

BICC FALAISE RACE REPORT.

The town of Falaise is situated in the Calvados department of Normandy in northern France. The castle which overlooks the town was the birth place of William the Conqueror in around 1028. As many will no doubt be aware, William went on to defeat King Harold of England at the battle of Senlac Hill [commonly known as the Battle of Hastings] in 1066.

And so to the Falaise race itself which was the first race of the season for members of this rapidly expanding club. Liberation took place, after a one day hold over due to high winds in the Channel, on Sunday 10th May, when 4,177 birds entered by 257 members were liberated at 8.30 am. into a light southerly airstream and good weather.

The breakdown of the number of birds entered through the various marking stations is given below:-
FALAISE OB

	MEMBERS	BIRDAGE
NORWICH		211
STOWMARKET		105
EVESHAM		88
HORNDEAN	30	319
ASH		609
BROMLEY	40	351
LOWESTOFT	12	87
IPSWICH	3	22
DISS	6	45
BATH		156
GWENT		144
BRIGHTON	34	217
S/OCKENDEN	55	891
CHESTFIELD NATIONAL	45	401
PLYMOUTH	8	35
NORTHAMPTON		483
TOTAL	257	4,177

This shows a 25% increase on the number of pigeons entered in the corresponding race in 2014. Here is John Tyerman's preliminary weather report regarding the liberation:-

"The BICC Falaise National pigeons have been released at 08-30am today (Sunday 10th May, 2015) in a very light south wind turning south west in the English Channel. Weather at Falaise is good and the birds cleared well. The sea crossing is shown as clear with both the Channel and Greenwich Light ships showing sun/cloud and light south west wind speeds varying from 10-22 mph. Hopefully a good racing day for all competing members and good luck to the northern members flying over 450 miles."

The following is John Tyerman's comprehensive report on the weekend's events-

"After last week's race cancellation due to the persistent heavy rain in Northern France it was good to see an entry in excess of 4000 pigeons for the re-scheduled race from Falaise. However the Saturday weather again proved problematic, showing very high SW winds reaching possible gale force 8, in parts the English Channel, so after consulting our weather Advisor Steve Appleby, it was decided that in the best interests and welfare of the birds we hold over till Sunday. I am aware that some members were not happy with this decision but we know the majority understood the reasons behind this.

Members will have seen the earlier post on the BICC website concerning the ferry cancellations and delays, which resulted in our birds not arriving on the lib site at Falaise until 1am on the Saturday morning, The Friday afternoon ferry crossing to Cherbourg had also disrupted normal feeding/watering arrangements so the extra time on site allowed our Convoyers to ensure the birds were properly catered for.

Over the weekend there was constant communication between the race advisory team and our Convoyers Trevor Cracknell and Steve Adamson. Sunday was forecast to be a much better day with light southerly winds and after speaking with Steve Appleby around 6am (Sun 10th May) he gave a favourable line of flight forecast but advised waiting to let any overnight murkiness clear on the Channel. This information was relayed to our Convoyers and the birds were released at 8-30am in a light southerly wind and cleared well. Winds in the channel were also very light and shown as SW 10- 20 mph, but here at Bracklesham Bay on the Solent the onshore wind was from the south east for most of the day. A good race ensued with birds being clocked all over the Country from Plymouth to Newcastle.

Well done to the winner and a special mention to Messrs. Rumney, Anderson, Daley, Wright and McGrevy who all clocked flying between 323 and 438 miles. Overall returns seem to have been very good

and my thanks to both Convoyers, also to Mark Gilbert and Steve Appleby whose input was invaluable to the success of this race.”

John Tyerman
Race Advisor

This is weatherman Steve Appleby's weather outlook for the race
Weather Report

Sunday morning over Falaise dawned bright as the satellite images identified almost clear blue skies. The channel at this time of year takes time for any murkiness which develops overnight to clear. Bearing this in mind race controller John Tyerman decided to wait for conditions to improve before liberating at 08:30. Weather conditions over the channel were good and visibility 15 miles plus. Central and eastern England enjoyed broken cloud and sunshine but heavy cloud persisted over the West Country for most of the day. Winds generally came from the south, light in strength but variations were recorded as wind direction changed on the flight path either from south east or to south west. A good race ensued for the BICC members and we hope this trend continues for the remainder of the season.

Steve Appleby.

I'm sure all our members would like to thank John and the race advisory team for all their hard work and professionalism shown over the weekend. I know that 100% of the fanciers contacted in the compilation of this report were full of praise for the condition of their pigeons on return and many reported near 100% returns.

The following report is based solely on first bird phone verification times and may well differ from the eventual published result, so here goes.

Not surprisingly given the strength of the southerly wind, the birds made excellent velocities in the favourable conditions and the winner was clocked recording 1896 ypm at the Eltham lofts of Martin and Bernard Flook. This one also tops the East section. She carries a 2013 ring and was bred in June that year and trained only in the year of her birth. She was sent to Tours Old Bird National with the BICC as a late bred yearling last year when she was also entered in a further two channel races. This season she has been kept celibate and exercised once per day for one hour with the young bird team and had been entered in one mid week race from Purbeck plus a few 30 mile trainers, the last of which was on the day of basketting for Falaise. She was mated a month before Falaise and was sent sitting a chipping egg- her first of the season. Bred from Champion Dark Eyes Busschaert lines, her sire is also a winner taking 1st Open Bromley 2 Bird. Martin would like to place on record his thanks to his Dad Bernard and sister Charlotte for all their help with training whilst he is at work. Martin only sent two birds from his small team of six pairs of old birds and clocked them both. All birds, both young and old are never separated. Congratulations the Flocks on your National win.

In second open position and recording 1741 ypm covering 330 miles to its home loft way up in the North East at Hull, was one to Reg Wright -a terrific performance on the day. This is a yearling blue hen of SVR X Van Loon bloodlines flown on round about. Her dam is a winner and her grand dam is also a winner of 2nd Open Combine for R & K O'Connor. Her preparation for Falaise was 3 in land races and twice daily home exercise of one hour's duration on both occasions. She was mated in early February and allowed to sit her eggs out without rearing.

Jack Fisher of Waterlooville in Hampshire comes in with one on 1701 ypm to take 1st Centre section and 3rd Open. This is a 2 year old cock having his first ever race and having been trained to 10 miles on two occasions beforehand! Sent looking at his hen he has access to a hopper of general mixture twice daily and is exercised at home for 30 to 45 minutes once daily – and that's it, simplicity itself.

Mike Armitage of Ash clocked for 1699 ypm to take 2nd section 4th Open. Mike's timer is a red cock and this is what Mike had to say about his timer:-

“ We have named the bird Paul's Choice (named after our 5yr old son Paul as he picked the bird out to send). The Red checker cock was on widowhood. He had won a race as a young bird plus two seconds and a fourth. This season I have been sending him in the Lion Brewery midweek club races.”

Walter Castledine's timer was close behind on 1693 ypm taking 3rd Centre section 5th Open. Walter's bird was bred by Eric Higginbotham from Eric's No1 stock pair and was a late bred in 2012. Unraced until a 2 year old she then had 2 channel races and was again rested until this year when she was sent to Falaise sitting 4 eggs in her first nest of the year when mated to another hen.

The Harefield partnership of Gurguri & Slaymaker come in with a timer at 4th Centre section 6th Open on 1689.9 ypm. Unfortunately I was unable to contact the partners for details of their timer in time for the publication of this report.

Just 0.3 ypm behind was one to the Portsmouth partnership of Jim Wilson and Bill Gee and this one takes 5th centre section 7th Open position. The partners clocked a yearling chequer hen gifted to them by Fred Healy of Brighton and sent sitting eggs. Falaise was her second race of the season the other being a short spin on the north road.

Jeff Poole of King's Langley clocked one recording 1675 ypm for 6th Centre section 8th Open . Jeff's timer is a three year old grizzle hen of Jap Van Alpen Van Loon bloodlines, flown on the widowhood system. She has been a consistent performer for him winning 5th Open BBC Bordeaux in 2014. Falaise was her second race of the year as she was badly hawked earlier in the season.

Close behind the Poole timer is one to Tom Powers whose first in the clock recorded 1674 ypm for 7th centre section 9th Open. This is a three year old chequer pied cock widowhood cock, bred by Chris Kavanagh and gifted to Tom as a young bird. The cock is a previous prize winner with the NFC and also has a couple of club wins to his credit. He has had two races in 2015 prior to Falaise and was first to the loft on both occasions. Then we have three birds on the same velocity of 1673 ypm timed at the Hawkley lofts of Foster & sons which mop up the next three positions in both the centre section and Open results. I was unable to contact the partners for details of their timers.

Right, lets move on to the section prize winners now and in the North Central section we have some outstanding pigeons racing every inch of the 400+ miles to their home lofts in Tyne & Wear.

First NC section velocity 1663 ypm at a distance of 419 miles goes to M Anderson & sons timer . The partners are brothers Ray and George but they keep their father's name in the partnership out of respect for their late father. Their timer at Falaise is a two year old widowhood cock having his first ever channel race. He is a full brother to a big winner for the partners at 635 miles and contains Jan Aarden Mon Juich lines on his sires side and Battenburg Van D Merwe lines through his dam going back to De Wittenbuik.

In second spot in the section is one to long distance trailblazer John Rumney of Houghton –le- Spring recording 1648 ypm over the 416 miles course. The first pigeon timed is a 2 y.o. Red Cock bred from a full brother of "Rob Roy" John's 631 mls on the day pigeon when paired to a Brian Denny hen, a double G/Dtr of Tuff Nut. This was his first time being race marked and first time going over the channel. He was privately trained only as a Young bird before going weekly as a yearling with Central Yorkshire fed as a trainer, an organisation 90 miles South of John's loft. (To give them confidence in solo flying for large parts of the journey) This season he has had a 160 (11th April) and a 202mls race (18th April), again as a trainer with the same organisation as well as 54, 54, 80 and 100mls private tosses.

In third North Central section is one to the St Neots loft of David Paine recording 1638 ypm.

Next we move on to the winners in the North West section and here we see John Rodway maintain his excellent form from the 2014 BICC programme to win 1st section velocity 1617 ypm. John's timer was a 2013 latebred hen which was unraced as a young bird, had two races as a yearling and Falaise was her first time across the channel. She was sent unpaired and returned in super condition. John had excellent returns and would like to thank the convoyers and race advisory team for a job very well done.

M & C Lee of Worcester come in at 2nd section with a bird on 1596 ypm followed at 3rd section by one to the Birtsmorton lofts of T & J Davies on 1589 ypm.

The winner of the North East section was timed at Hull by Reg Wright and this one also takes 2nd Open on 1741 ypm.

Terry Roughton of Wisbech in Cambridgeshire timed one of his entries on 1613 ypm to take 2nd North East section. Terry had two birds together and the first in the clock is a two year old widower having his first Channel crossing. He is of Soontjen bloodlines and is half brother to Rocky Dolby's NRCC Fraserburgh winner.

Terry's timer was followed by one to the Cambridge loft of T & N Hart & sons on 1604 ypm.

The Centre section winners also featured in the top five of the Open and they were respectively in 1st, 2nd & 3rd positions:-

Jack Fisher vel 1701; Mike Armitage vel 1699 and Walter Castledine vel 1693.

The winner of the East section as already mentioned, also takes 1st Open for M & B Flock vel 1896 ypm. Mr & Mrs T Tofts timer comes in for 2nd East section velocity 1618 ypm with Micky Watts of Southminster taking 3rd East section with his first on the clock recording 1617 ypm.

Finally, we come to the winners in the West section and here we have the evergreen partnership of Geoff & Catherine Cooper with their first timer recording 1618 ypm to take 1st section. Apparently the Coopers had a field day here and may well have a number of other pigeons well up in the section result.

The first clocked, winning 1st section was a two year old cock called Farm Devil, named so as his last three ring numbers are 666. His sire is a half brother to Farmer George 1st Int. Bordeaux and his Dam is a sister to Misty 4 x 1st plus 2 x 10th National. Farm Devil had flown 3 inland races prior to this race.

The Coopers clocked their second pigeon which might well finish at 2nd section. He is also a two year old cock a full brother to Stellar who last year won 2nd National, 4th National and 1st Section. His sire is called "Brother of Farm Boy" who won 2 x 1st. His Dam won several prizes as a young bird then put to stock. They clocked six pigeons in ten minutes and had all but one back within a couple of hours of first clocking. After three nights in the basket they all arrived home in excellent condition, except the last one who had lost a few feathers from his tail due to a hawk attack, so he was lucky to be home!

Geoff and Catherine would like to send their congratulations to all those northern flyers who put up some brilliant performances.

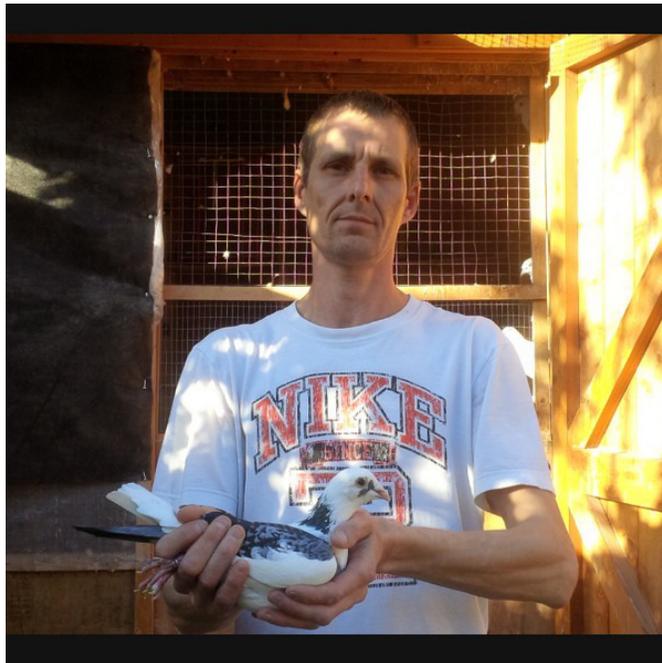
However, at the time of writing this report the provisional result shows Paul Atherton's timer taking 2nd west section velocity 1564 ypm with Dominic Baresi's timer at 3rd section velocity 1539 ypm.

My apologies for the lack of detail on some of the winning pigeons but I am governed by publishing deadlines if the report is to be featured in the weekly papers in the following week's editions. With this race being a Sunday liberation the time available to contact all the prize winners was even more condensed. In any event, my congratulations go to all the prize winners in what turned out to be another excellent race for the BICC and its members.

Before closing this report I can confirm that the great benefactor to long distance pigeon racing – Jim Emerton, has generously donated another prestigious trophy to the BICC, this to be competed for by Irish members. The £1000 silver trophy named The Jim Emerton Belief Trophy will be presented to the pigeon with the highest velocity into the whole of Ireland in the Barcelona International race each season. A difficult task, but one to which I'm sure the top class stock men of Ireland will rise. This latest trophy will be presented alongside THE JIM EMERTON TROPHY for the LONGEST FLYING PIGEON IN RACE TIME BICC BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL ;THE JIM EMERTON BARCELONA DREAM TROPHY for the pigeon recording the HIGHEST VELOCITY OVER 750 MILES IN THE BICC BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL RACE and THE JIM EMERTON MENSA TROPHY awarded to the HIGHEST VELOCITY INTO CORNWALL IN THE BICC BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL RACE.

Finally some sad news – I was recently informed of the death on the 3rd of May of Len Howe of New Romney. Len was one of the oldest members of the BICC and had enjoyed a fair amount of success when competing with the club. I'm sure all who read this, and in particular those who knew Len personally, would like to join me in sending their sincere condolences to Len's family at this sad time.

Gareth Watkins



Martin Flook 1st Open BICC Falaise

"Lady Falaise"

NWHU13E8995
1st Sec E 1st Open British International
Championship Club Falaise 2015
Raced by M & B Flook, Eitham



©Chris Sutton



1st Open Falaise for Martin Flook



Reg Wright 1st NE section 2nd Open Falaise



Reg Wright's winner of 1st section 2nd Open BICC Falaise



Jack Fisher 1st section 3rd Open BICC Falaise



Mike and Lexi Armitage with their 2nd sect 4th Open BICC Falaise timer



Walter Castledine with his 3rd sect 5th Open Falaise hen



Jeff Poole 6th sect 8th Open BICC Falaise



Tom Powers 7th section 9th Open BICC Falaise



Geoff & Catherine Cooper sinking a few in celebration of their latest section win



John Rodway 1st NW section BICC Falaise



Ray & George Anderson 1st North Central section BICC Falaise