

## BICC PAU INTERNATIONAL RACE REPORT.

The 2015 Pau International race attracted an entry of 526 British pigeons – an increase of nearly 40% on the 2014 entry. Let's hope that this increase in interest in participation in International racing continues throughout the 2015 International race programme and if the wind is in our favour who knows- maybe another International winner to celebrate in Bournemouth in February?

This is the breakdown of the entries in the various marking stations:-

STOWMARKET		13
ASH	53	188
BATH	13	67
GWENT	14	46
S/OCKENDEN		34
CHESTFIELD		191
PLYMOUTH		
NORTHAMPTON		0
TOTAL	80	526

I give you here a brief history and geographical location of the town of Pau situated in the northern foothills of the Pyrenees.

Pau (French pronunciation: [\[po\]](#)) is a [commune](#) on the northern edge of the [Pyrenees](#), capital of the [Pyrénées-Atlantiques Département](#) in [Aquitaine, France](#). It was also the capital of the historical [Béarn Province](#). It forms the [communauté d'agglomération of Pau-Pyrénées](#) with 13 neighbouring communes to carry out local tasks together.

The [Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour](#), founded in 1972, accounts for a large student population. The [Boulevard des Pyrénées](#) extends for 1.8 kilometres (1.1 miles) from the [Château de Pau](#) to the Parc Beaumont, with views of the mountains. [Alphonse de Lamartine](#) said: "Pau has the world's most beautiful view of the earth just as Naples has the most beautiful view of the sea."

The location of Pau is shown on this map of the historical and cultural area of [Gascony](#).

Pau is 100 kilometres (62 miles) from the [Atlantic Ocean](#) and 50 km (31 miles) from the Pyrenees. [Spain](#) is 50 km (31 mi) away as the crow flies. The frontier is crossed by the col du Somport (1,631 metres (5,351 feet)) and the col du Pourtalet (1,794 m (5,886 ft)). Access to the crossings partly accounts for Pau's strategic importance. The city stands on a 200m elevation overlooking the valley of a mountain river called the [Gave de Pau](#), where a ford gave passage to the Pyrenees. The Gave, which becomes a torrent when mountain snow melts, begins in the Cirque de Gavarnie. It is the principal tributary of the Adour after 175 km (109 mi). The crossing was used for pasturage for sheep in the high meadows. The old route is now a hiking path, [GR 65](#), that runs 60 km (37 mi) south to the border.

The other rivers of the region are the Luy de Béarn, a tributary of the Luy; the Ousse and the Ousse des Bois, which flow into the Gave de Pau; and the Uzan, which joins the Luy de Béarn.

Pau is located 200 km (124 mi) west of [Toulouse](#), 30 km (19 mi) from [Tarbes](#) and [Lourdes](#), 25 km (16 mi) from [Oloron](#).

And so to the race itself, the 526 British pigeons were liberated along with the total convoy of 9,062 at 7.15 am CEST [6.15 am GMT] on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June.

This is a record number of pigeons for the Pau International. In 2014 8,464 birds competed in the Pau International.

The following is a breakdown of the number of pigeons entered from each competing country:-

Belgium	1,988
Netherlands	3,433
UK	550
Germany	966
France	2114
Luxemburg	11

Total: 9062

As can be seen by the satellite image that accompanies this report the southern regions of France were covered by a wide band of cloud which extended north almost as far as the Bordeaux region.

The wind direction for the first 150 mile of the course was from the west northwest and this turned to a light northerly air flow as the birds made their way up through France.

The pigeons obviously struggled in the conditions confronting them, as the first pigeon was not clocked until 19.48 pm at the Heutregiville [near Reims] loft of Richard Roge completing the 755km[approximately 453 miles] course at an average speed of 928 mpm. There followed a very slow trickle of pigeons in an arc to the northwest of Reims to the loft of Dominique Casail at 20.01 pm doing 920 mpm and then one to Gerard Ledoux and sons to their loft north east of Paris at 20.15 recording 874 mpm.

A total of just 17 pigeons made to their home lofts on the day and the winner was eventually clocked by Belgian fancier Restien De Smeyter at his loft just south of the city of Ghent at 21.20 pm to record 976 mpm over the 884 km[530 mile] course.

Next morning the birds came in a steady trickle and one outstanding pigeon was clocked right over in the east on the French – German border near Saarbrücken by the world famous German partnership of Rutz & sons.

So much for the early timers on the continent in the International – what of the British contingent?

Given the fact that the continentals were struggling to get pigeons on the day, there was very little hope that any birds would make it across the English Channel by nightfall and this was to be the case.

However, at 9.23 am on the second morning Basildon fancier John Underdown clocked his good seven year old long distance racer to lead the field on 724 mpm. This red cock of Kipp & son x Martin Greatham Southwell bloodlines has a fair bit of “previous” to his credit including 18<sup>th</sup> Open Tarbes NFC when the NFC went with the International plus 30<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Pau International in 2014. He has had just one previous race this year from Pithiviers with the EECC before being lifted into Pau. Regular 50 mile tosses from Folkestone and Hastings on the south coast have kept him ticking over and he was sent to Pau with every confidence of putting up a good performance. John motivates him in different ways as he is a very jealous pigeon and so is flown on a form of natural / jealousy system for motivation. John’s pigeons are hopper fed 24/7. Congratulations John on your winning performance. As a matter of interest I was talking to Steve Pearmain in the week before Pau and he mentioned both John Underdown and a certain Calum Edmiston as two fanciers to look out for. Low and behold who comes in at 2<sup>nd</sup> Open but none other than..... Calum Edmiston!

In the runner up spot in the Open with a bird doing 669 mpm and looking likely to take 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Centre section is Calum Edmiston. Calum is a regular on BICC International race results and although only racing a small team, he seems to be able to get a team performance in most of the International races in which he competes. This is what Calum had to tell me of his latest International race experience:-

“The bird is a chequer cock of van der Wegen x Nico Volkens(Steve Pearmain and I imported the Volkens pigeons in 2004) and was 57<sup>th</sup> BICC Pau and 6<sup>th</sup> St Vincent last year. He comes from a joint pairing with my friend Doug Gatland and has several other tickets to his name from 300-550 mile. He was sent natural sitting 18 day eggs and had two preparatory races with the BICC from Falaise and Alençon where he is on the result. The second bird, should it stay in 2<sup>nd</sup> section etc, is related to Steve Pearmain’s timer at 6<sup>th</sup> Open in this race and is related to Volken’s 1<sup>st</sup> International Pau hens winner. Steve bred me the bird which is a two year old chequer cock on his first trip to 500 miles. He had three preparatory channel races and was sitting 12 day eggs.

At the time of writing I am some good birds missing on this one and I’m a bit down about that. I think they encountered bad weather en route and this has caused some difficulty-but that’s the game.

The general management is as before. No treatments whatsoever. Build up with fats before basketing.

My first bird at 2<sup>nd</sup> Open was ill after Tarbes NFC a few years ago but was put right following the advice of my mate John(Barcelona) Nicholson of Rochester. My recent successes to a small loft are in no small part down to John who has improved me as a fancier”

Whilst mentioning John Nicholson I see that John and Spencer clocked a good one at 11<sup>th</sup> Open. I hope your health has improved John?[GW]

Yet another BICC regular comes in next at 2<sup>nd</sup> East section 3<sup>rd</sup> Open vel 661 mpm – none other than Alan “Wally” Turner who races with great consistency to his loft in the former mining village of Elvington just outside Dover. Alan clocked a five year old chequer cock which was 2<sup>nd</sup> Open BICC Narbonne and has some other top placements to his credit from St Vincent and Perpignan Internationals. This year he has had a few 50 mile training races with the Wingham club followed by BICC Tours and then straight into Pau as fresh as a daisy feeding two big youngsters and calling his hen to nest again.

R & N Steptoe come in next with a bird on 657 mpm to take 3<sup>rd</sup> East section 4<sup>th</sup> Open. The Steptoes clocked a 2 year old red cock the sire being a Cannon x Deweerdt and the dam of Red Barcelona x Jan Aarden bloodlines. He was repaired and sent to Pau sitting 10 day eggs. In the build up to Pau International the cock had 3 inland races with the club and then BICC Tours followed by three weeks R & R.

Three times Perpignan International race winners with the BICC, G M Preece & son come in next on 649 mpm to take 4<sup>th</sup> East section 5<sup>th</sup> Open. Geoff and Clayton clocked a second pigeon to record 615 mpm to take 6<sup>th</sup> East section 8<sup>th</sup> Open and a third bird to make 16<sup>th</sup> Open. But wait there's more, they also clocked a fourth pigeon to finish at 39<sup>th</sup> Open on the provisional result. Their first on the clock is a three year old Chequer Widowhood Hen - Stoffel 270/Hermes/Matterne lines and a Granddaughter of the legendary 'Jack Jones'. Previous prizes for this hen have included Narbonne 2014 - 13<sup>th</sup> Nat. Agen 2014 - 53<sup>rd</sup> Nat. Narbonne 2013 - 1025th International Hens.

Next up at 8<sup>th</sup> Open is a five year old Blue Widowhood Cock of Stoffel 270/Hermes lines, a super pigeon that has previously been dogged with yearly injuries. Previous prizes have included St Vincent 2014 - 67<sup>th</sup> Nat. Barcelona 2013 - 24<sup>th</sup> Nat. Perpignan 2012 - 18<sup>th</sup> Nat. Perpignan 2011 - 6<sup>th</sup> Nat 1<sup>st</sup> Nat. Yearling.

Then we have at 16<sup>th</sup> Open the legendary Jack Jones, one of the greatest long distance racers in these islands. Just look at his list of prizes in INTERNATIONAL races. 'Jack Jones', is a chequer widowhood cock bred by Stoffel from 270/Hermes/Matterne lines. This cock in 2010 set the record of being the first pigeon to have ever homed on the day from the Perpignan International.

Pau 2015 is his 12<sup>th</sup> International race of more than 500 miles. He has been timed Nationally with the BICC in all and has included 6 International places within these races. He has also been awarded an RPRA Best Performance Award(over 451 miles) in 2010.

Fourth in the clock at 39<sup>th</sup> Open is a three year old Chequer Widowhood Hen of Woodall/SG Wilk lines. Previous prizes for this hen have included Agen 2014 - 105<sup>th</sup> Nat. Perpignan 2012 - 59<sup>th</sup> Nat.

Geoff and Clayton would like to pay a special tribute to the late Bill Woodall and their recently deceased, well known friend and mentor, Dr Jeff Horn of Berwick-on-Tweed. Their help, advice and encouragement have enabled Geoff and Clayton to compete in these highly competitive International races.

The list of long distance race winners in the BICC goes on and on with the Wickford partnership of Dicky and son Steve Pearmain clocking one of their pathfinders on 628 mpm for 5<sup>th</sup> East section 6<sup>th</sup> Open. The Pearmain clocked their blue chequer cock at 12.47. This one has an old 2004 ring but was a late bred in 2010. The cock has been a good consistent performer for the partners and has been on the BICC results from Agen, Perpignan and has two top ten positions from Narbonne 7th open 2014 and now 6th open from Pau. He's bred through the Volkens pigeons that have flown well for both the Pearmain and Calum Edmiston.

Next we have triple International winners Geoff and Catherine Cooper timing one of their team on 618 mpm to top the West section against the wind and take 7<sup>th</sup> Open. The Coopers' team hasn't been out of the first three in the section in any of the five BICC races this season and at Pau they clocked seven crackers.

The first bird of seven clocked winning 1st section was a three year old daughter of Daybreak Junior.

Daybreak Junior has won 1st and 2nd section 5th BICC & 6<sup>th</sup> BICC in the Barcelona International race. Plus 3rd section Pau and 4th section Tarbes.

Her Dam is a half sister to Gina, the mother of Farmer George 1st International Bordeaux.

She was flown widowhood, racing back to her cock. The photo that accompanies this report was taken just after she arrived home in very good condition.

This year she has previously flown four channel races prior to Pau, Falaise, Alencon and Tours. Last year she won 30th National BICC Pau International.

Second West section and 12th National for Geoff and Catherine Cooper was a four year old chequer cock flown widowhood. His sire is a brother to Farm Stellar, being a son of the Brother to Farm Boy.

The dam of the 2nd section winner is Farm Dream, a full sister to Farmer George 1st International Bordeaux.

He had three channel races prior to Pau. His main performances over the last few years include, 30th BICC Alencon, 52<sup>nd</sup> BICC Le Mans and 68th BICC Tours.

S R & W H Knox of Tylers Hill near Canterbury come in next with a bird on 611 mpm for 7<sup>th</sup> East section 9<sup>th</sup> Open. Bill clocked a Dark Chequer Pied four year old cock whose preparation for Pau was three East

England races:- Boves 125 miles, Cannappeville 150 miles x2 and sent to Pau sitting eggs 12 days overdue. The cock has previously recorded 52nd open Pau 2014, and 11th open St Vincent 2014. His sire was 1st section 2nd open Pau BICC bred down from N Barratts "Virgo" Kirkpatrick bloodlines. His Dam being down from Solway King lines. So saturated in the old tried and tested Kirkpatricks.

Finishing off the top ten in the Open result and finishing at 8<sup>th</sup> East section is the 2014 Europa Cup winning partnership of Kevin and son Lee Buddle of Dover. The partners clocked mealy hen Saffron on 602 mpm and the great International racer "Mike" on 577 mpm for a likely 10<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Open finish. Later in the day they clocked Elsa the 2014 BICC Narbonne winner to take 47<sup>th</sup> Open as well.

Just look at the race records of these two top class long distance racers:-

"Saffron" has previously won for us:-

3rd BICC Narbonne Int 557m 2014

7th BICC Pau Int 544 miles 2014

24th BICC Agen Int 484m 2013

26th BICC Perpignan Int 579m 2013

And this season she was 1<sup>st</sup> Open EECC Boves in her first preparatory race. This Pau International performance of 10<sup>th</sup> Open earns her a BICC Merit Award given to pigeons with three top 15 Open prizes with the BICC in International races. She is also looking good in the prize list of the GDSBNFC. Well done Saffron and the Buddles!

Second bird provisionally 13th Open BICC Pau is

"Mike"

3rd BICC Marseille Int 2014 594m

4th BICC Marseille Int 2011 594m

9th BICC Marseille Int 2013 594m

13th BICC Agen Int 2014 480m

24th BICC Perpignan Int 2012 579m

37th BICC Pau Int 2011 544m

60th BICC Pau Int 2013 545m

64th BICC Pau Int 2012 545m

Both Mike and Saffron are raced on the round about system and you can read more about Lee and Kevin's pigeons and methods in an article featuring their loft on the BICC web site.

That's the leading ten pigeons covered now let's have a look at the section prize winners.

The East section winners have been covered above.

The Centre section saw Calum Edmiston do a neat one two with club Chairman Albi Deacon in at 3<sup>rd</sup> Centre section and 20th Open on 562 mpm. Albi had this to tell me about their timer:-

"Our Pau pigeon is a 2yr old chequer cock, flown natural, He had a couple of races north and then sent to Tours B.I.C.C. prior to the Pau race, he was sent sitting 8 day eggs. His dam was our 2<sup>nd</sup> section 10<sup>th</sup> open Barcelona winner last year."

The west section saw the Coopers have a field day with five pigeons on the result to take 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> section and 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup> & 42<sup>nd</sup> Open.

Paul Stevens & son ably assisted by Roly Simmons of Hallatrow near Bath come in with one on 571 mpm for 3<sup>rd</sup> section 15<sup>th</sup> Open. Paul clocked a two year old dark chequer hen flown on widowhood which has had all the BICC races this year in the build up to Pau International. She is 100% Alwyn Hill of Wing Down breeding and since Paul introduced Alwyn's pigeons in 2009 he hasn't looked back. This is what an obviously excited Paul had to say about the loft's latest performance:-

"I'm over the moon after timing his 2 year old widowhood dark hen, Bella Marie, in the Pau International to be 3<sup>rd</sup> West Section, 15<sup>th</sup> Open (provisional). The pigeon was named after my granddaughter. Bella Marie dropped in just after half past two and I was pleased to see what good condition she was in. The family of pigeons are from Alwyn Hill and this hen is out of the DV100 line when paired to E. Devlaminc (a phenomenal racer for Alwyn out of Tarbes). I would like to express my gratitude to Alwyn as since purchasing these pigeons back in 2008/9, the loft has not looked back with many good results, particularly at this sort of distance."

This is Paul's first attempt at an International and he was very pleased to have timed two pigeons on Saturday. He also sends his congratulations to the race winner John Underdown of Basildon.

Alwyn Hill is in hospital for an operation at the moment and Paul wishes him all the best for a speedy recovery.

In the North East section the winner here looks to be a 6 year old chequer cock recording 408 mpm to the Cambridge loft of Robert Govier. This one is full of top long distance winning bloodlines including a Lerwick King's Cup winner. His dam has 5 x 1sts in races on the north road from Scotland so he is certainly bred for the job in hand. He was at Pau International in 2014 and homed on the Monday in time to take a top section prize but as Robert was new to south road International racing he failed to time him in! This year he was sent to Pau feeding a big youngster and sitting another round of eggs.

At the time of writing this report there are no further pigeons timed into the north east section and none in either the north central or north west sections. If any are clocked after this report goes to print then I will cover those pigeons in my next report.

There were some outstanding team performances achieved in this trying race with the Coopers as outlined above timing 7 pigeons on the result. Calum Edmiston yet again achieved the almost impossible with his small team of long distance racers with 4 pigeons on the result at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 51<sup>st</sup> & 52<sup>nd</sup> Open.

Geoff and Clayton Preece got four well up at 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 39<sup>th</sup> Open with the Buddles clocking three of their six bird entry on the result at 10<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 47<sup>th</sup> Open.

Well that's the first of the Internationals over with. My thanks go to all those fanciers who contacted me with details of their pigeons as this has certainly helped me to produce this report in record time – 2.45 pm on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June. Here's hoping that the members continue to help me give them and their pigeons the credit that they deserve.

Gareth Watkins



John & Angela Underdown with 1st BICC Pau International





Calum Edmiston 2nd Open Pau International BICC 2015  
plus 2nd, 4th & 7th Open BICC Agen International 2013, 11th Open Pau International  
& 5th Open St Vincent International 2014



Alan Turner with trophies won in BICC in 2009. Alan was 3rd Open BICC Pau International 2015



R & N Steptoe 4th Open BICC Pau International 2015 plus 9th Open BICC Perpignan in 2013  
& 1st east section 6th Open Agen International 2014



Clayton Preece with the partners' timer in the Pau International



Dicky, Steve and young Charlie Pearmain 6th Open BICC Pau International



Geoff & Catherine Cooper 1st west section 7th Open BICC Pau International



Bill Knox 9th Open BICC Pau International with Alan Turner 3rd Open Pau



Lee & Kevin Buddle 10th Open BICC Pau International 2015 and 2014 Europa Cup winners





Roly Simmons, Paul & Scott Stevens 3rd west section 15th Open BICC Pau



Robert Govier 1st NE section BICC Pau International