

BICC TOURS RACE REPORT

The Tours race is the third race in the Old Bird race programme for the BICC and I give you below a brief insight into the history of the town itself.

The city of Tours stands on the lower reaches of the river [Loire](#), between [Orléans](#) and the [Atlantic](#) coast. [Touraine](#), the region around Tours, is known for its wines, the alleged perfection of its local spoken French, and the [Battle of Tours](#) in 732. It is also the site of the [Paris–Tours](#) road bicycle race. Tours is the largest city in the [Centre](#) region of France, although it is not the regional capital, which is the region's second-largest city, [Orléans](#). In 2006, the city itself had 138,268 inhabitants and the metropolitan area had 546,105.

The Tours race is always a good stepping stone for pigeons being prepared for the International races later in June and July as it gives the birds the much needed “hours on the wing” to get them fit for the tasks ahead. The 2015 season Tours race was sponsored to the tune of £250 by Afeco courtesy of pigeon fancier Jamie Crouch so the winner will have a nice little pot of corn money to play with.



Jamie Crouch of Afeco handing John Tyerman a cheque for £250 sponsorship for the winner of the BICC Tours National

The following is John Tyerman's initial announcement regarding the liberation.

“The 4,288 pigeons entered in the BICC (AFECO sponsored) TOURS National were liberated in good conditions at 6-45am this morning (Sat 30th May 2015) They cleared well into a light west wind shown as around 11 mph. Weather in France is good and the line of flight is now clear of the overnight rain. Visibility on the English Channel is excellent with winds showing as west or SW around 17mph.”

And here is John's definitive report on the race preparations:-

The first two BICC National races were not without their problems due to the adverse weather and ferry cancellations, and the Tours preparations were not much different. The first incident was at Northampton marking when our Convoyer Steve Adamson stepped onto a very large nail which went into his foot requiring immediate first aid and a later tetanus injection. He was fortunately able to continue with his pigeon collection duties but when he arrived at Horndean later that night it was clear he was in some pain and pigeon men being as they are, soon named him, 'Hopalong Steve' which he accepted with a bit of good humour. In the meantime our Chief Convoyer Trevor had encountered two lengthy delays due to road traffic accidents and only arrived at Horndean in time to quickly load up before both vehicles headed off for the Portsmouth ferry - only to find loading had officially closed. Club Chairman Albi Deacon has a 'way with words' and after a quick phone call which resulted in the dispensation of the usual check-in formalities, both transporters

boarded the overnight ferry to Caen. We often forget about the people on the ground and but for the efforts of the Horndean marking team staying late to load the crates onto the two transporters we would certainly have missed the ferry. So on behalf of all members our sincere thanks go to Paul O'Leary, Peter Carrington, Jim and Sheryl Etherington, Albi Deacon, Miles Foster, Kevin and Vera Cooper and Nicky Wilson.

Our Weather Advisor Steve Appleby had earlier reported that the race day forecast was looking favourable and this information was passed to our Convoyers Trevor and Steve who had arrived safely at the Tours Lib site around lunchtime on the Friday. Trevor reported his concerns about the height of the trees at the liberation site and the fact that there continues to be no water or toilet facilities, so the Committee need to look at a possible alternative race-point for next year. (Any suggestions from members would be welcomed) Steve Appleby gave another weather update on the Friday evening and although there was a rain belt in the Channel this was forecast to move away from the line of flight - he suggested an early liberation and this information was passed to Trevor and Steve. We received the final weather update around 6am on the Saturday morning and with a good overall forecast plus a clear Channel, the liberation took place at 6-45 am into a very light west wind. The birds cleared well and on the way back to Caen, Trevor reported plenty sunshine and good weather so the birds had a very good start.

Well done to Micky Watts who is provisional 1st open and wins the £250 cash prize sponsored by Jamie Crouch and his company 'AFECO' Again our three northern stalwarts clocked good day pigeons with John Rumney timing at 18-57 flying 526 miles and M/M Anderson clocking at 1950 hours, flying 529 miles to Tyne and Wear. Mr&Mrs Hicks also timed at 19-33 hours flying 522 miles to Seaham. Well done all.

John Tyerman
Mark Gilbert
(Race Advisors)

This is weatherman Steve Appleby's weather report for race day.

Weather Report.

Fortunately as forecast a window of good weather presented itself for Saturday's race from Tours. Most of England and northern France was under broken cloud and sunshine. The only concern was heavy cloud moving towards the race point from the west which would have delayed liberation. Race controller John Tyerman was made aware of this development and soon had the BICC convoy away at 06:45. Winds over France were light mainly from the west. Over the channel early on winds were westerly reaching about 15 mph until approximately 11:00 hours when they veered to a south westerly direction. Visibility was excellent. A good race resulted for the BICC members and as expected the leading velocities recorded in the east of the country.

Steve Appleby

With the westerly influence in the wind yet again, it was expected that the fanciers in the eastern reaches of the BICC would have a distinct advantage. The positions quoted below are purely provisional and are based on fanciers' first bird verifications- the final result may well differ.

The eventual winner was indeed clocked on the eastern side of the club's radius at the Southminster, Essex lofts of Micky Watts. Micky's team have been in cracking form with the BICC again this season having appeared well up on all three race results. This is what Micky had to say about his latest BICC win:-

"Here are the breeding details for my first pigeon on the clock to win 1st BICC National Tours. He is a Dark Chequer Cock and was bred by M & D. Evans. The father is a pigeon called "Bob de Batt" The last direct son ever bred from Myrtle Lofts "Champion Shadow" when paired to his own granddaughter "Golden Black" (Golden Gaby, Golden Hen, Shadow, Carrie bloodlines) "Champion Shadow" Belg.95.3211313 must be the

best pigeon to ever leave the loft of Gaby Vandenabeele. Here is a small example of top national winners already bred down from "Champion Shadow" 1st Nat. Alencon 6,823 birds, 1st Nat. Messac 7,000 birds, 1st Nat. Angers 5,977 birds, 1st Nat. Eastbourne 7,312 birds, 1st Nat. Lillers 10,601 birds, 1st Nat. Vire 4,756 birds, 1st Nat. Bordeaux 1,339 birds, 1st Nat. Nants 10,148 birds, 1st Nat. Maidstone 4,472 birds, 1st Nat. Guernsey 2,433 birds, 1st Nat. Clermont 5,434 birds, 1st Nat. Carentan 5,103 birds, 1st Nat. Alencon 6,590 birds etc.

Mother to the Tours National winner is a pigeon called "Levi Young" (Full brother bred my 1st BICC Old Hens National winner in 2014) Both direct children from Myrtle Lofts "Pre Olympic" when paired to "Davina". Pre Olympic" was the No1. Race Performer for Peter Jonker from the Netherlands and was purchased by M & D. Evans from his Entire Clearance sale on pipa in 2010. Here is "Pre Olympics" performances 1st Strombeek 4,679 birds, 2nd Meer 5,497 birds, 2nd Duffel 4,694 birds, 2nd Strombeek 3,949 birds, 5th Meer 3,582 birds, 5th Nijvel 2,336 birds, 6th Nijvel 4,461 birds, 6th Morlincourt 2,377 birds, 7th Chantilly 9,565 birds, 8th Duffel 24,807 birds, 10th Peronne 2,349 birds, 10th Peronne 1,774 birds, 14th Chimay 3,666 birds, 20th Meer 19,826 birds, 22nd Strombeek 11,809 birds, 28th Nijvel 3,992 birds, 31st Strombeek 23,935 birds, 33rd Meer 27,750 birds, 51st Nijvel 12,673 birds, 51st Peronne 9,181 birds, 63rd Nijvel 23,698 birds, 75th Peronne 12,370 birds. Total winner of 33 prize cards (No doubles, all on different races) "Davina" was the No1. Breeding hen for Jos Goessen and again was purchased by M & D. Evans from Jos's Entire Clearance Sale on pipa in 2010. She is the direct mother to several top winners in the Netherlands and now since been at Myrtle Lofts she is grandmother to 2 x 1st National winners here in the U.K.

My second pigeon on the clock was also bred by M & D. Evans the year earlier in 2013. It was interesting to read on the pedigree that he is half brother to the first pigeon that I clocked to win 1st National. Both bred from the same mother "Levi Young" daughter "Pre Olympic" x Davina". The father on this occasion was Myrtle Loft's "Blue Magic" who contains the top winning bloodlines of Gaby Vandenabeele crossed with the "Albert" x "Paula" bloodlines from De Rauw-Sablon. My third pigeon on the clock was bred by myself from two direct M & D. Evans pigeons. This cock was 3rd Open BICC National when 419 members sent 4,651 birds two week earlier. I would like to say thank you to Lee Bastone & Terry Bentham for looking after and keeping my pigeons in the same routine while I have been on holiday". Well done once again Micky.

A full loft report on Micky Watts can be found on the BICC web site.

Mr & Mrs Eamonn Streatfield , fresh from their recent good performance in the BICC Alencon race where their timer finished at 6th Open are in again at 2nd East section 2nd Open on 1413 ypm. The Streatfield's timer is a yearling blue cock flown on widowhood and bred by Marney & Howard and purchased at a club fund raiser by Eamonn. The sire of the cock is a Vandenabeele with 3 x 1sts club and a 1st Fed to his credit whilst the dam is a winner of 13th Open NFC in the YB National. The yearling cock had just three races as a young bird and this year has had six inland races with Tours being his first hop over the briney.

The Laindon partnership of D Heywood and Son have been top fanciers enjoying success at club, Fed, Combine and National level for a considerable time. In the Tours race their timer was good enough for 3rd East section 3rd Open vel 1400 ypm. This is what Gary Heywood told me about their latest successful timer:-

"The pigeon we clocked in the BICC Tours race is a 4 yr old cock. He is a real star as he has to his credit 5th 12th 17th and now 3rd Open in BICC races. This does not including his minor results in the Open of BICC and the NFC. He is a son of Tours Lad our BICC Tours National winner and also a London and South East Classic Yearling Derby winner. He is a grandfather of our National Flying Club Fougères winner and his mother is a full Sister of "Celebration" winner of NFC Fougères."

Fourth East section and fourth Open vel 1394 ypm is one of Mark Bulled's sprint team. This is what King's Cup winner Mark had to tell me :-

"I timed in a 2 year old Mealy widowhood cock, from my Red Bull Sprint family, a half brother to 3rd Open NFC Messac, who, incidentally, was timed in 3 minutes later and should also feature high in the result. The Grandsire to my Mealy Cock has won the M11 SRFC 7 times in distances up to 125 miles. These Red Bull pigeons have been prolific winners in the short sprint races but I'm now trying to get more distance from them. My "Rocky" cock 1st BBC and 2nd NFC is off similar breeding".

The Sheerness, Kent partnership of Steven Kitts and Jaqueline Day come in next at 5th east section 5th Open vel 1393 ypm with a yearling roundabout cock. This one was bred by Paul Walder from pigeons Paul purchased from Geoff and Brigitte Clare before they emigrated to Australia. He is of Simons Brothers Janssen bloodlines and won 2 x 1sts and a second as a young bird. This year he was provisionally placed at 19th Open BICC in the Alencon race two weeks previous. A bit of an animal that one and certainly one with an excellent past record and hopefully a bright future.

John Pether of Henham in Essex near Stansted airport clocked a two year old chequer pied hen of Wildemeersch bloodlines on 1391 ypm to finish at 6th East section 6th Open. This one is a widowhood hen who was at Carentan the week previous to Tours. She has always been consistent without ever setting any trees alight on her previous race outings.

East Grinstead fancier Wayne Steptoe is in next at 7th east section 7th Open with a bird on 1390 ypm. Wayne's timer has had 2 club races Salisbury and Blandford followed by the two BICC races Falaise and Alencon prior to Tours. The Sire is a pigeon on loan from Wayne's good friend John Donovan out of Champion Indy King's Cup winning bloodlines. The Dam is a granddaughter of another King's Cup winner, "George" from G & C Cooper - so bred in the purple.

Ken Abbott of Brighton breaks the East section dominance on the result with his first in the clock doing 1380 ypm to take 1st Centre section and 8th Open. Ken's first bird is a Kees Bosua[via Premier Lofts] x Reynaerts via Crammond & Langstaff. The three year old is raced on widowhood and was picked up badly hawked by a Dover fancier on returning from the 2014 Agen International so is certainly lucky to have survived. Tours was his second channel race of the season.

D Wilton & son of Chadwell St Mary in Essex are regulars on BICC race results and in this race their first in the clock looks good enough for 8th section 9th Open on 1379.9 ypm. The pigeon is a 3 year old cock, raced on the widowhood system and of the partners' old tried and tested blood line- Invisible Spirit Jan Arden crossed with Super Crack Grusson line. He has the same grandfather as the Wilton's 2nd Open BBC young bird National winner of 2013 and the 2nd Open BICC Le Mans National winner of 2014. The BICC Tours was his first channel race of the year due to his being injured in training a few days before basketting for the BICC Alencon race. The cock is now destined for the BICC Pau International in a few weeks time .

Fred Agar of Grays in Essex completes the top ten in the Open result with a bird on 1379.3 ypm for 9th East section 10th Open. This one is a three year old Lindelauf x hen bred by Foxwood Lofts. She was raced as a young bird and then spent some time in the stock loft before being brought back into the race team in 2015.

That's the top ten positions in the Open covered now lets have a look around the sections.

Let's start with the North East section and here we see D Osborne timing the winner on 1364 ypm to take 18th Open as well. Their timer is a 3 year old Wal Zootjen hen bred from the President & Conimix lines. Raced on roundabout, this was her 3rd channel race of the season and she has scored well in each of them, also

scoring well in the section from the BICC Alencon race. She returned in excellent condition as did the other four of the partners' 6 bird entry on the day.

Kath Terry comes in with a bird on 1345.12 ypm [36th Open] to narrowly beat Mr & Mrs Roger Strowger's pigeon on 1345.02 ypm into 3rd section 37th Open. Kath Terry has been around pigeons for some years and served her apprenticeship at Brian and Cordelia Long's lofts at Gipping. In the Tours race she clocked a 3 year old blue hen of Willy Thas bloodlines sent sitting 14 day eggs.

The Strowger pigeon which takes 3rd section is a two year old cock bred by friend Terry Smith of Worksop. He had five races as a young bird winning 20th & 40th Open Anglian Classic FC and this season has had three channel races and was 18th Open Fed from Alencon. Roger sent 10 and got 10 on the day from Tours and enjoyed an excellent day's racing taking the first six positions in his local club race.

The centre section winner was clocked by Ken Abbott of Brighton and has been mentioned earlier.

In second spot in the Centre section was one doing 1365 ypm to the Epsom loft of Roberts, Carter & son who clocked a yearling widowhood cock bred by Clive Lister to take provisionally 17th Open BICC. This one has had all three channel races with the BICC this year.

Peter Donovan of Croydon comes in next at third Centre section 22nd Open vel 1362 ypm with a two year old round about hen bred by Andy Berry of Canterbury which was at Alencon with the BICC two weeks earlier.

Next we move on to the North West section and here we see the usual suspects of T & J Davies, Booth & Roper and M & C Lee mopping up the top three prizes.

Leading the way is one doing 1267 ypm to the Birtsmorton lofts of Jeremy Davies. In three races this season with the BICC Jeremy's birds have finished with 2 x 1sts section and 1 x 3rd. Those tonics of yours must be working a treat Jeremy. Jeremy had this to say about his latest success with the BICC:-

"We have Topped the North West Section for our 2nd race running in the BICC. We also timed in a Blue hen Great/ Granddaughter of Jimmy x Ticken Express 3 top breeder and winner herself only just over a minute later that could be provisionally 2nd section. Since joining the BICC in 2014 we have flown 6 races with them and have won the NW section 4 times being 2nd & 3rd in the other two races.

Our first timer GB13 N32899 Blue Cheq Cock is raced on the semi widowhood system. He was not allowed to rear only sit eggs in 2015 and showed his hen for 40 minutes before basketting.

The Dam of the winner is a Father/ daughter mating from Jimmy which was paired on to his own daughter that won 1st Section J NFC Tarbes flying 617 miles on the day in 2008 which was paired back to Jimmy who won five 1st prizes and five 2nd prizes before being put to stock and now is the Father of the loft. Jimmy is not fertile now but I put to stock most of his sons & daughters which are from 5 different hens and these will be bred off half-brother sister matings over the next few years. Two of my best breeding hens were from this father/ daughter mating couple which I later cross out with various cocks. The 08 pied father/ daughter mating hen has bred many channel winners to different cocks and in 2013 was paired to our home bred Terminator cock which is Brother x sister mating of Mike Ganus lines. These have produced a London North Rd Open winner plus 1st NW Section BICC Alencon in 2014. So the Sire and Dam are inbred then not being related put together and you get your hybrid vigour.

The birds are fed on a homemade feeding mix high fat and proteins while its on the cold side dropping the protein when the weather warms up. We use Jeremy's pigeon tonics in the water and on the feed which is given daily. We sent a team of 18 had 14 on the day and 3 the next morning to which it was a testing race more so on the west side of the country which some great performances must go to the top 3 in the west section and of course the open winners.

Thank you to the marking team in Gwent and the conveyer's who again did a sterling job. Next year we hope to compete in the internationals with a intention set to race and do well from Barcelona."

Then we have the partnership of Booth & Roper in second section on 1221 ypm . Their timer is a five year old grizzle cock of Brian Sheppard bloodlines having his second trip across the channel this year. Trevor and John's team are in super form at the moment as they have 9 x 1sts at club level already this season.

Bringing up the rear at 3rd section is one to M& C Lee of Alfrick on 1187 ypm. Mike and Christine also use to good effect the range of tonics marketed by Jeremy Davies.

Over in the West section the birds again had it all to do with the Westerly influence in the wind. Topping the lot here is the partnership of Geoff and Catherine Cooper with a bird on 1326 ypm to finish at a very creditable 58th Open given the conditions. Geoff and Catherine clocked a two year old widowhood cock called Farm Break. His sire is down from Farm Boy the sire of Farmer George 1st Int. Bordeaux and his dam is a full sister to Daybreak Junior who won 5th Nat Barcelona, 6th Nat Barcelona and 2 x 1st, and 2nd section Barcelona. Farm Break has flown consistently for the Cooper's, as a yearling he flew 3 channel races, twice being first to the loft. The same day as winning 1st section Tours with Farm Break, his full brother was 2nd Fougères with the local club. Well done the Coopers on yet another section winning performance – its getting monotonous now!!!

Taking the runners up prize in the section and 89th Open is the Nantyglo partnership of Gareth and Stuart Treharne with a bird doing 1305 ypm and flying some 50 miles further west than the section winner into the westerly wind up into the heads of the Welsh Valleys. The Treharne's have hit a golden seam of form over the past couple of weeks and in the WSRNFC race from Falaise the week previous clocked two birds together for 1st & 2nd National. At Tours they clocked a two year old hen bred out of their 2012 Saintes National and Gold Cup winner "Alan's Lad", when paired to a daughter of "The Machine" . She races on roundabout and had a good position in the hard Poitiers race with the BICC in 2014. Stuart tells me that their hen arrived pretty fresh and in good condition.

Third West section and 109th Open on the provisional result is one to John Smale of Abergavenny. John is a multiple National and Queen's Cup winner here in Wales and is an avowed BICC "nut" as he thinks it is the best organisation he has ever competed in [I can't argue with you there John]. The Smale timer is bred from a son of Katie's Star, Dave Impett's 12th Open National Flying Cub Tarbes, 740 miles of Brugemann bloodlines. The dam is direct from Jan Polder and is a grand daughter of Dolores, 31st International Barcelona x son of the Goldmine hen of Dave Impett. The cock was one of John's four entries in the National Flying Club Fougères last week. He returned in such good condition that John put him straight back across the channel into the BICC Tours. With 8 out of 9 birds on the day and all in first class condition John has asked me to compliment the BICC professional team of conveyers and race advisors on a job well done.

Leading the way in the North Central section is club treasurer Russell Bradford aided and abetted by his better half Clare. The partners clocked a five year old blue cock on 1297 ypm to take 1st NC section 97th Open on the provisional result. The partners' timer has 30 races and eleven Channel crossings in his CV and has been to Tours four times, so at last seems to now know the way home. Previously he has flown widowhood but Russell decided a few weeks back, to leave him natural this year with time to chase his hen for several hours every morning with an open loft. He was sent sitting a second nest, and will go back to Poitiers in a fortnight's time, and then probably be retired with over 5,500 miles of racing to his credit.

Mr & Mrs G Spiller come in with one on 1288ypm for 2nd NC section 107th Open. The Spiller pigeon is a four year old widowhood cock of Jos Thone bloodlines that has had four inland races and BICC Alencon prior to Tours. My thanks to Dudley Holmes and Russell for providing me with Greg Spiller's phone number.

In third NC section position is one to the ever present I/C of the Evesham marking station, Gavin Duggan. Gavin clocked is a yearling cock bred from his Jan Aarden bloodlines and once again raced on the roundabout system. Gavin would like to congratulate Russell & Clare Bradford on winning the section as he believes they are two of the hardest working members in the BICC. Well done.

Whilst mentioning the NC section I should point out the great amount of assistance given to Russell and Clare by Terry Bennett who travels all the way down to Farndish from his home in Boston to help out with the BICC marking. In the Tours race he was knocking on the Bradfords' door at 7.15 am raring to go. Despite ill health, Terry has also enjoyed some success with the BICC and long may it continue.

Before finishing this report I have a message from Rita Good the I/C of the South Ockenden marking station. Due to the fact that all those who sent to Tours from the marking station did a rapid disappearing act after their birds were race marked, Rita had to call on the help of Rob the barman, a non fancier, in order to load the pigeons onto the transporter. This will not be allowed to happen in the next race – so be warned!! Rita also asked me to thank Rob for his help- job done Rita.

Russell Bradford has had some members phoning regarding difficulty with accessing the early times on the BICC web site. This is Russell's explanation:-

“Evidently some members have expressed difficulty in accessing “Early Times” on the BICC web site. The ‘early times’ was working correctly; so if the Alencon result displayed on some computers rather than the Tours early times, then their computer ‘Temporary Internet Files’ will need to be deleted as these are blocking the new file being downloaded because it has the same file name”.

Readers will see the Top Pigeon logo heading the PR reports web page and I can inform members that all BICC race reports will in future, be published on this Internationally renowned web site. My thanks to Jan Polder for this kind gesture

Gareth Watkins



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

"Shadow's Image"

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**1st Sec E 1st Open British International
Championship Club Tours 2015
Raced by Micky Watts, Southminster**



@Chris Sutton

1st Open Tours



Micky Watts loft-Set-Up



Eamonn Streatfield with his 2nd Open BICC Tours



D Heywood & son 3rd section 3rd Open BICC Tours



Mark and Hana Bulled 4th section 4th Open BICC Tours



Steve Kitts and Jackie Day pictured on holiday in Canada. The partners were 5th Open BICC Tours



John Pether 6th Open BICC Tours



Wayne Steptoe 7th Open BICC Tours



Ken Abbott 1st Centre section 8th Open BICC Tours



Andrew Wilton of the D Wilton & son partnership 9th Open BICC Tours



Fred Ager 10th Open BICC Tours



Doug Osborne, son Lee and young Shania 1st NE section 18th Open BICC Tours



Russell Bradford 1st NC section BICC Tours



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



Booth & Roper 2nd NW section BICC Tours



Geoff & Catherine Cooper 1st west section BICCTours



Gareth & Stuart Treharne 2nd west section BICC Tours



John Smale 3rd west section Tours



Kath Terry 2nd NE section 36th Open BICC Tours



Roger Stowger 3rd NE section BICC Tours