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'Old 86'

# The Racing Pigeon

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## STOWELL'S SUPERSTAR

Paul Stowell lives in the lovely small village of Cliddesden just 1½ miles from Basingstoke in a house that he designed and built some 30 years ago. He started keeping racing pigeons in 1960 when 13 years old and entered his first race in 1964.

The time that Paul can spend with his pigeons is limited due to running his own business as a building consultant, providing architectural, estimating and quantity surveying services, in fact he runs two separate companies which take up a lot of his time. Racing pigeons have always played a major part in his life and attention to detail and a regular routine is a must in his book to fit in with his timetable. In his own words, 'The birds always get fed and watered first before I think of eating myself, since they cannot look after themselves. The birds are always cleaned out each Saturday no matter what and are never left for another week, in short the birds needs always come first'.

At the beginning of the 1998 season plans were made to send at least two pigeons to compete in the National Flying Club's Pau National, a distance of 546 miles to Paul's loft. A dark grizzle hen now named 'Emma Louise' (after Paul's daughter) was selected as the loft's main candidate together with a very good consistent Ko Nipius x Bricoux cock with a couple of reserves, just in case something went wrong, or it was not possible to get the first choice pigeons into top condition for this date.

'Emma Louise' is a Bricoux x Ko Nipius which has previously won: 1991 - 2nd Basingstoke & Dist, Weymouth, 72 miles, vel 1294; 2nd Basingstoke & Dist, Exeter, 116 miles, vel 1595. 1992 - 5th Basingstoke & Dist, Honiton, 202 birds, 10th Berkshire Fed 3,013 birds, 97 miles, vel 1622; 7th Basingstoke & Dist, Exeter, 26th Berkshire Fed, 1,784 birds, 1233. 1994 - 6th Basingstoke & Dist, Bergerac, 437 miles, vel 628 (only two on day, ten in race time). 1995 - NFC Pau National, 546 miles (just out of race time).

In 1996 she was again sent to NFC Pau, but the contingent of birds were brought back to Saintes, where she scored 34th, Sect F, 288 birds, 142nd Open, 4,982 birds, vel 1149, Saintes (1), 380 miles.

Last year she was mainly kept inland except for Sartilly early in the season, when she was the third bird to the loft in a race which this loft won 1st Basingstoke & Dist RPC, 1st Berkshire Fed & 2nd UBI Combine.

Paul was fortunate that both of his selected Pau candidates peaked at the right time especially 'Emma Louise' who on



'Emma Louise', dark blue Grizzle hen (GB91N18673), 1st Sect A, 1st Open BBC Bordeaux Nat 1998.

June 6 won the club's race from Honiton, 97 miles.

The birds were liberated at Pau at 5.45am on Sunday June 28 after a one-day holdover into a light northerly wind. The race turned out to be a hard one with only a small number on the day. Paul's dark blue grizzle hen 'Emma Louise' was clocked at 7.35am the day after liberation to win 3rd Sect F and 51st Open Pau National with 3,817 birds.

She was rested and given three 15-mile tosses with the YB team the week prior to the BBC

Bordeaux. She was one of only two entries, the other the same way bred, and she was sent sitting 18-day eggs. The sire of 'Emma Louise' was bred by Paul from birds that he purchased from his very good friends Mr & Mrs Jim & Jean Jones of Fleet in Hampshire. The distance bloodlines are full of Pau and Palamos winning pigeons and the partnership's record from Pau and Palamos is outstanding over the years that they competed. Although they have been out of the sport for 12 years they still keep an interest in Paul's team and their winning performances. The great grand dam of 'Emma Louise' was 'Fleet Lady' four times in the result from Palamos, 673 miles and also Perpignon, 618 miles. This pigeon was purchased by Paul Stowell with the rest of the Jim & Jean Jones team in 1986 when Jim was suffering very badly with pigeon lung and was told he had to give up the birds. The dam of 'Emma Louise' was purchased by Paul at the Ko Nipius clearance sale in Birmingham in 1986, the auctioneer being none other than Tony Cowan. Paul purchased other top birds at this sale, one cock who to date has bred 30 x 1st prize winners including 6 x 1st Fed winners and 3 x 1sts UBI Combine winners, 28 of these with a direct hen from Paul's very good friend Bob McDonald of Fraserburgh. One of this pair's children is Paul's 'Magic Moments', 11 x 1sts, 7 x 2nds (beaten four times in one season by another of Paul's pigeons), 3 x 1st Feds, 2 x 1sts UBI Combines, now retired to stock and breeding winners, the latest being 34th Open BBC Rennes YB National 1998, 218 miles, another very hard race with only a small number of birds on the day.

The highlight of the season was Sunday August 2, 1998, a day Paul will always remember. He says that the thrill and excitement in winning a National race was impossible to put into words. It all started happening so fast within one hour of clocking in, fellow club mate Roy Westlake telephoned Paul since he had been asked to come and verify

'Emma Louise'. Paul says he did not know if Roy was winding him up or not and when Roy asked for the duplicate rubber Paul thought he was winding him up even more! For the first time ever in National or Classic racing Paul had removed this straight away, but luckily had put it in his pocket and not discarded it. What followed was what Paul describes in his own words as 'a long sleepless night, wondering if there might be another pigeon further up country that would beat 'Emma Louise' and the next day or two when waiting for the verification to be checked, then wondering if all the details were correct and waiting for the phone call from Jim Hooper, the BBC secretary to confirm that you are the winner. The moment when it was confirmed was just like a dream and it was not until the evening of November 21 I finally realised that it was not a dream but reality.' For 'Emma Louise's' performances from NFC Pau and BBC Bordeaux she won 2nd in *The RP* £10,000 Championship 1998 in the Long Distance Category.

The birds are all flown Natural and are on open hole. The birds are fed on a mixture prepared by Paul and to a recipe handed down by Jim Jones. This was changed over three years ago to a commercial mixed corn, but with poor results, hence the change back this season. The distance pigeons were given extra peanuts individually as part of their preparation for the longer races.

A very interesting point is that 'Emma Louise' who is now 7yo was hatched when her sire was 8yo and her dam 6yo, another sister hatched in 1991 is in the stock loft and breeding winners every year and yet another sister hatched in 1993 who accompanied 'Emma Louise' at Bordeaux and has flown Bergerac on three occasions, is now being prepared to take 'Emma Louise's' place in the distance race team for 1999.

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