

From Chesil to Chickerell.

The array of trophies The British Barcelona Club awards to winners of its Blue Riband Event is almost overwhelming. From the latest perpetual trophy, the Ken Hine Memorial Trophy, presented by Ken's family and awarded for the first time in 2012 which from its size and magnificence reflects the stature that Ken held both as a fancier and within the Club to the smaller but no less significant British Barcelona Cup presented back in 1965 by R. Mitcheison & Son and awarded to the winner of the race each year that it has been held.



The Ken Hine Memorial Trophy to the right and the British Barcelona Cup to the left.

2012 also saw the award of a quite unique trophy presented by its maker Neville Walbridge of Portland. Neville is well known within the pigeon world for his work in a variety of areas and most recently his connection with the pigeon skeleton found in a chimney carrying a coded [war time message](#). For 2012 Neville carved, painted and presented a magnificent Portland stone plaque bearing an image of the winning pigeon. A truly beautiful object completed in meticulous detail even down to the number on the ring.



This is not of course the first pigeon that Neville has carved because it was he that carved the memorial slab unveiled at [Bletchley Park](#) of "[Royal Blue](#)" one of six young carrier pigeons presented by the royal family for use in service during the Second World War. *"Royal Blue was the first of the birds donated by the Royal Family to arrive back in the UK."* Taken, as many were, by pilots flying missions into Europe *"The pilot he had been sent with crash-landed in Holland and Royal Blue flew 120 miles in less than three hours."*

His reputation spreads much wider even than this as he spent much of his life working in the masonry and sculpture trade carving out a wide range of objects and passing on the techniques of this craft to masons and artists worldwide. Amongst his many great works is the coat of arms of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, [displayed in the town hall](#).



A quarry on the Isle of Portland.

Portland stone is limestone formed in the Jurassic period, that's about 150 million years ago if you can imagine that timespan, and quite appropriately this is the very period in which the first birds began to appear on earth. Portland stone has been used extensively in major buildings within the UK including St Pauls Cathedral and Buckingham Palace but also much wider including the United Nations headquarters building in New York.

Portland is actually an Island jutting out to sea south of Weymouth and forming the southernmost part of the Dorset coast. It is joined to the coastline by Chesil Beach, a name derived from old English meaning gravel or shingle, and this 18 mile long 600 feet wide 50 foot high bed of shingle has, over millions of years, rolled back landward from the sea protecting the coastline, and Weymouth in particular, and connecting the Isle of Portland to the coast. Just ashore from Portland is yet another important pigeon place beginning with "p" the Ponderosa UK Stud.



It is a very short way from the ancient Jurassic to the very modern facility that is Ponderosa and when the [Google Street View](#) picture was taken it was still under construction. Now as you can see from the pictures here it presents one of the most modern and well equipped studs to be found.



A Janssen Section

The buildings and facilities were designed and made to cater for the extremely high quality families of pigeons that are housed. Ponderosa is of course a primary sponsor of The British Barcelona Club offering high quality pigeons as prizes in most of the Clubs races. So the range of prizes on offer through the modern British Barcelona Club range from carved Jurassic stone to a range of trophies presented over the lifetime of the club and on to modern day racing pigeons from the top winning families of the world. If you are not quite in that winning group yet, or

even if you are, why not take a trip down to Dorset and wonder at the beautiful scenery before calling at Ponderosa where I am sure you will be able to find something to help you on that winning way.

Nigel Lane