



BICC FALAISE OLD BIRDS 2016

Well here we are again at the start of another season's Channel racing with the BICC. The weather in the week leading up to our initial race was far from ideal with strong northerly winds and showers, some of them of snow, making for pretty chilly conditions for our feathered friends.

However, a good proportion of members were prepared to trust in the wisdom, knowledge and experience of our excellent race advisory and conveying team to the extent that they entered 3,774 birds for this short/middle distance channel race. Amongst these fanciers were a number of diehards from the North East namely John Rumney, Brian Hicks and Neville Daley who were up before the sun and on their way to Northampton, a 450 mile round trip, to have their pigeons marked. There will be further reference to these intrepid fanciers and their hardy pigeons later in this report.

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

So much for the history of Falaise itself, what of the 2016 BICC race, here is the race advisory team's initial report on the liberation.

The entry of 3,774 BICC National pigeons were liberated at 10- am today (Sat.30/04/16) from Falaise. Winds are light North West and birds cleared well into partial blue skies and sunshine.

**John Tyerman
Mark Gilbert
(Race Advisors)**

And here's the race advisory team's complete report:-

Race Advisor's Report

For our first race of the season, and despite the cold weather BICC members sent some 3700 birds to Falaise National. As always it takes time to get round the numerous marking stations and it was after 8 pm when both transporters arrived at Horndean, which is the last pick-up point before the ferry. Paul O'Leary and the Horndean team did a superb job on a very cold night, loading and unloading both transporters, so our thanks to them all. They left Horndean around 9pm and were soon on board the overnight ferry from Portsmouth to Caen. Early on Friday I spoke to our Chief Convoyer Trevor Cracknell who confirmed safe arrival at Falaise. I had also spoken with our Weather Advisor, Steve Appleby who was able to confirm that the adverse weather front over the Falaise area was likely to clear in time for the Saturday race.

Early on Saturday I again spoke to Steve and Trevor who both confirmed rain at Falaise, but this was predicted to move away in time for a later liberation. The channel was clear with light north westerly winds and the birds were liberated at 10 am and cleared well. It was pleasing to see birds being clocked all over the country and an outstanding performance by John Rumney who timed at 9pm flying over 416 miles on the day.

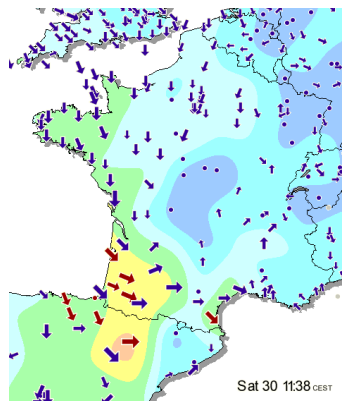
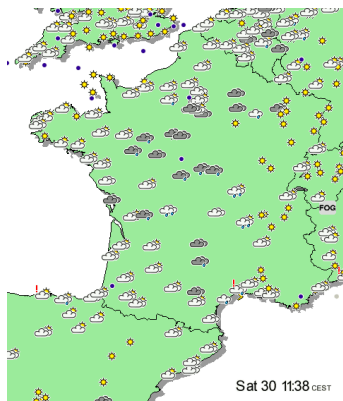
John Tyerman and Mark Gilbert (Race Advisors)

[On behalf of all the members, I would like to thank John in particular for his dedication to the BICC cause, which has been above and beyond the call of duty. Many thanks John.]

I include here Weatherman Steve Appleby's comprehensive weather analysis for the day of the race:-

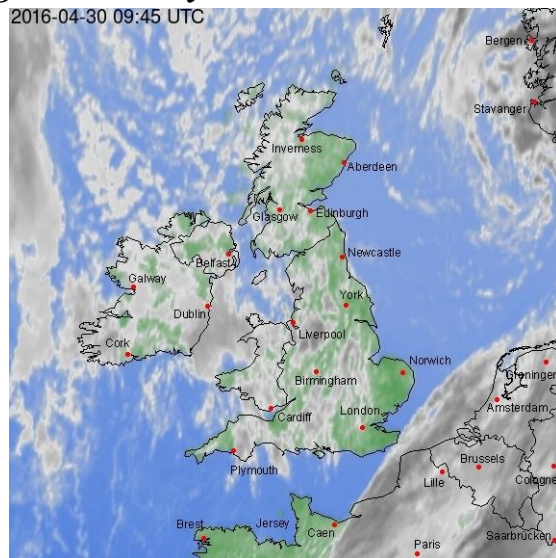
Weather Report

At first light rain and heavy cloud affected the Falaise area delaying liberation of the BICC convoy. The front responsible for the poor weather conditions slowly moved away south eastwards clearing the flight path. As predicted at about 09:30 hours the dull overcast sky



WIND & WEATHER FORECAST FOR 7.00AM RACE DAY

started to break up providing a liberation sky. I informed John Tyerman of this development which resulted in a liberation at 10:00 hours. The channel was clear with good visibility. Wind direction over the open sea was NNW averaging speeds of 15 mph as recorded by the metrological buoy moored central channel. Early morning most of England was under blue skies and broken cloud but as the day progressed heavy showers did develop mainly over northern regions and the Midlands. The northerly element in the wind resulted in a steady race producing working velocities.



Steve Appleby. Weather advisor.

Before continuing with this report I should emphasise once again that the report is based on fanciers' first bird verifications. If some of these have multiple timers then the final result might well differ considerably.

So the game was afoot and with the light northerly airstream in front of it, the convoy was expected to make steady progress across the English Channel and into southern England.

What stands out when reading the provisional result is the fact that three section winners i.e. Centre, East and West all feature well up on the Open result. This seems to indicate that there was not a lot of west in the wind but probably more a north, north westerly breeze as forecast by Steve Appleby, keeping the birds on a truer line.

The birds made good progress into the breeze and the winning pigeon recorded 1219 ypm to the Winkfield, Windsor loft of one of Britain's "All time great" fanciers – none other than Mark Gilbert. In fact he had three birds drop together to probably take the first three in the section and Open result.

This is what Mark had to tell me about his latest super team performance:-

"As mentioned, I had three birds drop together and they will in all probability take the first three positions in the race.

The winner, won the central section of the BICC last year from

**BRITISH INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP CLUB
FALAISE 30-4-15 3774b**



Alencon with over 2,000 birds in the section. The third bird is also a cock and has been 15th and 18th open NFC plus many more top performances.

This year has started very well and in my first three inland races I have topped the BBO federation with between 2,400 to 2,800 birds.

All birds have been sent on roundabout and I really looking forward to this years International races."

I give you here brief details of the breeding of the first three birds for Mark.

First we have a chequer cock whose sire is half brother to birds to win 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 7th & 12th Open NFC Tarbes. He is also grand son of a Perpignan National winner.

The dam of the Falaise winner is from a Koopman hen containing the bloodlines of Kleine Gerard and Elsie.

Mark's second in the clock, which looks good enough for 2nd Open, is a blue hen bred from a son of Etienne Meirlaen's Golden Vleugel. The 2nd Open winner's dam is a winner of 3rd International Pau 2013 for

Mark plus 39th Open Perpignan and 72nd Open NFC Tarbes. She is of Smaraagd 2 x Deweerdt bloodlines.

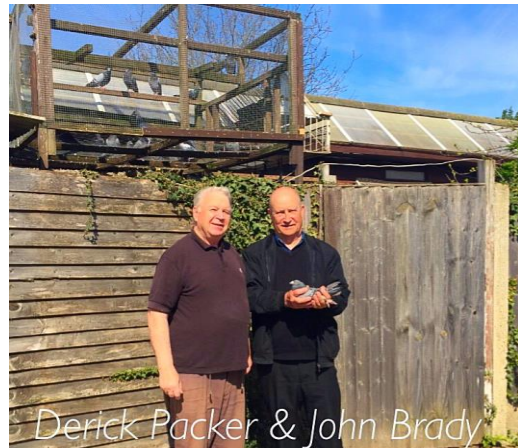
Finally we come to the bird which looks to be 3rd Open Falaise and this cock is bred from a Gaby Vandenabeele sire, of Blacky, Kolonel and Bonte Florke lines, when mated to another of Mark's top racing hens- Southfield Karen , a winner of 3rd International hens Agen and 4th Open International overall against 22,000 pigeons. Karen in turn contains Drum and Gerrie lines plus the ever reliable Southfield Supreme bloodlines.

If ever there was ample evidence that "blood will tell" then its here in the breeding of these three roundabout pigeons of Mark Gilbert.

Congratulations Mark on yet another superb performance and thanks to Chris Sutton for providing the excellent photo montage of Mark and the winning pigeons that accompany this report.

The winning pigeon in the East section racing to the Grays, Essex loft of Packer & Clarke, recorded 1204 ypm to finish at 2nd Open on the provisional result but may well move down a few places due to the Gilbert onslaught.

The partners' timer was a gift pigeon bred by good friends and top class fanciers J & J Brady. She is a two year old round about hen having only the second race of her life, having been trained only as a young bird and a yearling. Her first outing in the race basket was the week previous from Poole. She is bred from a Frank Tasker cock containing the bloodlines of Super



Blue and Nice Belle when mated to a hen of Jos Thone bloodlines that is the grand daughter of the Brady's top breeding hen responsible for one National winner and three 2nd Open National winners. Bred in the purple then!

In third Open with a pigeon recording 1201 ypm, is yet another truly world class partnership and winners yet again of the West section – Geoff and Catherine Cooper of Peasedown St John in the West Country. The partners had five birds drop together that may well finish at 1 to 5 in the section. The following is Catherine Cooper's take on the race:-

"Hi Gareth,

We were waiting in rain, thunder and hailstones, sheltering in the doorway of the loft when all of a sudden a group of five pigeons appeared diving for the loft, all clocked within 14 seconds.



We were amazed they kept flying as it was such bad weather for the last half an hour at the home end. We had no complaints about the race though as we had excellent returns.

The first clocked was a four year old hen, called Star Titch, she was flown widowhood. She has raced well for us, winning prizes from Pau and St Vincent last year. She is a full sister to Euro Titch 4th National Carentan

Her sire is EuroStar who has been a great breeder for us, he is a son of Euro Diamond of HP Brockamp.

Star Titch's dam is Titch 21 who has a very impressive racing and breeding record being the dam of Fleur 1st National section Sartilly, Euro Titch 4th National Carentan. She is from Titch who is the grandsire of George 1st National Tarbes, so Star Titch has all our top bloodlines in her pedigree.



The second bird to run over the pad was a two year old daughter of George one of the best breeders we have ever owned and Carla Page who won 16th International Pau for us. This hen will be second section for us.

Third into the loft and probably third section was another hen, bred from our super pair Farmer George 1st International Bordeaux and Wollongong 1st International Pau. The number of top pigeons bred by Farmer George is catching up to those bred by George.

We had two more birds, both cocks which may well finish at fourth and fifth section, the fourth was from Georgson a son of George and Gina, the dam of Wollongong.

The fifth is a grandson of Farmer George and EuroStar.

Even though the birds were wet when they returned they were still in a good condition, as the rest of the birds were when they arrived.

We would like to say a big "well done and thank you" to Clive and Jill Rogers for taking on the marking station, it was running very smoothly

when we were there and all the birds were marked quickly and efficiently.

Congratulations to Mark Gilbert for another good race.”

Next we come to the Feltham partnership of Tidbury & Garrett who clocked on 1200 ypm to finish at 2nd centre section 4th Open on the provisional result. Here, belatedly, but just in time for publication is Dean’s take on the race:-

“I’d like to start by thanking all the people who work hard behind the scenes at the BICC and the liberator for a nice race. The pigeon we got is a yearling chequer cock raced on the roundabout system. He raced 2 guernseys as a baby and came well and has been very consistent in the first few races in the club.

He’s a Soontjen x Wildermeerch the mother coming from the Mc Court Brothers, Mark and Ger from Ireland with the father coming from my good friends Shawn and Tony Mc Donagh of the Midlands.

Both these lofts have been at the top off their game for years, so I would like to thank both parties for supplying me good pigeons. When the pigeon homed he was in great condition a lot off credit must be given to my partner Danny Levett as if it wasn't for Danny I wouldn't be able to fly my birds through family and work commitment so thanks Dan. Also, I would like to thank everyone for the phone calls and messages – thank you all”.



Clive Turner of Capel in Surrey clocked on 1198 ypm to finish at 3rd Centre section and 5th Open. Clive’s timer is a three year old Busschaert cock flown on the round about system and having only his second race of the 2016 campaign.



Paul Murrell of Poole in Dorset, right down on the South coast, clocked his first timer on 1190 ypm for 2nd West section and 6th Open. Paul’s pigeon is a two year old chequer hen now known as "Gelf". She is a widowhood hen lightly trained and went to the Dorset Fed race last week at Littlehampton. Paul tells me that she is a small to medium sized pigeon that has been a



very consistent racer for him.

We then move up to Norfolk for the winner of the North East section which finishes at 7th Open vel 1185.8 ypm. This one was timed at the lofts of Eddy and Clayton Oxborough and is a 3 year old hen bred from their stock team.

The sire was from HG Cook & Son from Kings Lynn, from one of his best breeding cocks, a Busschaert, and the dam was from Graham Gilchrist & Brennan from Tyne and Wear from a daughter off Jimmy's Boy, 1st Up North Combine Folkestone.



The hen wasn't raced or trained last year, but the partners decided to train her this year and gave her two inland races from 100 miles in preparation for BICC Falaise. Eddy and Clayton would also like to thank Craig, Clayton's brother for all the training.

The Fareham partnership of R & R Clarke come in at 4th Centre section 8th Open with a bird recording 1185.3 ypm. This is what Rob had to tell me:-

"Firstly I would like to thank the BICC for organising and running a very good race 11 sent 11 home. Also a big thanks to the marking committee Horndean. The bird we clocked is a two year old. On his sire's side is 100% Leo Van Rijn direct off Jonge Jannie paired to Royal Lady 541. On the dam's side of the pedigree we have 100% Brian and Karen Hawes Leo Van Rijn Dark Knight 100% Leo Van Rijn paired to South Dakota a double Combine winner of 50% Soontjen and 50% Leo Van Rijn. He was competing on only his second week on widowhood. The birds racing feed is made up from 3 mixtures. Versele Laga Gerry +, Gem Cowood mix and Vanrobaeys 182 mixed by me. I would like to thank Pete Johnson of Park View Lofts, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead for introducing me to the Leo Van Rijn pigeons."



Mr & Mrs Ward of Marston take 5th Centre section and 9th Open with their first in the clock doing 1182 ypm. Their timer is a 3 year old Van Reet cock flown on widowhood. Here's a little about Mr Ward's time in the sport as related to Cosmin Talas:-

“Mr Ward is flying on his own and has been a pigeon fancier as long as he can remember. He races widowhood with around 24 cocks and breeds about 60 young birds every year.



The cocks are fed widowhood mixture and are broken down at the beginning of the week. The cock which was 5th section 9th Open BICC Falaise is a 3y old Van Reet cock bred from a very good stock hen, a breeder of many winners. He is half brother to a hen which won 1st and 2nd Fed in 2 weeks. The cock is a very consistent pigeon and seems to be special over the water. Last year he won 3 x 1sts in the club plus 3rd Fed from Fougères 1,408 birds. This year he had two races with the club and then the BICC. Mr Ward went to feed the young birds and when he came out of the young bird section the pigeon was already in the loft. His very good friend Gilbert, was supposed to keep a eye on the loft but he didn't see the pigeon come. As a result he has now been sacked for not doing his job properly!!”

Watford “ace” fancier Terry Haley comes in next at 6th Centre section 10th Open with a two year old blue cock recording 1181.5 ypm. Terry has been winning races on the north road for more years than I care to remember and is yet another super fancier who has now decided to have a go at south road National racing as well. Here’s what Terry had to tell me about his timer:-

“The pigeon is called Harry (after our grandson). This cock bird is bred down from Kerry Mellonby's good chequer w/f hen that has won me 9 first prizes for me flying both north and south. He was sent driving his hen to nest and he has had previous club wins.

I topped the Inter Counties Fed 2 weeks ago against 2,800 pigeons and have been highest prize winner in the Boxmoor HS for the last two seasons winning averages in the Inter Counties Fed 2014 & 2015.

The six birds I sent all arrived in good time and good condition.” Right that’s the top ten in the Open result dealt with. Let’s now do a trawl around the sections to highlight the leading pigeons in each of these.



The Centre and west section leaders have been featured in the top ten in the Open so we'll move on to the leading pigeons in the west section next. Geoff and Catherine Cooper's timers have been dealt with earlier as has Paul Murrell's R/U in the west section so I'll move on to Peter Atherton's hen that takes 3rd west section on the provisional result. She is a three year old Janssen hen that topped the West section of the BICC in the 2015 Poitiers race. She has had just one preparatory race this year, an 83 mile dash from Poole the week prior to Falaise. Raced as a widowhood hen, she was allowed to spend the Wednesday night with her mate prior to basketting on Thursday morning.

Next we come to the winner in the North Central section and this one is a two year old blue cock bird flown on the natural system and sent to Falaise sitting four day old eggs. He was clocked on the edge of darkness at 9 pm, having covered the 416 miles to his home loft, way up in the North East of England, after eleven hours of relentless slogging to record a velocity of 1135.8 ypm and finish provisionally at 32nd Open. The proud owner is none other than John Rumney and the equally proud breeder is Paul Chambers who gifted the bird to John.



Well done both, a truly outstanding performance on the day. The cock, now called "Chambers" after his breeder, was prepared for his epic journey as follows. Mated on March 20th he was allowed to rear a pair of young birds before being put into serious training in preparation for the Falaise race. This included a number of private training tosses to 100 miles followed by two races, one from 160 miles and another two weeks before Falaise from 202 miles.

He was then rested in the week prior to basketting for Falaise which was only the fourth race of his life. In two of the other races with the BICC he finished at 24th section Tours and 4th section Le Mans. A full loft report on John Rumney, his pigeons and his Spartan methods can be found on



the BICC web site. Top class flying by a top class fancier, congratulations John on yet another outstanding performance at the distance. Four hundred miles plus ON THE DAY in late April takes some doing.

In the R/U spot in the North Central section is one to the Bletchley loft of Paul Stiles. Paul's timer is a two year old Vandenabeele Blue hen having her first race this year. Preparation has been a few 15 mile trainers followed by a couple at 20 miles and then straight into Falaise at 214 miles. She was sent sitting 8 – 10 day old eggs and Paul removed her mate the day before basketting to give her a bit more motivation. It certainly seems to have worked.

Third section is a two year old natural pigeon sent sitting 12 day old eggs and racing to the Upper Dean loft of Curly Barnes. The cock is a combination of bloodlines from Pieter Oberholster and Hagens brothers. My thanks to Pieter for providing the above details.

The East section winner of Packer & Clarke has already been highlighted as it finished in the R/U spot in the provisional Open result.

Taking 2nd East section and 22nd Open is one to Kenny Burt doing 1148 ypm. Kenny's timer is a three year old widowhood cock that topped the Kent Combine in 2015 from Pithiviers. He has been a terrific racer for Ken and in this race was also entered and well pooled in the Bromley club. Bloodlines are Staf Van Reet x Adrian Van de Rhee. Preparation for Falaise included four inland races with the local club.

Bryn Thomas clocked a 2 year old Busschaert widowhood cock on 1147 ypm for 3rd East section and 23rd Open. This one was bred by Bobby Brunswick and has two good National positions to his credit with the NFC in 2015.

The North West section winner which is provisionally 16th Open, can be found at the Alveley loft of Ian "Barney" Barnbrook recording 1161 ypm.

Ian's timer is a yearling widowhood cock of the old tried and tested Janssen bloodlines. Falaise was his first channel race of 2016 and he had raced four times from inland race points as far as Frome in the build up to Falaise. The cock



had also taken 76th Open Coutences with the BBC as a young bird in 2015.

Alan Wicker comes in at 2nd section with a bird on 1092 ypm.

Unfortunately, despite several attempts I was unable to contact Alan for details of his pigeon.

The Wicker timer was closely followed by one to the ever present Tewkesbury partnership of Booth & Roper at 3rd section vel 1086 ypm. The partners have asked me to congratulate Mark Gilbert on winning the Open, a good performance, and also to congratulate all the section winners. The partnership had three birds in 14 seconds drop in to the loft. The first over the pad was a 3yo blue chequer hen bred from Brian Sheppard stock and their French hen. The Dam of this hen has taken 13th SW sect. 22nd open MNFC Carentan 2012; 3rd sect, 26th open NFC Falaise 2014; 3rd sect, 150th open BICC Guernsey 2014. They finished with 10 out of 12 home on the day.

The winner in the North East section which finished at 7th Open in the provisional result was clocked by Eddy and Clayton Oxborough on 1185 ypm.

Runner up here was a two year old natural hen racing to the Ipswich loft of Michael Sewell recording 1146 ypm. Michael's timer is a natural hen of Vandenabeele x Van Rhijn x Van Loon bloodlines sent sitting due to hatch. Falaise was her third outing of the season.

Third section was one to Reg Wright up at Hull on the North East coast. Reg clocked a Van Loon cross hen from his successful family. Previous results for this yearling hen are 4th Patrington Haven Club, 8th Yorkshire Middle Route Combine From Huntingdon Approx 3000 pigeons week previous to Falaise. This is what Reg had to say about his system of management:-

"I Race 20 cocks and 20 Hens raced on roundabout system. stock birds paired around the beginning of January. Young birds bred around 60-80 per year. Feeding system I mix my own at the beginning of the week then feed widowhood mix towards end of week. All pigeons are exercised twice daily since beginning February. Cocks and hens are shown prior to race and again on return.

I've been in the BICC for a couple of years now and for me I think its the best club in Britain, fantastic presentation 2016 and a credit to all concerned who organised it, but without great members this wouldn't happen. I would also like to add that the way the pigeons are looked after, absolutely brilliant they come back every time in lovely condition

thanks to Steve Adamson, but also the transporter plays a big part as to the way its designed, drinkers both sides to the crates, brilliant idea.”

Well that’s the first of fifteen race reports done and dusted and ready for the printers. As you can see on reading this report, there are several omissions, where I have been unable to contact the successful fanciers. I apologise for this, but as I have repeatedly made clear, I have a very tight deadline to keep if I am to get the race report published in the pigeon press the week following the race. Despite several attempts at phoning, texting and emailing fanciers I have unfortunately drawn a blank and the report has been sent off without the fanciers and their pigeons getting the coverage their performances deserve.

SO I ASK YET AGAIN – if you have a pigeon which features in the first ten of the Open result or in the first three in the section result then please make yourself available for me to contact on the day after the race, or better still, email me with your pigeon’s details along with a photograph of yourself. My email address is Gcymro@aol.com or telephone on 01443/435684. It’s not rocket science!

Here’s wishing you all good racing in the coming events.

Gareth Watkins

