

National Flying Club

Certificate of Merit Awards 1979-2024

A special **NFC Certificate of Merit** (COM) shall be awarded to any pigeon that is placed:-

1. 3 times in the top 100 in the Open result of the longest Old Bird race, when flying up to 650 miles
2. 3 times in the top 200 in the Open result of the longest Old Bird race, when flying over 650 miles

Here's the full COM Roll of Honour, showing 53 individual pigeons (sent by 42 Members) winning a coveted COM. Some in the list will surely be "household names", such as Alwyn Hill's **Wing Down** (2nd, 4th, and 7th Open), Bill Lewis's **Freelands Gem** (6 times top 100), Paul Kendal's **Morning Glory** (twice 2nd Open), and Derek Human's **Any Distance** (1st Open 2007). But, to be frank, every COM winner is an absolute topper, all of them being pigeons we'd dream of owning and racing.

Note: the longest Old Bird race is, in most years, the Grand National Race

1. 1979 Fear Bros, Clandown
2. 1980 Mr & Mrs E F Cannon, Wormley
3. 1987 L. Painter, Southampton
4. 1989 L. Green, Runcorn
5. 1991 Mr. & Mrs. J. R. Green, Runcorn
6. 1992 J. Jones, Dymock
7. 1993 Mr & Mrs E F Cannon, Wormley
8. 1993 G. A. Baker, Bridgnorth
9. 1995 A. Shore, Crewe
10. 1995 B. Sheppard, Trowbridge
11. 1997 F. Attrill, Isle of Wight
12. 1997 Mr. & Mrs. E. F. Cannon, Wormley
13. 1997 J. Willis & Sons, Portsmouth
14. 1999 Mr. & Mrs. E. F. Cannon, Godalming
15. 1999 Biss & Waite, Whitchurch
16. 2002 Mr. & Mrs. P. Kendal, Wantage
17. 2002 Mr. & Mrs. A. W. Rose, Worksop
18. 2003 G. G. Cooper, Peasedown St. John
19. 2004 S. G. Biss, Norwich
20. 2005 J. Nicholson & Sons, Rochester
21. 2006 P. J. Newton, Weston-Super-Mare
22. 2007 D. Human, Petersfield
23. 2008 A. E. Shepherd, Emsworth
24. 2009 C. Howse, Devizes
25. 2012 Alwyn Hill, Ilkeston
26. 2012 Mr. & Mrs. W. Lewis, Worcester
27. 2013 A. Parsons, Salisbury
28. 2014 Alwyn Hill, Ilkeston
29. 2014 W. D. Reed, Monmouth
30. 2015 Mr. & Mrs. W. Lewis, Worcester
31. 2015 J. Raeburn, Melksham
32. 2015 Fletcher & Gobin, Runcorn
33. 2016 Alwyn Hill, Ilkeston
34. 2016 J. H. Clements, Stockport
35. 2017 S. Redfern & Family, Derby
36. 2017 Nicholas Adshead, Selby
37. 2017 K. Bush, Cossall
38. 2017 Mr. R. Parker, Chichester
39. 2017 Stuart J. Potter, Coalville
40. 2018 A. Parsons, Salisbury
41. 2018 S. Redfern & Family, Derby
42. 2018 Mr. F. Cornwell, Southend on Sea
43. 2019 D. & D. McFadden, Cranleigh
44. 2019 K. Bush, Cossall
45. 2019 Ronnie Dodd, Liverpool
46. 2020 Mark Bulled, Harlow
47. 2020 David Bacon, Tunbridge Wells
48. 2020 A. E. Shepherd, Emsworth
49. 2024 J. A. Hamplett, Stafford
50. 2024 C. Gordon, Pontefract
51. 2024 C. Gough, Shrewsbury
52. 2024 C. Gough, Shrewsbury
53. 2024 A. Parsons, Salisbury

Members winning 3 Certificates of Merit

Mr & Mrs E F Cannon, Wormley
Alwyn Hill, Ilkeston
A. Parsons, Salisbury

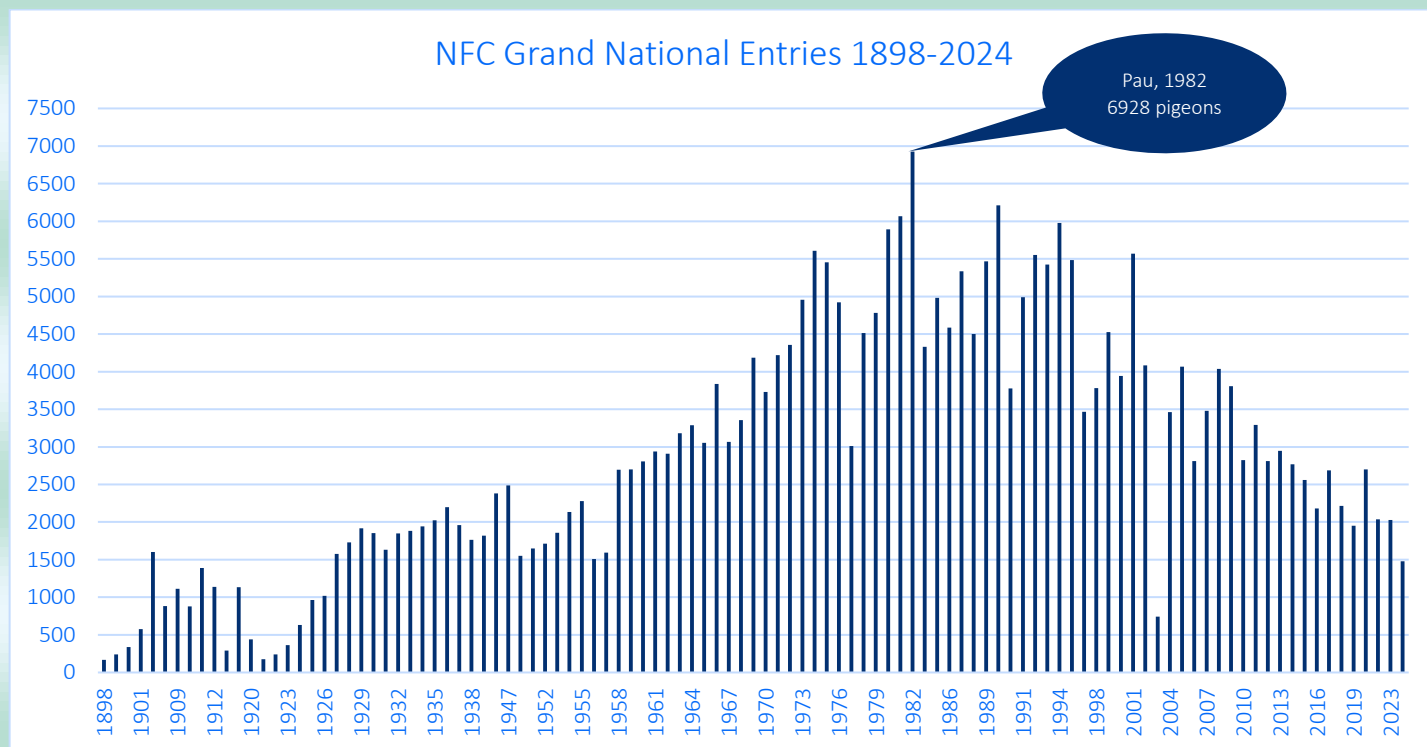
Members winning 2 Certificates of Merit

A. E. Shepherd, Emsworth
S. Redfern & Family, Derby
K. Bush, Cossall
Mr. & Mrs. W. Lewis, Worcester
C. Gough, Shrewsbury

Some other interesting accompanying facts, from and including 1998 (for which years the detailed data is available to compute these statistics):-

- The furthest flying pigeon is that of Nicholas Adshead, Selby
- The pigeon with the best co-efficient is Alwyn Hill's **Wing Down** with an truly astonishing 0.3766 (7th, 4th, 2nd Open 2009-2012),
- Tthe next best is Paul Kendal's **Morning Glory** with a coeff of 1.5734 (2nd, 80th, and 2nd Open 2000-2002)
- **Only one of the above winners flew more than 3 qualifying races, Bill Lewis's Freelands Gem** who, amazingly, had 6 (45th, 60th, 18th, 21st, 42nd, and 88th Open 2010-2015)
- The only COM winner to also have been an outright winner of 1st Open Grand National was Derek Human's **Any Distance** (71st, 70th, and 1st Open 2004-2007)

One thing that's quite apparent is that just 15 were awarded in the 23 years 1979-2001, and 38 in 23 years 2002-2024. I think this is simply a function of the qualification for a COM remaining the same, whilst birdage has gradually reduced through the years (Pau in 1982 saw the record high entry of 6928 pigeons, imagine that!). So, maybe we need to adjust the qualifications, linking them to birdage e.g. "A certificate of Merit shall be awarded to: (a) Any pigeon that is placed 3 times in the **top 2.5% segment** in the Open result of longest OB race. (b) Any pigeon placed 3 times in the **top 5% segment** in the Open result of the longest OB race, flying over 650 miles" ... thus raising the qualification bar to a level more closely aligned to previous decades when 4000-6000 pigeons were being sent. Perhaps we could also consider Sectional COM's based on similar %age criteria? Some food for thought, perhaps.



I've said it before, and I'll say it time and again until my voice fails ... whilst having a 1st Open winner, or a 1st Section winner, in your loft must be a singularly exhilarating experience, this experience is most likely matched, or even exceeded, by a high quality, consistent, warrior that puts in multiple shifts at the very highest level. **Wing Down** never won 1st Open NFC, yet some very good judges concur that this is as good a pigeon as will have ever raced with the NFC. What about **Freelands Gem**, too, what an amazingly consistent and brilliant racer.