

Hullbridge Pigeon Club

Now is the time, when, if we are not prepared, we can drop some big clangers. I'm talking about the fast approaching onset of the racing season. For me it is an exciting time, a time to reflect on how to better last season's results (that shouldn't be hard!). The big question is, are we ready, have we done enough preparation? We mustn't make excuses. Take the bull by the horns, get our fingers out and get some training in. Very soon our local top trainer Terry Bentham will be hitting the road with a brand new, custom-built training vehicle. I think a queue is already forming for his services. I'm not too sure of the pick up points yet but I believe he is catering for some of the East London boys as well. Happy days all round when you can

have a reliable person like Terry who is a pigeon man through and through, doing the training. I have managed to secure some extra training in between Terry's agenda with Mr Marmite Steve Adcock. As Steve only takes birds from around two people, he is able to toss the birds up in ones and twos which Terry can't with his volume of trainers. Getting singled up can only educate the birds to break away from the main flock but also sorts the wheat from the chaff.

My weekly out of season visit to the club house saw another great Sunday lunchtime session. Once again, Tony Buckfield put on piles of cheese, biscuits and pork pies along with mustard, peanuts and crisps, well done Mr Buckfield. While on the subject of Tony B, three of them, Rob, Gary and



Jack Martin



John & Pat relaxing.

Tony are driving over to Belgium for a jolly up for three days. I was invited but had to pass, there is no way I could keep up with their drinking. I believe they will also be going to a pigeon auction if drinking time allows.

Getting back to the Sunday lunchtime session, as I would be passing John Buckfield's house on the way to the club, I offered him a lift as his chauffeur was out of action. Big mistake. After losing a couple of games of darts which cost him £8, he challenged me to a game of cribbage. Why not I thought, I just trashed him at darts so why not take a few more bob from him at crib. I now know that he lulled me into a false sense of security. I



Baby Luke Skywalker learning his trade.



Enjoying the Portugal sun.



Club ladies taking a break.



Waiting for the first birds home.

won't, through embarrassment, tell you how much he took me for but he was very close to getting a taxi home!

Going back to the club and what is happening. The old wooden marking shed has been demolished and work is on the way in building a brand new purpose-built marking station. It will be built in conjunction with a couple of adjoining yacht club buildings, making one long brick building. It will be a first class secure building, about five yards nearer to the club house. The Hullbridge is certainly moving with the times. We have a club to be proud of.

Only another few weeks and the membership can get together again, where we left off at the end of last season. It will be great to meet up again and find out any news. One thing that has been suggested is a weekly levy of around £1 per week per single or £2 per couple and this, if approved will pay for our annual prize presentation. Hopefully some more BBQs will be on the agenda, maybe Desperate Dan will turn up and help to eat the mountain of food that is offered. Our ladies always go the extra mile in the preparation of the food, not forgetting chef extraordinaire Luke Skywalker who is a master with his monster BBQ, provided he has a Guinness handy. Always a free family day out. These are not restricted to members only, we are all free to bring friends at no cost. Last year, Robbie & Paula Hume provided two huge legs of lamb for the barby and they went down a treat. The added bonus was that one leg was slow roasted and the other one cooked faster. Either way they were delicious.

Once again it's time to sign off. Here's wishing you all a hawk free season. Regards to Paddy in Dublin.



The youngest bidder, Teddy Jackson.



Is this the real Paddy from Dublin?

Firstly I would like to explain in advance that this article should be titled, Thames & North Eastern Counties. The reason I am doing this article is as a favour to John Gladwin who usually does the Thames write up. He is so overwhelmed with his work in the stock market, the Coronavirus has affected him big time that he would find it an unbearable burden on his time, so here is good old Tailendcharlie stepping into the breach to help out.

One reason for this report is to give an update on the latest futurity sale that was held at Sundridge Park. The other is to thank the members who set up and dismantled the pens without any fuss and what a good job they did. Of course we also have the regulars who always turn up to help with the auctioneering, along with Mr auctioneer himself, John Gladwin. We had a good showing of volunteers with most of the clubs local to us having a representative helping out. The heroes of the day were Joe House, Estuary Club, David Coward-Talbot from the Laindon Club, Mick Jarvis from Tilbury, Michael Simmonds from Hullbridge, Rachael Bacon and Theresa Gladwin from Hullbridge doing the all important paper work and taking the money.

In all we had 58 lots making a very impressive £4,230. Bidding was brisk from the word go and very soon more and more people got involved. I met up with the fake 'Paddy from Dublin' again and enjoyed having a pint with him during the sale. All in all there was a big mixture of ages with the bidders and I felt it only fair to take a photo and mention the youngest bidder there who bid £100 and purchased a pigeon entered by Laindon's Frank White. To say it raised a smile to see young Teddy Jackson bidding from the back of the room is an understatement, I



Rachael and Theresa hard at it.

believe people were secretly hoping he would be successful in his bid.

By around 2.30 the auction was over and it was time to pay and collect your birds. I was told that one bidder spent £800 on birds. I sincerely hope that he has the success that he was after. In fairness the man purchased some quality birds that were on offer so we wish him luck.

The time came to hit the road home and for once I didn't have to drive. I had the luxury of being ferried by John & Theresa. John spotted an open café near where the car was parked and decided to make up for his missed breakfast. We were soon on our way home with a bacon sarnie and cup of tea to tide us over.

That's it for this abridged Thames write up and hopefully we will see you all at the sales. Paddy from Dublin, are you well? I miss our chats.

Good luck everybody in this wonderful sport of ours. With a bit of luck the Coronavirus might be deadly to our friends the BoP.

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Frank White coughing up.



Auctioneer John Gladwin, Joe House topping up the pens.



Even the host has to pay.