

BICC ALENCON RACE REPORT

The second race of the BICC Old Bird race programme took place on Sunday 17th May from the French town of Alencon. Alencon is situated in the Orne department of Normandy and 107 miles west of Paris. The town is famous for its lace making industry and was once besieged by, William the Conqueror. That man made a real nuisance of himself in the early part of the 11th Century both in England and abroad. If ever there was a man who deserved an ASBO it was our Will!

After the trouble and strife surrounding the Falaise race, first with the postponement due to bad weather and then having to deal with the effects of the French Port authority's striking dockers it was to be hoped that the build up to the Alencon would be trouble free.

At this point I think I should point out to members the massive amount of work undertaken not only by the race advisory team but also by "an unsung hero" of the events surrounding the Falaise weekend- none other than club Chairman Albi Deacon. Albi, at short notice, had to reschedule the ferry sailings from Caen to Cherbourg on the outward journey and then repeat the task through Calais and Dover on the return journey so that the transporters and their drivers and convoyers could return home safely and in good time.

Albi you are truly one in a million and an indispensable asset to the club and the sport in general.

Looking at the marking station numbers for both Falaise and Alencon it strikes me that the Northampton marking station under the supervision of Russell Bradford is coming on in leaps and bounds, as at Falaise the send was more than 400 and this was comprehensively beaten at Alencon with a massive 555 birds marked by 10.30 am!!

As I mentioned to Russell, Clare, Russell's much better half, will have to get a bigger tea pot to cater for all the visitors on race marking days. It seems that the large influx of new members from the London area find it easier to travel up the M1 to Northampton than use the M25 to get to Kent.

Russell also mentioned that John Rumney who had travelled down from the Newcastle area with the north east fanciers' pigeons, was badly delayed due to a crash on the road down and arrived too late for marking at Northampton. Undeterred by this set back, he motored all the way to South Ockendon to have the north east birds race marked. Now that is DEDICATION in what must be a near 800 mile round trip. Well done John Rumney, I hope you are admirably rewarded in the race result. [Footnote: John clocked the first of his entries flying 449 miles to record 1265 ypm for 7th section 103rd Open on the provisional result.] Well done and well deserved.

Before moving on to the race itself I'll include here a brief note from Russell regarding the upgrading of the computer software that might explain to members the reason why some members had difficulty using the online verification in the Falaise race:-

"Those members who use the BICC web site may have noticed that the race result computer-software has been changed in order to accommodate a rapidly growing membership. There are potentially many members whose only contact with the BICC (apart from taking their birds to the marking station) is through the excellent reports written by Gareth in either the Homing World or the Racing Pigeon, or by reading the result(s) when they are printed; which can of course be a fortnight or more after the race. The BICC web site is the more modern answer to the immediacy of the world we live in, and a great deal of work is done behind the scenes to try and communicate with over 1,500 members as quickly as possible. The new bespoke race software has been produced by Mysoft, and has taken several months of work to produce and fine tune. Our race software is far from straightforward given that we can have races that contain up to six or even seven days of hours of darkness for the Internationals, and with over fifteen hundred members getting everybody's' distances up on the site means thousands upon thousands of lines of data. The Falaise race was the first time the new software went 'live', and with 430 members sending 4,177 birds; plus a Sunday release it proved quite a test, but one bar a few tiny glitches proved itself to be entirely fit-for-purpose. Sections have now been added to the provisional result displayed on the web site, so that it is now possible to go straight to your relevant section without necessarily having to scroll down through hundreds of places to find the provisional position. The cancellation of the Falaise race on the Wednesday afternoon prior to basketing on the Thursday (or Wednesday evening for two marking stations) proved a communications nightmare. The information was put up on the BICC web site along with a couple of other sites and Carol Francis input over five hundred and fifty 'e'-mail addresses, and mailed out those members for who we have these contact details. Inevitably some people didn't get to hear and turned up at marking, so if you have an internet facility and can connect to our web site it is well worth checking the state of play on a Wednesday. Equally update your contact details with Carol as plenty are no longer valid. Both Carol and I have the means to input some data on to the web site such as Liberation time; marking station numbers and of course early times, but beyond that we are completely reliant on our web master with all his expertise to alter or add anything further. Our web master Keith Thomas has been unwell and spent a few days in Hospital recently, and we wish him a very speedy recovery. His spell in Hospital coincided with a glitch with On-Line verification and apologies to those who tried to use it and failed, as this means of verifying helps Carol enormously."

And so to the Alencon race itself. The convoy of 4,651 pigeons was eventually liberated at 7 am on Sunday 17th May following a one day hold over due to poor weather conditions in the English Channel and Northern France. The following is John Tyerman's preliminary report:-

"The entry of 4,651 BICC National pigeons have been liberated at 07-00 hours today (Sun 17th May, 2015) in bright sunny conditions and cleared well. Winds are very light NW and the channel is clear with good visibility. UK mainland shows light west or south west winds."

John gives a more comprehensive account below:-

The Saturday race day weather again proved problematic with an adverse weather front situated on the French side of the English Channel and over the line of flight from Alencon to UK. There was also poor visibility and rain clearly shown on web cams at Le Havre and other locations. Our Weather Advisor Steve Appleby as usual provided a full and detailed report and as predicted, the poor weather did clear later in the day but not in time to effect a liberation, so the birds were held over at Alencon until Sunday.

Regular contact was maintained with our Convoyers Trevor Cracknell and Steve Adamson at Alencon and after receiving a favourable weather forecast from Steve around 6am on Sunday morning (17/5/15) this information was relayed to them. Trevor reported a fine sunny morning at Alencon and the convoy of approx 4571 birds were liberated at 7am into a very light NW wind, clearing well. Channel visibility was shown as excellent with a light NW wind, turning west or SW on the UK mainland.

A steady race ensued with pigeons being timed in all over the country. Our most northerly flyers again all clocked good birds on the day. Very well done to Gladwin, Jarvis and family partnership and also Meg Murray who are likely winners of 1st and 2nd open in this the second BICC National of the season.

Thanks again to our Weather Advisor Steve, and all the various marking station i/c's and helpers who have very ably dealt with the task of basketting some 9,000 pigeons in the past two weeks for the Falaise and Alencon Nationals. Also not forgetting our appreciation and gratitude to our two stalwart Convoyers Trevor and Steve who have been on BICC duties in France on two consecutive weekends and always take excellent care of the birds. "

John Tyerman
Mark Gilbert
(Race Advisors)

Here's weatherman Steve Appleby's weather report for the race:-
Weather Report

Sunday presented the BICC convoy racing from Alencon with a perfect flying day. The skies over northern France and England were of broken cloud and sunshine. Winds early on were light generally from the west over England but veered to a west north westerly direction over the channel. At first light the Alencon aerodrome wind sock was almost stationary indicating a light north westerly air flow. As the morning progressed winds generated increasing in strength over the channel and southern England benefitting the pigeons racing into the east of the country. The channel was clear with endless visibility. Later in the day winds changed over southern England to south westerly. Another good race for the BICC members.

Steve Appleby.

It transpired that all organisations with a wide catchment area, and scheduled to race from France on the Saturday, erred on the side of caution and decided to hold over. Fanciers should be aware of the fact that the BICC race advisory team have to take into account the country wide dispersment of the BICC membership, with many fanciers' pigeons having to cover more than 400 miles from Alencon. This rules out a late liberation if the longer flying pigeons are to have a better than even chance of homing on the day.

Although the wind was forecast to light north westerly, it's obvious from the result that there was a lot more westerly influence than as was first thought. This resulted in the fanciers on the eastern side of the club's radius dominating the result .

At 1st East section 1st Open is that excellent Leigh on Sea partnership of Gladwin, Jarvis & Family whose bird made 1412 ypm to lead the field. This is what John Gladwin had to tell me about the partners' latest success:-
"I have been involved in racing pigeons my whole life with my Mum & Dad and granddad before them raced pigeons, it is them I have to thank for the curse of being doomed to have the highs and lows which pigeon racing brings us all every weekend.

Today was a bit special for me and my family as it was 8 years ago today that my mother in law passed away, she and my father in law also both raced pigeons all their lives. When I heard the pigeons were up this morning I said to my wife I have a funny idea that your Mum (Maxine) will help us out today and we will get a good result, which is what seems to have happened hence the winning cock will now be called Max, after the

lovely Maxine Jarvis.

Two seasons ago we decided to have a go at the International races with the BICC, so over the last 2 years we have not done much south road club racing with our y/bs and most of our old birds were sent to the longer BICC races. This year I have very lightly trained the pigeons in total they only have had 7 training spins and two short races with the Basildon zone and Thames before this race, with the view of getting the birds ready for Pau and Argen Internationals

Max our first pigeon is a 2013 late bred Formula 1 lofts bred Frans Zwols who only had one race as a y/b and was raced in 3 inland races in 2014 before doing Alencon, Tours and Poitiers with the BICC last year. Max is a pure Frans Zwols bred from two directs we brought in 2010 & 2011. both have bred many good birds for us and others.

The sire of Max is NL 10/ 1135072 a direct son of Eagle Boy a top racer and breeder when paired to Little Amy she is also a top racer and breeder. Eagle Boy wins include 1st against 13,767 birds 1st 9,930 birds 9th 15,066 birds 9th 13,410 birds 11th 12,995 birds plus many other top prizes, he is also sire g.sire to many top birds including winners in both the UK and Holland with up to 9,845 birds. "Little Amy" is a full sister to the 3 Musketeers she won 3rd 12,389 birds, 9th 2,228 birds & 12th 5,870 birds she is also dam g.dam to winners and prize winners with up to 11,716 birds. In turn 072 has bred some very good birds including club, section and open winners, a y/b bred in 2011 scored 3 positions in National & Classic races. All years to date 072 has bred winners,

The Dam of Max is

NL11/1207749 Blue pied hen a direct daughter of D'Artagnan (full brother 3 Musketeers) D'Artagnan himself is sire, g.sire to 1st 19,476 birds, 12th 6,378 birds. Dam of 749 is Kid Loverboy 254 a daughter of Bambino and daughter of Mister Bond.

749 is proving a top breeder being dam of top national pigeons in both 2012 and 2013 in 2013 our super racer 35 won 5 national positions as a yearling and the A ring hen another daughter has scored well for us and was my 3rd pigeon in today's race.

2013 proved to have been a brilliant breeding season for Formula 1 lofts with many winners coming from that years breeding either directly or winners bred from them for us and other fanciers. The list includes 1st Amal 3 weeks ago from 4, 800 birds, 1st Amal 5,500 birds in 2014, and now 1st BICC, other 2013 birds have also won 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,15,16,17,19 21st with 105 members sending 1361 birds in the Essex north rd combine 2013 yb race another 2013 bred pigeon has bred 2nd Amal 4,800 birds. This is without the many club and fed winners.

On a personal note I would like to thank Alan Armstrong, though he is not a partner in our flying name, for the last 3 years he has been doing the main chunk of the work with the pigeons, as I took a new job which meant I have to travel a lot often for a week or more at a time and at short notice and am away from home for at least 12 hours each day Monday to Friday. I needed help to continue to race and Alan needed somewhere to race pigeons so it was a match which suited us both and the partnership has gone from strength to strength during the last 3 years.

I would also like to thank my Mum & Dad and my wife Theresa who are always running about for me sorting things out, running birds to marking for me etc (like this race even when they have not sent they still took the birds for me) also to Theresa for entertaining all the visitors we get and for putting up with the constant phone calls and pigeon talk in our house."

Congratulations John and Co on a good win..

In the runner up position in both the East section and the Open result, [velocity 1402 ypm] is a yearling hen entered by probably the UK's most successful lady fancier none other than Meg Murray of Burnham on Crouch in Essex. Meg is a regular on BICC race results and this latest success comes close on the heels of her triumph in the 2014 Guernsey YB National with the BICC. Here's what Meg had to tell me about her latest success:-

"First, a big "Well Done" to Jonathan and Alan, stalwarts of the Gladwin, Jarvis, and Family partnership. You know I'm saying this through gritted teeth, don't you?!!

My first bird to time in was a little chequer-pied hen. Just a yearling, she doesn't stand out from the crowd very much, just a steady 'team player'. Although a couple of weeks ago she was in the first batch of eight birds from Lyndhurst, all doing more than 2260yphm - a very fast race.

Looking at her pedigree, though, she does come from sound stock.

Her sire is a four year old cock, bred from one of the super pairs of stock pigeons given to me, quite a few years ago, by Lee Bastone who flies to a loft several yards away from mine and in the same club.

Known as 'The Good Pair' the cock is three quarters Soontjen, through Sabre and Secret and one quarter SVR with Radar in his pedigree and the hen is pure Soontjen, again through Sabre and Secret.

Sadly the old hen died last year, but the cock, aged ten, is still producing superb winning youngsters and has done so again this year.

The yearling's dam is another gift, one of the great birds that come down to me every year from Craig Booth of Hartlepool, Co. Durham. Craig 'donates' young birds to me every year and they appear time and again at the top of the race sheet.

A few years ago, he sent down some to go in the stock loft and it was one of those hens, paired to the cock off 'The Good Pair' that produced this week's good yearling."

Well done Meg.

Micky Watts of Southminster in Essex is another fancier who regularly appears near the top of the BICC middle distance race results including two outright wins to my knowledge. In 2014 his team of hens did a "demolition job" on the opposition in the Guernsey OH's taking the first five positions on the result. In the Alencon race Micky timed another good 'un for 3rd East section 3rd Open vel 1400yphm. Unfortunately, I have no further info' on Micky's pigeon despite emailing and phoning his home.

My good mates Tony and Pat Mahoney, formerly of Dagenham and lately of Basildon, come in with a three year old widowhood cock recording 1397 yphm for 4th East section 4th Open. This follows on from their 1st Open Falaise with the BICC in 2013. The Alencon timer is a Planet Bros Van Loon x Ron Williamson x Frank Sheader Soontjen and has previously won 1st Open EECC; 70th Open BBC plus numerous other club and Fed prizes so is no stranger to the winners enclosure.

Next in 5th East section 5th Open position is another regular on the BICC result sheets, Dean Childs whose pigeon recorded 1380 yphm.

Having left a message on Dean's answer phone for him to contact me I unfortunately do not have any further information on his pigeon at time of going to press.

The Snodland, Kent partnership of Mr & Mrs Eamonn Streatfield take 6th East section 6th Open, velocity 1362 yphm with a yearling chequer hen of Lotterman bloodlines sent celibate. Her sire is a winner of 1st Combine Le Mans so she is certainly bred for the job. The hen had just three races as a young bird, followed by a further two inland this year before being entered in the Alencon race.

Peter and Andrew Meades clocked a yearling blue cock sent sitting 7 day eggs for 1st NE section 7th Open, velocity 1359 yphm. This Busschaert cock was having his fourth race of the season and finished at 4th club in the 220 mile Clermont race the week before Alencon.

R Hacon & son come in for 2nd NE section 8th Open vel 1358 yphm. Unfortunately, I do not have a phone number for the partners so can give no further details of their timer.

Mr & Mrs Roger Strowger of Leiston in Suffolk come in next on 1357 yphm for 3rd NE section 9th Open. Roger was going to get back to me with details of his timer but somehow failed to come through- too much of that Suffolk beer I suppose!

Colin Seago of Lowestoft clocked for 131358 yphm to take 4th NE section and complete the top ten positions at 10th Open. Colin clocked a two year old Soontjen hen raced on roundabout. She has had three races out to 130 miles prior to Alencon at 280 miles. She was lightly raced as a young bird and yearling winning 1st club Littlehampton in 2014.

Let's now move on to the various section winners. The east section prize winners all appeared in the top ten Open so no need to repeat ourselves there.

Centre section winner was clocked at the Southfield lofts of triple International winner Mark Gilbert who clocked one of his widowers doing 1354 yphm for 1st section 13th Open. Mark enjoyed a good day's racing both with the BICC and the BBC and this is what he had to say:-

" I was really pleased with the race today. Had great race with 7 in a minute and half, plus also 1st,2nd, 5th and 6th in the BBC.

The first pigeon was a two year old widowhood cock, his father is from a son of Perpignan 06 1st National, 2nd international Perpignan and the father of 1st International Marseille when paired to 79333 the mother of 2nd, 7th and 14th open Tarbes NFC a daughter of Supreme 1st International Dax. The mother is a double granddaughter to Gerard Koopmans KLIENE DIRK “

Roger Holdom comes in with one on 1345 ypm for 2nd centre section.

This is a two year old chequer cock sent calling his hen to nest. He was at Falaise with the BICC last week and featured well up on the provisional result. This latest performance from Alencon follows his 1st club Poole earlier in the season – so a pigeon on form. Due to persistent hawk attacks, Roger has to exercise his birds at set times although he would much prefer to allow them an open loft. He sent six and had 100% returns.

Malik & Khan clocked a yearling hen on 1341 ypm for 3rd section. Imran Malik had this to tell me about his first on the clock:-

“Our 1st pigeon was a yearling hen bred down from our stock, her sire is "SIRROL" who is a direct Koopman from De Lorris x Rafaella. Sirrol has sired 1st & 5th centre section in the BICC before and is a sire and g.sire to 1st fed winners. He was paired to "TIP TOP ACE" a direct Franz Zwols from Tip Top Junior x Queen of Rekkem. Tip Top Ace is dam of 1st fed winners with different cocks. The birds arrived in good condition.”

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In top spot in the NC section is a two year old Houben widowhood hen doing 1347 ypm to the St Neots loft of David Paine. The hen had been to two club races out to 107 miles in the build up to Alencon and received a number of 20 mile trainers to keep her close to the mark, along with her regular daily home exercise.

Gavin Duggan of Chipping Camden in the Cotswolds clocked on 1302 ypm for 2nd section. Gavin's timer is a 2013 pigeon flown on the roundabout system and bred by good friend and club mate Gary Carter of Broadway which Gavin bought at the Fed B/Buyer. He has been a consistent pigeon in the loft and finished 7th Fed last week so Gavin knew he was in good form. He's had 3 inland races on the build up to Alencon and the plan is to head him for Tours. Gavin would like to congratulate all the section winners and the BICC for getting it right again.

Mr & Mrs Appleby of Grimsby flying 352 miles to take third NC section vel 1293 ypm. Unfortunately, the number provided for the Appleby's was unobtainable and so I have no further details of their gallant pigeon.

T & J Davies of Birtsmorton timed one of their entry on 1241 ypm to take the honours in the North West section. Jeremy had this to say about his timer:-

“My winner today is a stunning blue widowhood cock the sire being a G/son of the world famous Gaby Blisken cock. On the mother's side being our old De Klak lines. No 48 had 3 inland races before being sent to Alencon he has been a very consistent pigeon in the past but this is the first time he has timed in first to my loft. Full brothers and sisters of 48 have won channel races up to 440 miles but feel that they should not go past this distance as they are the type to put everything in up to this distance. No 48 was allowed to rear a pair of young birds till 8 days old when they were removed which I gave the young birds to my good club mate Micky Lee who is provisionally 2nd NW section. They are fed on a home made mix with Jeremy's Tonics to keep them fit and healthy. I would like to thank the markers in Gwent Wales who do a sterling professional job. The BICC convoyers took great care of them as the pigeons returned in super condition with 12 from 14 sent at present on the day. We have a great camaraderie in our club and some of our members really enjoy competing in the BICC as its National racing at its best.”

The ever present husband and wife partnership of M & C Lee of Alfrick come in with one for 2nd section. This is a 2 year old chequer cock of Jan Huybrecht bloodlines from Martin Williams. He has had two inland races whilst mated and his hen was taken from him after last week's Falaise race so Alencon was his first race of the season on widowhood. The Lee team of racers are hopper fed a good mixture marketed by Countrywide and given Jeremy Davies's tonics.

Booth & Roper are also regulars on the BICC results and in the Alencon race they clocked to take 3rd section.

Over in the west section the pigeons had it all to do in the westerly wind and here we have a two year old Mealy cock racing to the Dorset loft of Paul Murrell taking top honours on 1291 ypm. This one is of VanderEspt bloodlines through Nigel Llewellyn stock and had one preparatory race of 70 miles before going to Alencon.

Geoff and Catherine Cooper come in at 2nd section on 1284 ypm.

Geoff and Catherine timed a 2 year old widowhood cock named Kerr to win 2nd West Section. He has won several prizes including 5th WS from Falaise and is a half brother to Star who won 1st National Tours last year.

Kerr's sire is Euro 60, a g/son of Euro Diamond.

Kerr's dam is Carla Page, bred for Geoff and Catherine by Alan and Carla Hudson. Carla Page has won many prizes including 5th International hens Pau and 16th International Pau. Her sire is a son of Brockamp's Mistral and her dam is Miss Magnus, a daughter of Deweerdt's Magnus

The partnership of E & M Richards at 3rd section velocity1273 ypm.

Perry Little the I/C of the St Austell, Cornwall marking Station sent me this brief report on the Cornish entries who battled against the elements to reach their home lofts in the far south west:-

Please find below some notes from today's race from Alencon where 4 members sent 18 birds.

- 1) First to time was Tony Hubbard, who timed a 5y.o. Blue Cheq, Soontjen x Janssen cock sitting on 8 day eggs at 14.02, doing approximately 1063ypm. This bird has previously flown Messac and Carentan and considering the conditions we think that this is a real stormer on the day!
- 2) Second to clock was Keith Frost, who timed a 3.y.o Blue Cheq, Heremans Ceusters x Vandenabelle cock sent driving at 16.19, doing approximately 802ypm.

I hope you have better luck with the wind next time Perry.

The next National race from Tours is sponsored by Jamie Crouch and his company "AFECO" with a £250 cash prize to the winner.

My thanks to all those fanciers who took the initiative in this race and contacted me first, this saves me a great deal of time and aggravation in preparing these reports and is much appreciated. My apologies to those fanciers who I failed to contact in time for the submission of this report but as I have written previously, I have a very tight deadline to keep if the report is to be published in the following week's pigeon press.

Finally, a request – nay a demand from our secretary Carol, members MUST verify their first pigeons within 30 minutes of clocking. Failure to do so may entail disqualification. You've been warned.

Gareth Watkins

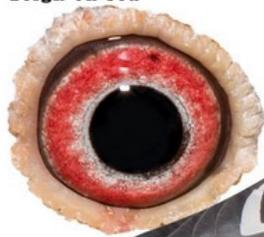


Alan Armstrong, Theresa & John Gladwin 1st BICC Alencon

"Max"

GB13P37662

**1st Sec E 1st Open British International
Championship Club Alencon 2015
Raced by Gladwin, Jarvis & Family,
Leigh on Sea**



©Chris Sutton

1st BICC Alencon



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Meg-Murray 1st Open BICC Guernsey YB 2014 2nd Open BICC Alencon 2015



Micky Watts 1st Open BICC Guernsey OH's 2014 & 3rd Open BICC Alencon 2015



Tony & Pat Mahoney 4th sect 4th Open BICC Alencon



David Paine 1st NC section Alencon



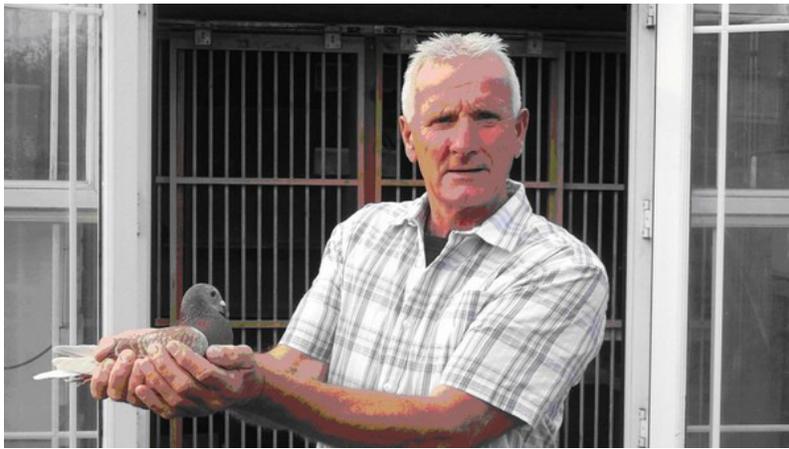
Dean Childs prov 5th Open BICC Alencon



Eamonn & Julie Sreatfield 6th Open BICC Alencon



Meades & son 1st NE section 7th Open BICC Alencon



Roger Strowger 3rd North East section 9th Open BICC Alencon



Mark-Gilbert-1st Centre section BICC Alencon



Paul Murrell 5th Open BICC Alencon 2014; 1st west section Alencon 2015



Roger Holdom 2nd Centre section Alencon



T&J Davies 1st NW section Alencon & 3rd NW sect Falaise 2015



Gladwin-Jarvis-&-Family