, and they are always looking to improve their products in a scientific way which benefits the racing pigeon.

How much do you feed per bird, loz per bird etc..

I feed once per day by hopper, the birds have as much as they want, with the pots in the breeders nest boxes topped up at all times. The hoppers are closed after the birds have finished.

How often do you feed, - Daily, Twice per day etc.

As above, once per day, plus two spoons of Versel- Laga Sneaky mix in the pots in the nest boxes when racing, for two days in the week prior to racing.

Training:

Weaning:

Once per day for as long as they want, and then kept in the loft, they are not allowed to pick about on the outside ground.

First 5 Tosses:

I start them off at 5 miles when they are ranging, and then when they are home before me I jump them to 20 miles.

How many tosses before the first race and what distance?

Probably taken to about 30 Miles as many as 3 tosses per week.

Once Racing:

How Far: 30 Miles

How Often: once per week

Single Tosses: Y/N YES. Sometimes for slow comers, and for promising yearlings.

Do you toss alone? Y/N Yes

Why? Mainly because I like to observe them when they are released, and take note of the ones going it alone, also you can take your own time, and any mistakes are down to you alone.

Middle Distance Training

Basically the same as for the long distance, purely for convenience.

Distance Training

Distance pigeons are trained with a local clubs race program up to about 200 miles.

Do you prefer to race OB or YB?

I prefer O/B racing.

Why? Mainly because the experienced old birds give you more of a chance of clocking in, and the buzz I get from them when they do come from the distance races, I believe cannot be beaten.

Do you train differently YB against OB?

No.

What training do you use for the OB

I train them myself, and use a local club to train them in their inland race program.

Do you prefer to race Hens or Cocks?

Both

Why?

I believe that either a cock or hen when in form can surprise you with their performances, and because I race natural I can choose which is in form nearer a particular race.

Do you use any training methods such as Motivation?

After breeding one round of youngsters in December, I will split them up until their first race in May, but in between especially when training I will show the hens to the cocks, so they know they are still at the loft.

How do you select a bird for a coming event?

I believe that the good birds select themselves, they show you they are ready, sometimes selection is done with nest condition in mind, it's all about observing your birds, and noting which nest position they like to race to.

Do you train differently for special events?

As I only concentrate on the distance racing, my training is constant, and consistent, but it is done with a particular race in mind.

Please list your best Performances over the past current years

These are what I believe are my best performances over the last two years, after only being back racing in the sport for three years I think my birds have achieved a lot, it is mainly due to taking my time with the birds and not throwing them at every race as youngsters.

DK/ Cheq Cock GB 2001D 32765.

19 / 5 / 2002 1st club, 25th federation Portland, England, 200 miles, 173 members sent 2,454 birds.

1 / 6 / 2002. Eccles 2 bird specialist club, Manchester. 13th open Fougères, France, 79 members sent 158 birds.

Cheq Cock GB 2001D 32764.

13 / 7 / 2002. 1st club, (only bird in race time) Niort, France , 500 miles. 13 birds.

13 / 7 / 2002. 4th federation. Niort. France. 500 miles. 76 members sent 316 birds.

13 / 7 / 2002. 19th combine. Niort. France. 500 miles. 241 members sent 1,100 birds.

Cheq Cock GB 2001D 32764 (as above)

3 / 5 / 2003 British International Championship Club, 6th NW section, 183rd open, Falaise. France. 328 miles, 1765 birds sent.

This is a good distance cock.

Blue / Pied, Cock GB 2001N 84896.

21 / 6 / 2003 Eccles 2 bird specialist club Manchester. 9th Nantes, France. 430 miles, 63 birds sent.

5 / 7 / 2003. Eccles 2 bird specialist club Manchester. 4th Niort, France. 500 miles, 45 birds sent.

Red Cock GB 2003 V06246.

6 / 9 / 2003. Eccles 2 bird specialist club Manchester. 12th Y/B Picauville. France. 284 miles. 40 birds sent.

Medications:

Breeding Season:

All birds including stock birds are treated for cocci, tricho, and canker before pairing up, and they are also wormed.

Racing Season:

Prior to racing all the youngsters, stock and race team are vaccinated against PMV & Pox, treated again against cocci, tricho, and canker.

Other:

All birds receive a bath containing anti-lice and mite treatment.

Do you use any natural remedies?

No.

What type of trapping method do you use?

I use open door trapping, just as a matter of choice, and on distance racing it is better for the birds as they can see right into the loft, and there is less of the rushing about to catch them for clocking.

Please briefly explain your loft design and layout.

It is a three-compartment loft plus a stock loft with aviary. Open sliding doors with a netting door, which can be drawn across in the hot weather to let more air circulate.

What are the weather conditions in your area?

Very mixed. Manchester is known as England's rainy city, but there are wetter places in the UK ie Scotland and Wales.

What other conditions effect your racing e.g. mountains, Lakes - water etc.

The Pennine chain which is a mountain range known as the backbone of England, if the birds get on the wrong side, they can end up far North, and you probably will never see them again.

Breeding:

Do you use any system: *Line-breeding – Inbreeding*

I try to breed of the stock pairs, which I buy as pairs if possible. I let the racers select their own mate and I will let them breed one round of youngsters whether they have line-paired or in-paired, you can be surprised by the resulting youngsters. Basically they pair naturally.

What has been your most successful breeding pair?

I have had success with most of my stock pairings, especially the ones from Hoogstraten in Belgium from both of these outstanding pigeon men, I will have to wait to see the results of the other pairings as they are relatively new, and I believe that you have to wait for a couple of rounds to see their true potential.

What time of year do you breed?

I breed in December.

How many rounds?

One round of Racers.
Two rounds of Stock.

Do you have any suggestions for the Novice?

Listen to the elders of the sport, their knowledge is invaluable, help out as often as you can at your club as its future is in your hands. Go to a top flyer in the type of racing you want to do and purchase what you can afford. Let your thoughts be known, as even us older fanciers can learn from you in this modern age.

Any ideas for the betterment of the Sport of Pigeon racing?

I think there should be more co-operation between clubs in respect of boundaries, i.e. opening them up as some fanciers find themselves unable to race pigeons at club level due to boundary restrictions.

Young fanciers (novices) should be given more say in their race programs, maybe give them their own race, even give them their own rings i.e. 04 NOV, etc, it would give them more independence, you could also have a clock and equipment bank to help them out when they come into the sport.

And last but by know means least, more could be done internationally to promote the sport as a sport and make the public more aware of this great sport. Less complaining about those people who run the clubs and Feds etc, especially those who write articles on a regular basis, or organise the race programs. These people do what they do mainly because they enjoy it and because no one else wants to do the same things, and that speaks for itself. Enjoy the pigeons, that is the main thing.



Loft in Winter



Loft in Summer



Pegleg



Angel



Crusader

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