



Barry Partington with trophies won in 1980, the second year in succession.

EVERY NOW and again we witness the emergence of a new 'star' and as far as West Surrey is concerned their new 'star' must be Barry Partington of Farnham. When chatting to my very good friend, Jim Jones of Fleet, a few years ago he told me to watch out for the name of Partington and reckoned he would be a hard man to beat, particularly from the distance. Jim went on to say that Barry had obtained his basic stock from him and that he had let Barry have his best. Jim is, of course, one of the top distance flyers for miles around, his record from Palamos alone is outstanding. However, that is another story and I am supposed to be writing about Barry Partington.

The story of Barry's start in the sport is not an unfamiliar one and had his first pigeons at the tender age of 5 yrs when his father used to bring him birds which he caught in the local timber yard and which were kept in a chicken coop. His first racing pigeon was obtained from a Neville Law from whom he also purchased his first loft, some 8ft x 6ft. This pigeon, a pencil blue hen came in as a stray and, later, a red cock from Bob Wood up the road started to make its appearance and paired with the blue.

Later, Barry decided the time was ripe to buy some better-class stock and obtained a pair (£5 each) from Mr. Lunt who had scored in a Nantes National event. He then visited Alf Baker who was unable to supply his needs at the time but referred him to the legendry J.M.K. McGugan of N.Ireland who sent him a couple of pairs. His first club was the Tillingbourne Valley, where he became friendly with John Furlonger. Barry was in his teens at this time and remembers the great thrill he experienced when clocking from Bordeaux with a bird from the Lunt pair to win 3rd Club. As with many other young lads, new interests replaced that of pigeons and Barry turned first to Football and later to Boxing. Always a hard worker, Barry took a stall in Guildford Market and worked up a wholesale business but by this time the feathered birds had been sold to one of the Andrews brothers in Guildford and he met Joy, the girl who was to become his wife.

Barry spent nine years in Canada and had an interesting story to tell on this score. His grandad who hailed from Bury, went to live in Canada many years ago when Barry's father was

three years of age. During the last war (1939/45) Barry's father was stationed over here and where he eventually married a local girl who was to become the first war-time bride to emigrate to Canada. Barry returned from Canada at the tender age of 5 yrs only to return as a young man for the aforementioned period of nine years.

A few years ago Barry became 'mine host' of the Black Prince public house in Farnham and the 'pigeon bug' bit yet again. Barry is a great believer in that nothing succeeds like success and having already become successful in business decided that only reaching the top would be good enough for him with pigeons. With the advantage of the experience gained in the sport in his younger days he realised that you must first have excellent stock. The performance of Jim Jones of Fleet had always impressed him, particularly in the long distance events from Palamos and he obtained some 20 birds from Jim. He had nothing but praise for this fancier who was prepared to let him have his best pigeons. Jim's old family was Bricoux but he was also finding the K.O.Nipius strain were working well. Jim obtained these from McDonald of Fraserburgh and Barry decided to go direct to Mr. McDonald for stock, a decision he has never regretted. His friendship with both fanciers developed over the years and it is a tribute to Barry that these men have nothing but praise for the quality of the birds which he has bred in recent seasons. At this point I should also add that Barry introduced birds of the Desmet Matheus strain and which have also worked well for him.

Barry really burst on to the racing scene in the 1978 season although he did not compete in the longer races because the birds were too young. Flying in the Farnham R.P.C he won, with old birds, 1st Weymouth (1), 2nd Exeter (1), 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Weymouth (2), 3rd & 4th (Plymouth) (1), 2nd Avranches, 2nd Exeter (2), 3rd & 4th Plymouth (2), 1st, 2nd & 3rd Angers (a hard race) & 7th Fed, 1,118 birds, 1st Club & 9th Fed (1347 birds) Exeter (3) and 2nd Weymouth (3). With youngsters, he was 1st & 4th Club & 16th Fed (1,245 birds) Weymouth (1), 3rd & 4th Exeter (1), 3rd Exeter (2), 2nd Plymouth (1) and 2nd & 3rd Weymouth (4).

1979 was to see him really emerge and with old birds won 1st, 2nd & 3rd Weymouth (1), 2nd Club & 5th Club and 10th & 18th Fed (1759

"White Flight" reports on...

BARRY PARTINGTON OF FARNHAM

THE SUCCESSFUL SURREY FANCIER

birds) Weymouth (2), 1st & 2nd Club & 15th Fed (1818 birds) Exeter (1), 2nd Laval, 3rd & 4th Club & 13th & 14th Fed (1330 birds) Exeter (3), 3rd Angers, 1st, 2nd & 3rd Exeter (4), 3rd Niort, 1st Weymouth (3) and then probably his best-ever performance - 1st, 2nd & 5th Club, 2nd, 5th & 12th Fed (811 birds) and 5th, 11th & 20th B.T.B Combine (3,417 birds). This race, the longest of the season, was a very hard event and only 20 birds were recorded on the day in the whole Combine and Barry had three of them, the only competitor to record three birds. With youngsters, Barry won 3rd Club & 5th Fed (1224 birds) Weymouth (1), 1st & 2nd Weymouth (2), 2nd Plymouth (2), 4th Club & 14th Fed (1290 birds) Exeter (1), 2nd Weymouth (3), 2nd Club & 13th Fed (1310 birds) Weymouth (4). In club he won the Longest OB Trophy, 2-longest OB Races Avge Tph, OBA, YBA and Comb Avg. He was also R/u Best Av two longest OB races in the Fed. He was also 117th Sect & 171st Open in the British Barcelona Club YB event from Rennes and 112th Sect & 159th Open N.F.C Guernsey.

In 1980 he continued on his merry way with, in old bird programme, 2nd, 3rd & 5th Club & 23rd Fed (1813 birds) Weymouth (1), 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 6th Club & 2nd, 3rd, 5th & 25th Fed (1864 birds) Honiton, 1st & 5th Exeter (1), 1st, 2nd, 5th & 6th Plymouth (1), 2nd Club & 12th Fed (1266 birds) Laval (1), 1st & 2nd Club and 20th & 22nd Fed (1843 birds) Exeter (2), 3rd & 5th Laval (2), 1st & 2nd Club & 7th & 21st Fed Nantes (1144 birds), 3rd, 5th & 6th Club & 12th Fed (1530 birds) Exeter (4), 1st, 2nd & 3rd Club & 5th, 9th & 13th Fed (1058 birds) Niort, 1st, 4th & 6th Weymouth (2) and 3rd, 4th & 6th Bergerac. In this, the longest race of the season, Barry clocked 10 birds on the day, many of them in driving rain and the tenth bird coming in the dark and had a further 22 before 6 a.m on 2nd day. With YBs he won 4th, 5th & 6th Club & 23rd Fed (1813 birds) Weymouth (2), 1st & 2nd Club & 2nd Fed (1659 birds) Exeter (1), 6th Exeter (2), 5th Exeter (3), 2nd, 3rd & 5th Club & 22nd Fed (1056 birds) Guernsey, 4th Plymouth, 2nd & 6th Club & 3rd Fed Weymouth (3). He also won all the averages and other trophies for the second year running. Readers will note that these pigeons win from all distances and, indeed, in all conditions but they really excell when the going gets long and hard.

I asked Barry various questions concerning loft management and from his various replies gained the impression that he believes in working the birds hard, provided they are fit. On the subject of feeding, he believes you must give them the best that money can buy and supplements that with a very high protein content which he increases or decreases according to the weather. He makes up his own very special seed mixture which the birds get all the year round. He reckoned that in 1980 he got his distance birds too fit just a little too soon and the edge

(continued on opposite page)

BARRY PARTINGTON *continued*

was slightly off for the longest race. If that is what they can do with the edge off heaven help us when they are right on song. The old birds are trained from 10 mls, 20 mls and 30 mls and then anywhere along the coast he can manage. His training is up altogether and no single-ups due to lack of time.

His favourite condition for racing old birds is 10-12 days on eggs but does like to race a cock with a three week old youngster and some hens to a 10 day old baby. But, as he says, you have to know your pigeons and find out what nesting condition suits the individual bird best.

I asked him what law he would like to see passed for the betterment of the sport and, without hesitation, he replied something that would stop the breakup of clubs and where you have several small organisations in the same area. He believes that we should have one large club in preference to two or more small ones and that each club should own its own headquarters.

What was his advice to someone just coming into the sport? "Go to a top man in the area who has a real family and who has won from all distances. Pester the man to sell you half-a-dozen good birds from his stock loft and then try to buy more stock birds from him the next year. Take it easy for a couple of years and build a reliable team and then you can really go." He reckons if you are lucky enough to find a fancier of the calibre of Jim Jones and obtain stock and advice from him you are half-way there.

When I asked him who he thought were the top fanciers in the area I knew he would name Jim Jones of Fleet as one but he said there were a number of good racing men in the area, including Les Davenport and the great partnership of Mr. & Mrs. Cannon. Who could argue against that?

He thought that the reason why so many fanciers never made it to the prize table was due

to obtaining what he termed 'bits and pieces' from here, there and everywhere and not putting enough into the sport. Barry reckons you must be totally dedicated and also be a 100% lover of the birds.

I was surprised when he told me that he thinks highly of late-breds although agrees they need a bit of special attention. He trains his third round YBs about 20 mls during their first year and in the second season they only get inland racing but are then ready to go across the water as 2-y-o. He actually feeds these birds on the perches to make sure they get plenty.

There are two lofts in the Partington set-up. one is built by Kidby Bros of Reading, equipped with 36 nest boxes and the other is of Red Cedar construction with a 4ft flight, twelve nest boxes and 60 perches. Both lofts measure 18ft in length.

I was particularly impressed with the type of pigeon Barry has kept to, they all look alike, handle exceedingly well and are all endowed with superb feathering. It seemed to me that every bird in the racing loft has won something on the road and I must emphasise that this is not a one or two bird loft. I have visited a great number of lofts in my time but it is surprising how many of the successful ones owe almost all to just one or two star birds. Not so with Barry and I felt myself going green with envy as he rattled off performance after performance when running through the birds. With over 120 diplomas in just the last three seasons you can work out for yourself that there must be a lot of good individual pigeons housed here.

At the time of my visit, Barry said he felt the time was now ripe to concentrate on National flying and I would tip him to figure high in the result from Nantes and Pau in the N.F.C in 1981. With birds of the calibre he houses and also in the fantastic condition he maintains he just has to do well.