

## BICC AGEN INTERNATIONAL RACE REPORT.

### ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL WIN TO CELEBRATE

BOB AND ANTHONY BESANT 1<sup>st</sup> OPEN from 10,510 birds.

The second race in the BICC International race calendar took place from the French town of Agen on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June when 10,510 pigeons from many of the best lofts in the UK and Europe were liberated at 6am GMT. The UK contingent for this race was a MASSIVE 1,000 pigeons entered by 189 fanciers. This entry is an incredible 90% more than the corresponding race in 2014 proving yet again, that the BICC and its allure of sprint/middle, long and extreme distance racing is rapidly attracting more and more aspiring fanciers to test themselves and their pigeons against the best fanciers in the UK and mainland Europe.

The Agen race point is situated approximately 80 miles inland to the south east of the coastal town of Bordeaux which is situated on France's western coastline on the Bay of Biscay. Agen and St Vincent are the most westerly of the International race points and, should in theory, afford the British contingent the best chance of an International race win.

With a fairly brisk south, south westerly wind behind them it was anticipated that the pigeons would record good velocities and so they did. First birds were being recoded in North West France near Lens and Lille from 16.19 onwards and these timings continued along the French – Belgian border with pigeons being timed at regular intervals, as far north in Belgium as Ghent and Antwerp.

Hopes were high therefore that some of the British contingent, which made up almost 10% of the total International convoy, would make it across the English Channel in good time. This they certainly did!!

From studying the early results I would speculate that a small group of British pigeons broke from the main drag heading into Northern France and Belgium around the Le Mans area. My guess is that they then made their way on a direct line due north passing over Alencon and hitting the French coast around Le Havre and in the process flying over not a centimetre of "dead ground" in their flight home. Racing on this line they would have hit the English coastline around the Brighton area after covering over 90 miles of sea.

One of this group then surged on into southern England racing every inch of the way to its home loft at New Malden in Surrey in the south western suburbs of London. This one pigeon was bred and raced by the partnership of Bob Besant & son Anthony to win 1<sup>st</sup> Open BICC and 1<sup>st</sup> Open International!!! The Besants join the elite group of fanciers – now numbering TEN who have taken up the challenge of International racing and triumphed. Well done all, and congratulations on behalf of the BICC membership to Bob and Anthony Besant on their great International win.

Right, what of the partnership and the winning pigeon?

The winning pigeon is a 2 year old dark chequer cock flying on widowhood, having already won prizes in Combine and National including 41<sup>st</sup> Centre Section, 92<sup>nd</sup> Open BICC National Poitiers just 2 weeks ago. His bloodlines are full of long distance National winners including "Morning Glory" 2 x 2<sup>nd</sup> National Pau and "Tuff Nutt" of Brian Denney winner of 5<sup>th</sup> National Pau at 738 miles. The dam of the winner was bred by Keith Mott and is from a full brother of "Dark Charm" and "Dark Dancer" of Brian Denney – both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Open Tarbes National 748 miles.

The cock returned in excellent condition, he had not moulted a flight. He was paired in February and raised a single youngster completing the rearing on his own for the last 7 days. In the week leading up to basketting for Agen he had been really annoying when exercising as he refused to come in unless he was the very last pigeon. The team are fed to appetite throughout the season on a combination of Versele Laga Superstar plus with additional oil seeds as and when required.

He certainly didn't muck about on the day that mattered and finished the job off in fine style. Congratulations Bob and Anthony on a terrific performance. See you in Bournemouth! I hope to write an in depth article on the partners in the coming months.

The Dagenham partnership of Jack Harris and daughter come in next at 1<sup>st</sup> East section 2<sup>nd</sup> Open. Jack is a dedicated supporter of the BICC and is particularly successful when competing with the BICC on the International stage. In the Agen International the Harris pigeon also takes 21<sup>st</sup> Open International vel 1289 mpm. Their first in the clock is a blue cock which is full of top long distance winning bloodlines. I'll let Jackie tell you how his race unfolded:-

"I have got to thank the wife who was washing up at the time 'cause I was watching the tele'. She said "you got any pigeons out?" No I said. "Well there's one just dropped on the landing board".

The pigeon I have called OSCAR after the great grand son. He had two 100 miles tosses with the local club , then he went to Pithiviers with the Essex & Kent Amalgamation where he was 3rd Sect Essex 12th Open Amalgamation. Then he had Le Mans, Tours, Poitiers, His Sire is half brother to 105th Open Tours,81st Open Bergerac,68th Open Tarbes, 2nd Open Perpignan. He was bred out of a grand daughter of RED & CRACK Perpignan when paired to a pigeon I got from J Siebum of Holland. His Dam is Half sister to 4th Pau, 39th Open Bergerac, 8th & 12th Open Clermont, 24th Open St Vincent, 60th Open Agen .She was bred out of a grandson of Turban & grand daughter of Natrix. So OSCAR is full of J BISS blood lines. The pigeons are raced unpaired fed on Gerry Plus and super widowhood. I do not use any medication as I believe in natural immunity. You have to laugh when you win & laugh when you don't time in."

Well done Jack and hard luck on coming so close but beaten by a pigeon that beat the rest of Europe as well!

Mark Gilbert sent a big team to this race and this resulted in him recording a big team performance with 3<sup>rd</sup>,4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>,19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Open plus a shed load of follow up timers. The first three Gilbert timers recorded velocities of 1282,1282 and 1275 mpm to take 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>,&31<sup>st</sup> Open International. I'm told that up until 12 noon on the second day Mark had clocked a total of 35 pigeons in this 500 mile International race. The first three pigeons were all grandchildren of Southfield Supreme Mark's 2004 Dax international winner beating more than 17,000 pigeons in the process. Since being retired to stock Supreme is responsible for scores of winners throughout the UK.

The first pigeon's sire was a son of Supreme when paired to the Verkerk Hen, the dam was a daughter of George. George in turn is the sire of Brockamp's Euro Diamond and Minstral.

The second pigeon which was 5<sup>th</sup> International yearlings 4,500 birds was from the same father as the first and the mother was from Darkie Mark's double National winner when paired to a daughter of Starlight of Etienne Mierlaen.

The third pigeon's sire is a double grandson of George, the father of Euro Diamond and Minstral of Brockamp when mated to a daughter of Supreme.

The Chadwell St Mary partnership of D Wilton & son come in next at 2<sup>nd</sup> East section 6<sup>th</sup> Open 32<sup>nd</sup> Open International vel 1275 mpm. The pigeon timed is a two year old Brockamp cock raced on the widowhood system. He is bred from a pair of stock birds obtained from the Jutla Brothers of East London. The sire is a grandson of Brockamp's Super Bordeaux 1st International Bordeaux and the dam is a granddaughter of Brockamp's Perpignan 06 1st international Perpignan. In fact the dam is nest mate to the mother of David Coward Talbot's Lucia 1st NFC young bird 2013. The cock has been to every BICC race so far this season and was sent to Poitiers in preparation for the Agen International. He may now be prepared for the NFC Tarbes depending on how he is nearer the time of basketting.

At 3<sup>rd</sup> East section 7<sup>th</sup> Open 42<sup>nd</sup> Open International we have a bird doing 1263 mpm to the Southminster ,Essex loft of the ever present Micky Watts. Here's what Micky had to tell me about his latest top class performance:-

"First of all I would like to congratulate Bob Besant & Son on winning 1st BICC& 1st International, great flying and well done to all concerned.

Here are the breeding details for my first pigeon on the clock to win 3rd ES Section, 7th Open BICC National Agen. He was a two year old cock who was sitting 12 day old eggs. He was bred by M & D. Evans and is a full brother to two 1st MNFC Yearling Section winners in 2014 for Mark Evans's partnership loft D& J. Hawkins & Evans.

The father is a pigeon called "Ice Man" a direct son from Myrtle Lofts "Champion Shadow" when paired to "Top Investment" (Wittenbuik bloodlines) Shadow's offspring include 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, 1st Nat. Tours 4,171 birds etc.

The mother is a pigeon called "Lucky International" She is a direct daughter from "National Lucky Ace" sire of 1st National Argenton 25,586 birds (Fastest velocity from a total liberation of 36,816 birds) when paired to "Marlon" dam to 1st International Limoges 4,885 birds and fastest velocity from a total liberation of 35,000 plus birds."

Constantin Cornea timed one of his entries to take 5<sup>th</sup> Centre section 8<sup>th</sup> Open & 59<sup>th</sup> Open Yearling International vel 1215 mpm. This is a yearling roundabout cock of Van de Wegen bloodlines that has flown the club programme through to 300 miles before basketting for Agen. I hope your wife and new baby are doing well Constantin.

Mark Bull fresh from his pigeon's great performance of 1<sup>st</sup> section 3<sup>rd</sup> Open in the BBC Palamos race, comes up trumps once again with one on the clock to take 4<sup>th</sup> East section and 9<sup>th</sup> Open vel 1207 mpm. This is what Mark had to tell me about his latest top class performance :-

"I timed a 3 year old widowhood cock. A Grandson of my Foundation cock Die Hard the Sire of Legacy 1st NFC Tarbes and King's Cup. The cock is the result of an experimental crossing of putting my sprint and distance birds together. The Sire had won 7th Open BICC Poitiers and the Dam 7th LSECC Tarbes. I think this being a fast race suited him although he did score in last years very tough Tarbes Grand National.

The nest mate to this pigeon has won 1st East Section BICC Tours.

My club mate Micky Sontag was here collecting my birds for the local club race and spotted him arrive. I'm not sure who was more excited Micky or me!!" Well done on another excellent performance Mark

John Hemmings , the winner of 1<sup>st</sup> Open BICC Le Mans in 2014 comes in with a bird on 1196 mpm to take 5<sup>th</sup> East section and finish off the top ten at 10<sup>th</sup> Open. John clocked a Soontjen hen bred from stock loaned to John by local ace John Buckfield. The hen has had a few preparatory races with the EECC and has been John's first bird on each occasion. She was sent to Agen sitting 14 day eggs.

The partnership of Dave Watson & son Daniel also enjoyed a good race here with a number of pigeons on the result and the first two of these take 11<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> Open vel 1165 & 1106 mpm. This is what Dave Watson had to say about his Agen timers:-

"Our first pigeon has been to Agen 3 times now. Last year he came 54th open 18th centre sec. Both pigeons are on their 6th channel race of the season. We fly on the widowhood system with no tricks just simple. The origins of both pigeons are Krauths from my late cousin Malcolm Watson from Truro and my late cousin John Dickerson from Charlton Mackerel"

Next at 12<sup>th</sup> Open vel 1162 we have one of the club's founder members and multiple BICC National winner, plus 1<sup>st</sup> Open NFC and King's Cup winner, none other than Dave Delea of Rainham in Essex. Dave clocked a two year old black cock from his old family of distance pigeons originating with the old Champion Major bloodlines. Sent sitting three day old eggs he has had Alencon and Poitiers with the BICC plus a few trainers from the south coast in the build up to Agen.

Dean Childs of Basildon clocked one of his entries on 1161 mpm for 13<sup>th</sup> Open. This is a yearling red cock on round about which has flown the BICC Channel programme this season. Sire is a Mark Gilbert Deweerdt whilst the dam is a daughter of Mike Mitchell's Champion long distance racer "The Dutch Hen".

Mark Gilbert as mentioned earlier than got two more on the result at 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> Open vel 1121 & 1112 mpm followed by the second of the Watson partnership's pigeons at 16<sup>th</sup> Open.

Given the strong westerly wind that prevailed in Wales and the West country, the next pigeon at 1<sup>st</sup> west section and 17<sup>th</sup> Open vel 1094 mpm, to the Bridgewater loft of Daniel Hocking deserves a special round of applause. Daniel clocked a two year old chequer hen flown on the roundabout system. This one is of Bruggeman brothers bloodlines through stock loaned to Daniel by his good friend Sheldon Horn. She was allowed in with her mate on the night before basketting for Agen and this certainly seems to have done the trick. She was at Poitiers a couple of weeks prior to Agen where she homed to take 4<sup>th</sup> section BICC. As with all the racing hens she has been exercised twice daily for an hour on each occasion and fed in ad lib on Gem mixes. Her preparatory races have been undertaken with the Devon, Cornwall and West Somerset Continental FC. The section winner has now been named "Jasper's Lady" after Daniel's young son who seems to be a lucky mascot as he has been in the garden with Daniel when the hen has come to win prizes in the last two BICC races.

Mr & Mrs Connolly of Marden then come in with one on 1081 mpm for 18<sup>th</sup> Open followed by Mark Gilbert's next two arrivals at 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Open vel 1078 & 1073 mpm. The Connollys timed a two year old Dark Chequer cock "Sonny Boy" which was unraced as a baby and yearling, but trained to 50 miles. He's had a couple of races this year with Maidstone club then into Agen sitting two day old eggs. He is bred from a daughter of Euro Diamond when paired to a son of Legend, winner of 1st international Dax 19,000 pigeons for Brian Sheppard. The partners also clocked a second bird that looks to be 123<sup>rd</sup> Open BICC. This is another two year old but this time an unpaired hen, which was unraced as a young bird and bred from a Hugo Batenberg Hen when paired to a son of Legend.

The leaders in both the Centre and East sections have been covered above so I'll move on to the other prize winners in the various sections starting with the West section where Daniel Hocking's pigeon put up an outstanding performance given the wind and the drag. In second west section is a real trooper of a pigeon racing deep into the Welsh Valleys against the wind. This one to the Abertillery loft of Mark Sparey, just look at this diehard's list of prizes:-

Now named Rhiw Parc Tomos he is a grandson of Mark Gilbert's Southfield Supreme:

WSRNFC:

2011: As a yearling being runner up for the RPRA middle distance award.

52nd Open 37th Section Messac

48th Open 26th National Carentan

14th open 8th section Cholet

6th open 2nd section Niort

Returned from Bergerac injured by peregrine hence his split wattle.

2012:

63rd open 45th section Carentan

85th open 44th section Tours, returning once again injured by peregrine, finishing the season for him.

2013:

BICC

164th open 55st section Tours

24th open 16th section Poitiers

15th open 3rd section Agen

2014:

NFC

126th open 17th section Tarbes.

2015 BICC

26th open 2nd section Agen.

Twice winning the GGDC Agen race. A pretty handy tool to have in your locker! There are countless club and federation results for this pigeon.

Mark has asked me to congratulate Besant and Son on their fantastic performance winning the Agen International.

Next up in the west section at 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Section is a trio of birds to Graham Clift. This is what Graham had to tell me about his first in the clock:-

"He has been a very consistent winning positions from middle distance races in the BBC, BICC & CSCFC but until now has not been tested over 500 miles. His sire is a Van Breeman cross being a grandson of Perrott Nadia 1st Open NFC Sartilly and "Nuts" 4th Open NFC Saintes for Matt Rakes. His dam was purchased from the clearance sale for Ron Davis of Bristol she was 7th Open BBC Sennen Cove.

He has previously won 8th Section, 19th Open BBC Messac, 2nd West Section Le Mans [beaten by his loft mate], 44th Open CSCFC Carentan 2,971 birds and now provisionally 3rd Section, 30th Open BICC Agen 553 miles. His nestmate was 1st Section 3rd Open BBC Messac but unfortunately was killed by a hawk a week after winning. I sent 6 birds to the race and clocked two more the next morning, both Deweerdt's the second pigeon being from a son of Geoff & Catherine Cooper's "George" when paired to a daughter of Brian Denney's "Tuff Nut".

Next we have the prize winners in the North Central section where John Black of Hitchin clocked one to take 1<sup>st</sup> section 75<sup>th</sup> Open on the provisional result. This is John's information on his timer:-

"My bird that won 1st NC section from Agen was a 2year old B/CH Hen. Sire is a grandson of Emiel on one side and Culmer Channel Queen on the other.

Dam was bred by Terry Robinson of Goffs Oak Hertfordshire sire a son of the Motivator X G/daughter of Bryan Denny's Tuff Nut.

My hen had two inland races with the Baldock pigeon club, one Carentan with the UBI Combine, Tours with the BICC where she was my 3rd bird then into Agen. She was in good condition when she returned and if all goes well her next race will be Tarbes.

Congratulations to Bob Besant & Son on winning the International and to all the section winners.

I would also like to thank Paul Loom for taking my birds to the marking station."

In second spot in the section is Gavin Duggan's timer. Gavin clocked three pigeons to take 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> section 78<sup>th</sup>, 104<sup>th</sup> & 149<sup>th</sup> Open.

The first in the clock taking 78th National 2NC section is a blue chequer cock of Jan Polder bloodlines from a brother and sister to (Victoria) who was 1st&7th National St Vincent 620 miles. The cock had two channel races with the BICC before Agen and was sent sitting due to hatch on the day of liberation.

Mr & Mrs Russell Bradford fresh from their section winning performance in the BICC Tours National, come in next with two birds for 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> section 95<sup>th</sup> & 143<sup>rd</sup> Open. Here's what Russell had to say about the race:-

“ My 3rd section timer from the Agen International that looks like being 96th, Open, also flew Agen in 2013 and was also 96th, Open, albeit with a huge increase in the BICC birdage this year. He is a Robert Ben pigeon with the G/Dam being a full sister to Super Ben (5 times Barcelona) and was sent calling his hen to nest. I believe the heat in France on the day of release and a further very warm second day in the UK – or at least here in the East Midlands - took its toll on pigeons flying 550 miles and upwards, but am pleased to have a second pigeon – a Deweerdt hen also on the score sheet with a 5th, section. These two pigeons may well be introduced to one another come next year's breeding program.”

The winner in the North East section was clocked at the Lowestoft loft of Philip Harrod to take 75<sup>th</sup> Open. Unfortunately, after eventually speaking with Philip I have not received the details on his pigeon that he promised to email me – probably lost in the ether.

D Osborne & son come in with one for 2<sup>nd</sup> section 81<sup>st</sup> Open. The sire of the partners' 1st arrival which is a 2 year old hen on roundabout is of Wal Zootjen President lines and the dam is Jos Thone via their good friend Ian Stafford. She in turn is a half sister to the Osbornes' BICC Tours section winner this year. The second arrival is also a 2 year old roundabout hen, sire being a half brother to The President, ( Joop Koch) and the dam is the sire's daughter which has won previously from Falaise. Agen saw the partners clocking for the first time from a BICC International race and they're pretty pleased with both pigeons.

Finally at 3<sup>rd</sup> section 89<sup>th</sup> Open we find Norwich fancier John Gannon timing his entry to take 3<sup>rd</sup> section 89<sup>th</sup> Open. This is a two year old widowhood cock which has had three earlier channel races with the BICC in 2015 before being set up for Agen. His sire is something of a long distance phenomenon as in his racing career he was 2 x 2<sup>nd</sup> section BICC Barcelona; 2<sup>nd</sup> section BICC Perpignan and 3<sup>rd</sup> section Pau!!!! Bloodlines being George Burgess x A & T Deacon. The dam of the Agen cock is a Jan Aarden.

There you have it then a very successful race which saw another British pigeon, entered by a BICC member, triumph over the whole of Europe in an International race. Not only did Bob and Anthony Besant's pigeon succeed - the race saw five British pigeons feature in the first 42 of the Open International result at 1<sup>st</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup> & 42<sup>nd</sup> Open against a field of 10,510 pigeons. In addition Mark Gilbert's yearling was placed 5<sup>th</sup> Open in the yearling category along with Constantin Cornea's yearling at 59<sup>th</sup> Open in the same category. Congratulations to one and all on an awe inspiring feat of long distance pigeon racing, proving yet again, that with a little “nudge” in their favour, the British fanciers and their pigeons are more than a match for the best in continental Europe.

Gareth Watkins



Bob-&-Anthony-Besant 1st Open BICC 1st Open International Agen

*"Noble Dream"*

**GB13N85881**

**1st Open International Agen 10510b  
1st Sec C 1st Open British International  
Championship Club Agen 2015  
Raced by Bob Besant & Son, Worcester Park**



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1st Open BICC 1st Open Agen International for Bob and Anthony Besant



Jack Harris with his 2nd Open BICC 23rd Open International Agen timer. I like the shorts Jack!



Mark-Gilbert Multiple National and International winner

enjoyed a good race in the BICC Agen International 2015



D Wilton & son 6th Open BICC 32nd Open International Agen



Micky Watts 7th Open Agen, 3rd Open BICC Alencon and 1st Open BICC Tours, 0th Open Poitiers 2015



Mark and Hana Bulled 4th section 9th Open BICC Agen & 4th section 4th Open BICC Tours in 2015



John-Hemmings 1st Open BICC Le Mans 2014 & 10th Open BICC Agen International 2015



Russell Bradford 3rd North Central section Agen



Daniel Hocking with son Jasper. Daniel was 1st West section 17th Open BICC Agen





Mr & Mrs Connolly 18th Open BICC Agen International



Gavin Duggan 2nd, 4th, 6th & 7th North Central section Agen



Graham Clift 3rd, 5th & 6th west section BICC Agen International



John Black 1st North Central section Agen



Lee & Doug Osborne 2nd section Agen



Philip Harrod 1st North East sect BICC Agen