

Champions of the Scottish National Racing Pigeon Club 2010

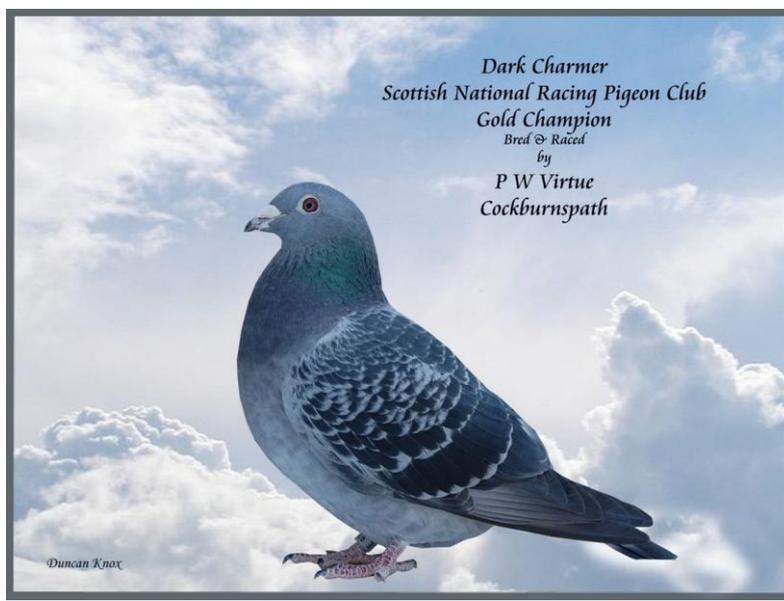
We are now more than one year on from the SNRPCs 2008 AGM held at the beginning of 2009 when the member's motion to change our Hall of Fame Award was agreed and the term SNRPC Champion was born. It has been a major task and an interesting one for Duncan Knox the PRO and my-self the Junior Vice president of the SNRPC, reporting on these first twenty one SNRPC Champion pigeon's their loft environment, and the Fancier.

The SNRPC is not a large organization and whilst it may not represent all of Scotland it most certainly is now recognised as an established serious Scottish long distance racing pigeon Club, with many of Scotland's great national flyers being members and competing with ever improving performances at the distance for our Gold medal, our silver medals, the Bronze medals and now our Champion awards.

This is the first of sixteen reports and over the next few months it is hoped that all of these reports will appear. The SNRPC President and his committee congratulate each and every one of these fanciers on their pigeon's achievement to SNRPC Champion status.

Peter Virtue of Cockburnspath Berwickshire winner of 4 SNRPC Champion awards in 2009.

SNRPC Gold Champion Dark Charmer

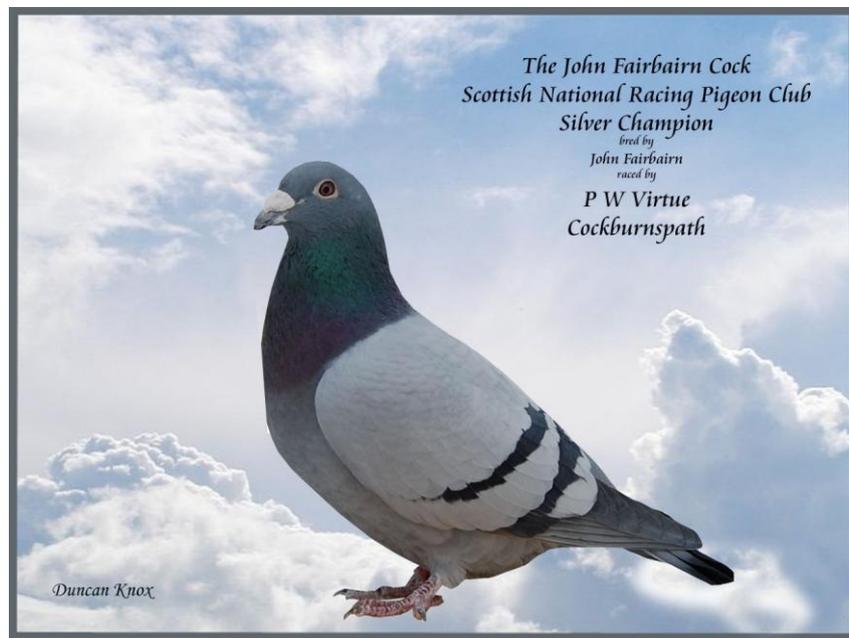


This Dark Chequer Hen was bred in 2004 and is through Peter's current Jan Arden Blood lines. Dark Charmer was fully raced as a young bird. As a yearling she was flown in the federation programme before being entered in the SNRPCs 2005 Falaise race. From an open entry of 908 birds with 269 of these entries in section B flying

500 miles she won a very creditable 14th open and 8th section B. As a 2 year old in 2006 she was again flown in the Federation Programme prior to being entered in the SNRPCs Premier Gold Medal Race from Reims, with an open entry of 532 birds and 120 in section B she won 31st Open and 13th section B flying 536 miles. In 2007 as a 3 year old, this very good hen was flown in chosen federation races then entered in the SNRPCs Premier Gold Medal race from Reims this race was flown after a 5 day hold over and the flying conditions en-route very testing to say the least, from an open entry of 575 birds and 150 section B entries Dark Charmer was again timed to win an outstanding 5th open and 3rd section B. Then in 2008 as a 4 year old after her preliminary training and racing she was entered for a third time in Reims the SNRPCs Gold medal race and her fourth time to fly the Channel competing with 450 open entries and 110 section B entries she won an amazing 3rd Open and 1st section B flying for the third time 536 miles.

Finally in 2009 again from our Gold medal race Reims with 449 open entries and 100 in section B she won 31st Open and 30th in section B her fifth time across and her fourth time from 536 miles, each of these five times winning great open positions. I am not one for handling fanciers winning pigeons but this dark chequer hen was every bit the champion to handle as she was at flying from the distance a definite SNRPC gold Champion in any mans language

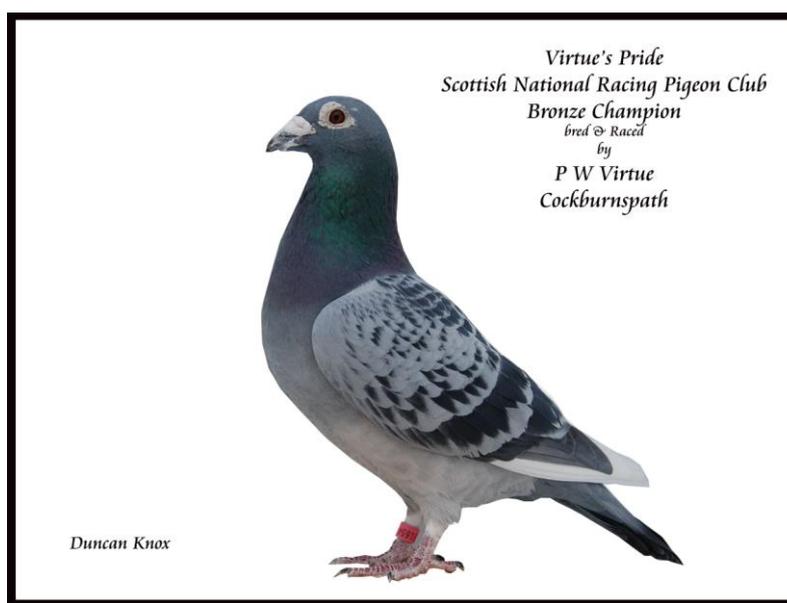
SNRPC Silver Champion The JF Cock



This stylish Blue cock was bred by John Fairbairn of Cockburnspath in 2001 and purchased by Peter at a clearance sale held by John's family after his Death in 2005. He is a lovely pigeon to handle and has great style and when Peter bought him had already won 47th open from Falaise, 500 miles as a 3 year old with the SNFC in 2004. In 2006 after settling him, Peter sent him to the SNRPC Premier Gold Medal race from Reims flying 536 miles where he won a great 2nd Open and 2nd section B

competing against 532 open entries and 120 in section B only losing by a close margin to Wilf Flockart from Tranents 1st Open winner “ Gladiator “ . In 2007 Peter sent him back to Reims in the SNRPCs gold medal race and this outstanding pigeon won 4th Open and 4th section B, this was a very hard race racing against 575 open entries and 150 section B entries. At now 6 years old Peter sent him back to the SNRPCs 2008 Reims premier race and he won 18th open and 6th section B against 450 open entries and 110 section B entries. This grand Blue cock bred by John Fairbairn and raced by Peter, now named The J F Cock just missed being an SNRPC Gold Champion because in 2009 at 7 years old he went back to Reims with the SNRPC and was placed 102nd on the race sheet and 30th in the section 5 times recorded from the channel achieving 47th open, 2nd open, 4th Open, 18th open and recorded 102nd in 2009 this last position was against 449 open entries and 100 in section B. Peter has retired this pigeon to the stock loft and is delighted with him as a producer. The Original blood lines of Peter’s SNRPC Silver Champion the J F Cock is through Hugh Fairbairn of Drem blood lines, a great National Flyer and a relative of John’s

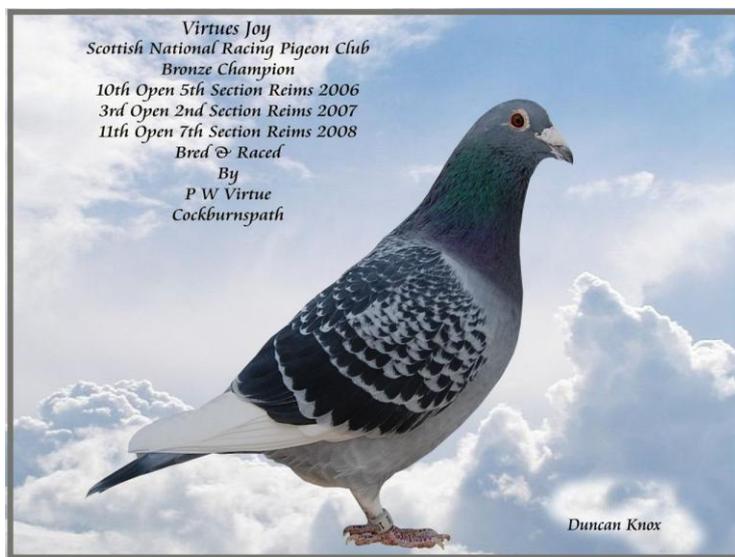
SNRPC Bronze Champion Virtue’s Pride



Virtue’s Pride is a Blue Chequer slightly pied cock now 5 years old and is typical of Peters current succesfull Jan Arden blood lines. This pigeon before flying the SNRPC Reims race in 2007 had been subjected to Peters very strict training and racing programme Eg:- flying the full Federation programme as a young bird and again the full programme as a yearling and 2 year old. Competing in 2007 against 575 open entries and 150 section entries in this very hard SNRPC channel race he won 38th Open and 13th section B. In 2008 after selective racing Virtue’s Pride was sent to the SNRPC Premier race from Reims, with 450 open entries and 110 in the section he won 6th Open and 3rd section B, in 2009 as a 4 year old he flew Reims again with the SNRPC and won 24th open and 13th section B against 449 open entries and 100 in the section. Virtue’s Pride has twice been on the result from the SNRPCs Inland National 8th open and 57th open. It will be interesting to see how this very good distance

pigeon will fare if sent back as a 5 year old in 2010 we shall follow his progress with great interest.

SNRPC Bronze Champion Virtue's Joy



Peter's fourth SNRPC Champion winner is a Chequer Pied Cock bred in 2004 this too is typical of Peter's current Jan Arden Blood lines and like the others comes easily to the hand, a classic long distance pigeon. As a 2 year old he was sent to Reims the SNRPC Gold Medal race this 2006 race had 44 birds on the day from every section and Virtue's Joy secured a super 10th open flying 536 miles competing with 532 entries and 5th section B from 120 in the section. Peter ensures that his pigeons are extremely well raced and flies his birds on what he calls the celibate system which means that they normally go to every fed race out to 300 miles plus, before the channel. In 2007 as a 3 year old, from Reims an entirely different race compared to 2006 was flown after a 5 day holdover and this good cock competing against 575 birds from Reims won a great 3rd open and 2nd section B competing with 150 entries in section B. In 2008 he was timed to be 66th from the Gold medal race but was very badly Hawked Peter thought he was going to lose him but he recovered sadly this position did not qualify for an official diploma. Then in 2009 now 5 year old he again flew from the SNRPCs Gold medal race from Reims winning 11th open and 7th section B 445 open entries and 100 in the section. In 2009 Virtue's Joy was also 34th open from Wanstead Flats the SNRPCs Inland national. I am certain that these Champion pigeons of Peter's if spared the hawk attacks will bring more credit to this already very good long distance National flyer.



Photo of the Loft with Peter and his Grand son Brodie

Peter's lofts are virtually as they were when I first visited Cockburnspath in 1968 same colour, same style, very well kept and still cleaned out twice per day, situated at the top of the neat tidy Garden of no 24 Callander place Cockburnspath, a lovely family home where Peter and Jean, his wife have made so many fanciers welcome. His Main Loft is some 35 feet long and houses some 24 pair of race birds of all ages in five sections a broad passage runs the entire length of the loft. At one end and separate to the main loft he has a stock loft with a small aviary and 12 pair of some very interesting Stock birds. At the other end of the racing loft he has attached a small addition for his youngest grandson Brodie encouraging him to keep his own pigeons, which Peter has supplied. Peter's other Grandson Blair was, in his earlier years also interested but has found other interests now to occupy him.



The Racing Loft

Over the years Peter has flown on the Natural system but the last 6 years or so he has flown on what he calls the celibate system for both Cocks and hens. Pairs up at the beginning of February takes one round of young birds then separates all his race birds. He makes sure that the cocks and hens cannot see each other and meeting only takes place on returning from a race this is his procedure even for the distance races. Without doubt it has proved quite outstanding for Peter in Club Federation and National distance racing his pigeons excelling at every distance with 500 miles plus wins and performances being quite exceptional.

Other influencing factors which must also be considered are Peters' utter dedication to his pigeon's welfare, they are his whole life and to that end he is the master. His affinity to his pigeons is of paramount importance ensuring that every aspect of the bird's interests catered for. At the same time Jean his wife is also integral to his success by supporting Peter in his recreation in every possible way. All of Peter's Family are important to him but at the present time his youngest Grandson Brodie is very keen on the pigeons so he is encouraging him with his own small loft.

Originally Peter's pigeons were allowed complete freedom around the loft, even at the horrific expense of losing many major national winners over the years to the ever present Raptor. The Sparrow hawk and the Peregrine falcon have been a serious menace for years but the situation is now at critical level when he lost some 20 birds in 2008 alone. Training is now restricted to 2 or 3 preliminary 10 mile tosses before racing then his birds are raced every race in the programme with any flying around the loft under strict supervision. One of Peters' best National pigeons was Peter Thorpe twice 3rd Open from Rennes, a great distance pigeon that was the victim to the peregrine in training. This good blue cock was bred by Peter Thorpe of Scarborough.

Peter is not averse to bringing in new stock each year if it is young birds they must keep up with the young bird race programme, if it is stock birds their progeny must do the same if not it is discarded His original blood lines from Reg Barker of Essex with

the blood lines of A J Spare, J W Bruton, F J Jarvis the Golden Plovers and Tom Clarke of Frampton and Severn, are still in the back ground, Peter also had birds from Jim Donaldson of Donaldson and Bramley Seahouses as well as these mentioned. Over the years certain other additions have boosted the blood, at the present moment the Jan Aardens have proved to be a very special introduction.

Peter has also taken an active part over the years in the structure of pigeon racing in Scotland at club, federation and National level and to that end still does. In the last 50 years Peter has won innumerable National diplomas at 500 miles plus and amongst these holds 5 1st opens 4 2nd opens and at least 20 3rd opens and many other open diploma positions a superb legacy for the Scottish long distance fancier to emulate, or any other fancier for that matter, I would doubt that this record may ever be equalled or surpassed placing Peter Virtue as one of pigeon racings greats.

Over the years several major articles have recorded Peters' lofts, his birds, his performances and are a permanent historical reference which the reader can refer to. Some of These are Duncan Knox in the Pictorial of 2009, Bill Wortley the Racing Pigeon 1997 John Gray the British Homing World November 2006. Richard Boylin The racing Pigeon February 1995. David Parkinson The Gazette 1993. Bob Wardrough Fenton Barns the Gazette 1974. Keith Mott the Racing Pigeon 2003 and many other articles over the years, including articles in the Stud Books as recent as 2008, 2009 and 2010 in the BHW all highlight in great detail Peter Virtue and his Pigeons if the reader wishes to explore further his performances and family of racing pigeons.

In the 2010 racing season with the SNRPC, Peter was once again to the fore being 13th open from Wanstead flats. 2nd open from Arras with the 1st yearling. 3rd Open from Peterborough in the young bird national as well as other positions in all of these races. His first bird in Reims our Gold medal race was 23rd open and was his Bronze award winner Virtue's Joy, this was his 5th time across. At 32nd open was his other Bronze award winner Virtue's Pride both these pigeons can now be classed as SNRPC Silver champions 4 times across the channel and winning an official diploma. Peter had 6 other Birds timed in the Gold medal race to take an official diploma. From 14 birds entered in this very hard 3 day race he timed 8 on the result and has only 2 to account for

Photo's Duncan Knox, SNRPC PRO.

Text Ian M Brown, SNRPC Junior Vice President.