



BICC ALENCON 2[CHOLET] NATIONAL

The third race of the BICC Old Bird race programme was scheduled to take place from the French town of Cholet. However, Brittany Ferries were forced to cancel their Ferry sailings, because of the fuel protest in France, and so we had to re-book for a Channel crossing: Poole / Cherbourg on Friday morning. This effectively meant that the birds could not get to Cholet in time to feed and water the pigeons for a Saturday liberation. The race committee therefore decided to go to Alencon as an alternative race point.

Following a short delay due to persistent heavy cloud cover at the race point, the 4,326 BICC National pigeons were liberated at 11-30am Saturday, 28th May, 2016. Winds were light northerly and north east in the channel and the birds cleared well into partial blue skies, light cloud and sunshine.

Race Advisors Report.

With the French Industrial action affecting fuel depots and filling stations we received information on the Wednesday that the usual overnight ferry from Portsmouth/Caen for our Thursday race marking had been cancelled. Brittany Ferries offered us an alternate crossing from Poole to Cherbourg but not until 8-30 am on the Friday morning, which meant it was not possible to arrive at Cholet in time to feed and water the birds in daylight. Coupled with the likelihood of being unable to obtain fuel, a decision was made to change the race-point to Alencon, some 95 miles short of Cholet - not ideal for those members wanting the longer fly.

Thanks to our Chairman Albi Deacon new licences were obtained via the RPRA and ferry bookings secured to allow us to go to Alencon.

Convoyers Trevor, Barry and Steve were kept busy on the Thursday collecting the 4326 birds from our various marking stations and both transporters arrived at Horndean at around 8 pm that evening. After loading the Brighton and Hordean birds, both transporters left for Poole Docks.

Around 8 am Friday they boarded the ferry for Cherbourg and later made the 4 hour drive down to Alencon arriving round 6 pm. Birds were then properly fed and watered and left to rest overnight.

Weather Advisor Steve Appleby had been in contact and he was somewhat concerned that early on Saturday it would not be suitable for a liberation at Alencon, due to heavy cloud cover and fog in the channel. However, he was confident that this would clear late morning in time for a liberation. We spoke with Chief Convoyer Trevor

Cracknell early on Saturday and he confirmed it was not suitable for a liberation. Steve also confirmed the weather at Alencon would clear late morning, so it was a waiting game. Early morning the channel was murky with fog patches but this too was forecast to clear. Around 11 am Steve confirmed the weather had greatly improved and we had sun and broken cloud from Alencon up to Caen. The channel was clearing and the observation buoy mid channel gave visibility of around 11 miles. (See copy of official report by Steve confirming 11 miles visibility from mid channel buoy at 1400 hours)

Trevor confirmed the good weather at Alencon and the birds were liberated at 11-30 am (Sat. 28th May, 2016) into sunshine and they cleared well into a light northerly wind, turning ENE in the channel. Whilst driving back to Caen, Trevor confirmed good weather with blue skies and sunshine. He also said that the return channel crossing was very calm with some sea mist patches but in general, it was clear with good visibility. He had no reservations about the earlier decision to liberate.

The Race Advisory team are fully aware of adverse comments made by certain individuals and posted on the 'pigeon chat' website, but we can assure all members that in the circumstances we felt the decision to liberate was the correct one. Members will know that the weather forecast for the next few days was not good. We are aware that many birds did not make home on the day, but with the thundery conditions in France and certain parts of the UK the atmospherics could well have played a part in poor returns. The Belgian Nationals also suffered poor returns from Bourges and elsewhere and they have put it down to the thunderstorm activity in France. A Welsh organisation racing from Fougères also had poor returns of around 20% on the day. Many

BICC members saw good returns on the Sunday. The ENE wind in the channel undoubtedly made for a very testing race.

***John Tyerman & Mark Gilbert
BICC Race Advisors.***

Weather Report.

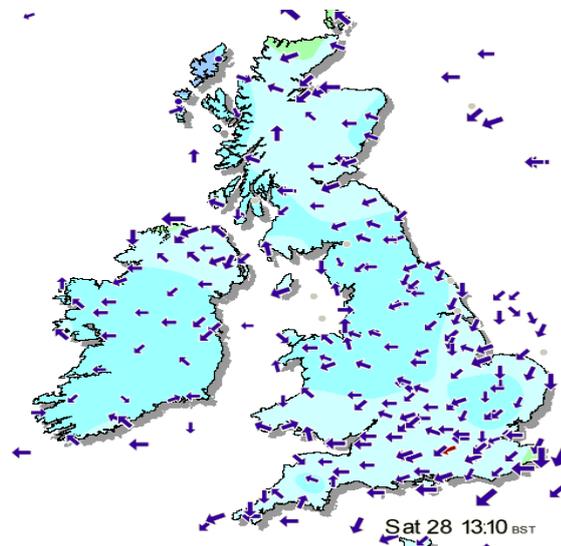
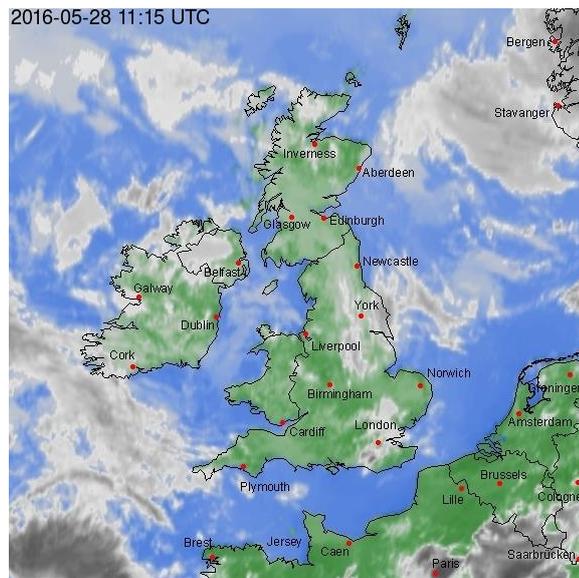
Below I reproduce weather man Steve Appleby's weather report.

At first light over Northern France heavy cloud extended from north of Alencon all the way to the French coast and over most of the channel. Fog had been located in many coastal regions over the sea including the Caen area. As the morning progressed conditions improved as the cloud slowly cleared the flight path to the west. This allowed the sun to burn off any fog increasing visibility and effectively clearing the line of flight. The race controllers were made aware of these developments and decided that a liberation was possible. With broken cloud and sunshine all the way from Alencon to the French coast which was supported by the convoyers on their return journey, liberation was effected at 11:30. Cloud did persist over some areas of the channel.

Winds were mainly light and

variable over France. The pigeons on reaching the French coast then had to face a north easterly (at times ENE) over the channel.

Wind speeds were recorded at 20 mph with good visibility. It turned out to be a testing race with the north easterly wind over the channel having a major influence. Another important aspect to consider was the weather had the potential for thunderstorms to develop anywhere in



Europe. Storms were identified in France and England which would no doubt have affected the atmosphere and possibly the ability of the pigeons to navigate. Below is the record obtained at 14:00 GMT from one of the meteorological buoys moored centre channel recording the visibility at 11 miles.

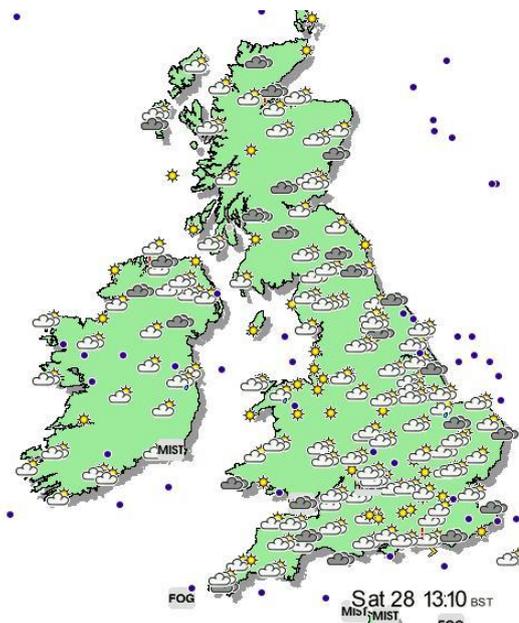
Steve Appleby. Weather advisor.

Lightship owned and maintained by [UK Met Office](#)

51.102 N 1.800 E (51°6'9" N 1°48'0" E)

*Conditions at 62304 as of
1400 GMT on 28/05/2016:*

<i>Wind Direction (NNE):</i>	<i>N (350 deg true)</i>
<i>Wind Speed (WSPD):</i>	<i>20.1 kts</i>
<i>Wave Height (WVHT):</i>	<i>3.6 ft</i>
<i>Average Period (APD):</i>	<i>5 sec</i>
<i>Atmospheric Pressure (PRES):</i>	<i>29.28 in</i>
<i>Pressure Tendency (PTDY):</i>	<i>+0.00 in (Rising)</i>
<i>Air Temperature (ATMP):</i>	<i>51.53 °F</i>
<i>Water Temperature (WTMP):</i>	<i>54.3 °F</i>
<i>Dew Point (DEWP):</i>	<i>52.3 °F</i>
Visibility (VIS):	11.0 nmi



THE RACE .

Let me stress once again, that the following report is based on the provisional result which is formulated on fanciers' first bird verifications. Some of these fanciers may well have recorded multiple arrivals and as a result the final result might well change considerably. With that in mind, here we go for a run down of the prize winners in both the Open and section results.

Taking pole position and in the process winning 1st West section 1st Open with a velocity of 1260 ypm was a two year old cock racing "way out west" to the Barnstaple lofts of Edward Reilly and son Peter who only joined the BICC on the day of the first Alencon race two weeks previous.

This is what the partners had to tell me about their first National win:- "The sire of the pigeon is from Mark Gilbert and is nephew of Dream which was 2nd Open Tarbes NFC. He also has Deweerdt and Jan Arden bloodlines in his make up. The dam is from John Highley of the Yorkshire Syndicate. Her sire is a

brother to Luka 07 the father to Marco which was 1st Belgium National 5th International from Pau for Etienne Meirlaen. He is also the uncle to Pennine Heights 1st Open Tarbes National Flying Club. The mother to this hen is a Janssen from Leach Brothers of Hebden Bridge. We got the Janssen to cross in to the distance pigeons for speed. This cock, now named "Red Eyes" as he homed in a thunder storm, has been up in the prize cards as a young bird and a yearling. His full brother was 8th section D from Fougères NFC. We race the pigeons on roundabout and we feed Marrimans super widowhood. We would like to say a big thank you to John Highley for all the help he has given us over recent years." Well done and many congratulations to the Reilly team.



In the runner up spot with a velocity of 1228.87ypm was one to Abergavenny fancier Shane Lewis. Shane eventually came through with the following information:-



“My wife Kelly in the photo with me works very hard with the pigeons and I will be flying in partnership as Mr & Mrs Lewis from now on. The chequer hen in this photo is last week’s Welsh National Flying Club winner from Fougères, so we nearly did the double of two National wins !!! Our 2nd Open BICC winner is a yearling blue

cock bred by Williams and Owen from Bargoed in the Rhymney Valley. He was sent to Alencon sitting his first ever nest of eggs and is a previous winner of 1st Club Maidstone. His dam is a Vandenaabeele which is a half sister to 1st National Saintes and 1st National Lillers for Ian and Tracey Bromley of Pontypool. In fact she is a full sister to six Fed winners for Ian and Tracey. The sire is a Casaert x Haelterman from Morris & Lucas form Bargoed and is closely related to National winners.”

Third Open and third West section on 1228.80 ypm was a bird racing to the Radstock lofts of Clive and Jill Rogers and Neil Sales. The partners



clocked a yearling Chequer Cock whose sire is a Santens Brothers cock bred from a pair of Crowley & Green pigeons {Marathon and Mica bloodlines} that were sold by Pipa when Richard and Anna emigrated to Portugal . The Dam is a hen bred from a son of Magnus 2 from Bill Keays.

This pigeon bred winners for Geoff and Catherine Cooper and is a grandson of Magnus and George, so Dewerdts bloodlines on this side of his pedigree. The cock has been flown on the chaos system



and fed on Matador Corn. He has flown with the West of England South Road Combine – Carlingcott Homing Society – from Lyndhurst, Bedhampton, Bedhampton, Littlehampton, Coutances before this race with the BICC. They sent 36 birds to Alencon and clocked 12 on the day up to 9 o'clock at night. Today, 11 more had returned by 9 am. The birds arrived home in good condition and Clive, Jill and Neil would like to thank the BICC for the usual excellent conveying skills. They would like to thank John Tyerman and Mark Gilbert for their role as race controllers – a very difficult decision to take.

Fourth Open and taking fourth west section is the highly successful West Country partnership of John and David Staddon. Their first across the ETS pad recorded 1224.6 ypm.

Here's what Dave Staddon had to say:-

“We were delighted to time our good 3year old widowhood hen in what proved to be a very tough race. Gina G as she is now known is a brilliant racer and has already won 1st Combine Truro 134 Miles 2,227birds; 2nd Combine Newton Abbot 63 Miles 2,933birds; 7th Combine Sennen Cove 158 Miles 1,360birds; 1st Section G 4th NFC Guernsey 115 Miles 948b, 9th Section 16th BICC National Guernsey 115 Miles 891b, 31st Section G 443birds; 481st National Saintes 383



Miles 3,726birds as well as over £1000 in pool money. She is bred from our Miracle Pair and is of middle distance lines from Mark Gilbert. Her next race will be Poitiers with the BICC. We would like to offer our congratulations to the Reilly's on their winner and to Clive & Jill Rogers & Neil Sales on another good performance this year. Clive & Jill deserve a special mention as they have taken on the Radstock marking station and without their hard work for the sport in our area, we wouldn't be able to enjoy our racing with the BICC.”



At fifth Open and taking 5th West section on 1223.4 ypm we have former King's Cup winner from Tarbes, Matt Rakes of Bristol. Matt clocked a yearling natural hen having had 3 inland races and now having her third channel race of the season. Previous channel races this season being CSCFC Coutances and the BICC Alencon two weeks ago. The hen is bred from

a very good racing hen of Matt's that is a daughter of his 1st Open and 8th Open NFC Tarbes winning hen 'Indy'. The sire of the yearling hen is good van Geel racing cock that is a full brother to 1st NPO Bergerac. Matt tells me that, yet again, the BICC birds returned in fantastic condition and asked me to pass on his congratulations to the winners as their bird had to fly a long way on its own to reach the North Devon coast at Barnstaple.

In at sixth Open on 1186.3 ypm was a bird for the ever present Mark Gilbert of Windsor.

Mark is enjoying yet another hugely successful season this year and this is what he had to say about his latest success:-

"I had three drop together to take probable 1st, 2nd, 3rd section.

The first was a cock and a full brother to 10th National Tarbes and 1st BICC National Marseille, he is a two year old and scored from Tarbes and Agen as a yearling.

His Father is from Rutz and Son and is a son of their 2008 Barcelona winner. The mother is a Derweerd from Ted and Magnus lines.

The second was a hen and she was 4th open Tarbes NFC National as a yearling in 2015.

Her father is a double grandson of Euro Diamond and her mother is a full sister to Rutz and Sons 2008 Barcelona winner.

The third was a hen and is a full sister to the last weeks 2nd Open Fourges with the NFC.

Her Father is a son of Champ my 1st NFC Saintes winner and the mother is a daughter of Rooney which is a full brother to Harry."

A comprehensive loft report on this world class fancier can be found on the BICC web site.

Bob Brown of Efford comes in next at 1183.07 for seventh Open and seventh West section.

Bob's timer is a yearling hen sent sitting two day old eggs. Her sire has been a top racer and stock cock for Bob and has flown Pau five times. The dam of the yearling hen is on loan from Dick and Gail Anthony of Camborne in Cornwall.



Then at 8th Open and 7th West section we travel way down west to the Plymouth lofts of Terry Lee and Terry Dyer who clocked a yearling hen on 1182.9 ypm.



This one is a Vandenaabeele bred from stock obtained from Kenny Wise of Isleworth. She won a first as a young bird and this year has had two inland races followed by one channel race with the BICC in preparation for Alencon.

Ninth Open and taking 8th West section goes to the Ivybridge, Devon partnership of John and Gill McClements with a bird doing 1181 ypm who clocked a 2yo dark hen raced on round about, that was a gift bird from Richard Goodier. The McClements exchanged young ones with Richard after buying birds at the clearance sale of Cowley & Green, (Compton Bassett Missiles) and the hen was the result of a cross with Richard's John Halstead stock. She went missing last year for a couple of months from an overseas race but certainly seems to have learned from the experience

Finally at 9th West section 10th Open we have one to Bridgewater fancier Daniel Hocking, whose first bird in the clock records 1174 ypm.

Daniel gives me the following information:-

"Firstly I would like to congratulate Mr E Reilly and son on their win - well done. On what seemed to be a dodgy day's racing I was very pleased with my yearling hen who dropped in great shape. She is bred from direct Derek Flowers of Pontypool in South Wales blood lines, with the sire being a son of

Derek's National winner from Folkestone and being a grandson of his "Giessen hen" another of Derek's many National winners. The dam being a granddaughter to a full brother to the Giessen hen and to Derek's great stock hen "Natalie Hen", My thanks to Derek for providing me with some cracking birds".



The above list of prize winners is dominated by fanciers in the West section and therefore it seems obvious that the Easterly influence in the

wind, especially in the English Channel, played a major part in the make up of the final result.

Around the sections now and in the West section the section winners who also win 1st Open are the Reillys.

Second West section and second Open goes to Shane Lewis of Abergavenny on 1228.87ypm.

Third West section and third Open are Clive and Jill Rogers and Neil Sales on 1228.80 ypm.

Over in the East section, Colin Hoskins clocked a blue yearling hen, one of a batch bred by Jack and Pat Walker of the north west, and of Syndicate Lofts lines to take the red card on 1159 ypm. She was sent to



this race having just deserted her eggs and showing to another cock as her original mate had failed to return from the previous week's race from Fougères. She was Colin's second pigeon from NFC Fougères and should feature on the section result. The hen was obviously in good nick because in the three days prior to basketing for Alençon she was running with the youngsters. Her previous race to Fougères was the first BICC race from Falaise and her only race as a young bird was BICC Guernsey. So Alençon was the fourth race of her life and all of these have been across the English Channel.

Second East section on 1143 ypm is a bird to Dean Childs of Basildon who clocked a yearling celibate hen of Mark Gilbert bloodlines. Sire is a full brother to Southfield Warrior whilst the dam is a daughter of Southfield Miss Consistent. Dean really rates the Gilbert pigeons and who can blame him? As with all the others in Dean's race team the hen has not been mated this year so has not raised any youngsters. The usual procedure is to allow the sexes to run together on their return from the races.

Third East section are the Mahoney Brothers, Tony and Pat, also from Basildon. Their bird recorded 1127 ypm and is the same pigeon that they clocked from Alençon two weeks earlier. He is a full brother to their 4th Alençon winner in 2015 and is a Planet Bros x Williamson x Soontjen. He has had two club wins already this year and also 14th Inter Counties Fed (2,806) birds. Last year he was also 110th open BICC Tours (4,315) birds flying 290 miles as a yearling in his first

Channel crossing. He then went on to take 233rd Open Le Mans(3,509) birds in his next channel event, Alencon 2 was his fourth time across the Channel.

In the Centre section Mark Gilbert tops the section with three birds together on 1186 ypm with D & D McFadden coming in on the provisional result at second section vel 1153 ypm. This is what Darren had to tell me about his timer:-

“My first in the clock is a yearling dark pied hen who is raced on pure widowhood, with her cock waiting for her on return. She was only raced twice as a baby up to 120miles and so far this year has had 3 inland races and today's race was her second channel crossing. Her dam is Razors girl my 1st open LSEEC Tarbes winner and her sire is Megan's Boy a London and southeast classic club merit winner from Tarbes his best position being 4th open”.

Third centre section is a bird to the Oakley Green lofts of Stuart Sheffield on 1144 ypm. Stuart clocked a two year old Round about hen which had previously raced the Fed's inland programme before going to the first BICC Alencon race. She has always been consistent winning minor cards at club level and is of Patrick Janssen bloodlines.

North Central section winners went to the Wyboston partnership of B & P Loom with a bird on 1137 ypm and here's what they had to say about their latest success:- “I would like to say a big thank to my loft manager Paul Loom, also known as “Eddie the Eagle” by friends and family! Paul is devoting his every minute of the day and night to his pigeons to be achieve these results. The pigeon that was 1st section is a blue hen which is raced on a round about system. She has been racing extremely well the last few weeks. We have nick named her “Mrs Eddie the Eagle”.



Runner up in this section is one to Gavin Duggan of Chipping Camden on 1045 ypm. The Duggan timer is a 2014 late bred out of Gavin's first pigeon back from Agen International of 2015 and his bloodlines are Jan Aarden cross. He arrived back with a hen also in the same race and both are



raced on the (“Duggan Camden roundabout system”) Gavin says “well done” to all who clocked in on a testing day.

*Club Treasurer Russell Bradford along with his much “better half” Claire comes in at third section on 1038 ypm. Here’s Russell’s take on the race:-
“My two year old cock flying to a hen sitting second round, and with a youngster about to come away from the nest-box, is 80% Deweerdt but with some blood on his Dam’s side from Jim Biss’ Natrrix a couple of generations back. He has flown all three BICC Channel races so far this year and interestingly at the first Alencon took seven hours eleven minutes and was fifth bird to my loft, whereas this trip for a much harder race took seven hours thirty two minutes for the 266 miles”.*



Topping the NE section is the Cambridge partnership of T & N Hart and son whose first in the clock recorded 1062 ypm. The Harts clocked a 4 year old Staf Van Reet widowhood cock. He is bred from a cock from Brown, Nee & son and a hen from Axeholme lofts through the lines of Rosie and Toey. The section winner has been a super pigeon for the partners being a previous winner of 1st club 4th Fed 6 UBI Combine Poitiers, 1st club 2nd Fed 2nd UBI Combine Bordeaux when liberated with the BBC. In this race he recorded the third fastest velocity in the liberation, only being beaten by two birds fly over 30 miles shorter. The Harts send their congratulations to the Open winners and all the section winners.



Second section on 1057 ypm is one to the Great Yarmouth partnership of Mr & Mrs P Barker. This is what the Barkers had to tell me:-“We



were North Road Flyers until 3 years ago and enjoy long distance racing. Channel racing was appealing so we decided to give it a try and turned to the South route and join the BICC.

This 3 year old blue chequer cock is bred from Stan Biss lines x Janssen from Melvyn Horn and flown on the widowhood

system. He is our most consistent from Channel races and was our first bird from Alencon 2 weeks ago.”

Third North East section is a bird to Anthony Moore of Norwich. Unfortunately, despite several attempts I was unable to contact Anthony for details of his pigeon.

The North West section winner comes in at 66th Open provisionally doing 1049 ypm to the Tewkesbury “ever presents” Booth & Roper. Here’s what the partners had to say about their timer:-

“We clocked at 18:57:00 to provisionally take 1st NW sect. and 66th open. This hen has been very consistent, already scoring in Upton on Severn HS from Salisbury. She is bred from direct Brian Sheppard birds. We were pleased to see Brian well up in the results and would like to congratulate E. Reilly & Son on their success as well as all the other section winners.”



Mr & Mrs Gwyn Lloyd take the runner up spot here on 1005 ypm . The Lloyds clocked the same yearling hen which was their first bird in the Alencon 1 race. They had 3 out of 10 birds entered on the day and another 3 arrived early next morning in what seems to have been a fairly tough race. Gwyn and Joy would like to congratulate Booth and Roper who were 1st section again and all the other fanciers who clocked on the day.

T & J Davies of Birtsmorton finish off the top three in this section with a bird doing 954 ypm. Jeremy’s timer is off his “Jimmy” lines and won 2nd section BICC Tours in 2015, beaten by a loft mate. He would like to congratulate the Open & Section winners on a testing day.

Finally, another brief report from Perry Liddle I/C at the St Austell marking station on the Cornish birds sent through the St Austell marking station.

“1st and only bird to be verified is Dave Johnson who clocked a 2 year old pencil blue w/f hen being raced on Roundabout, at 09:27:19 on Sunday morning for a velocity of 515ypm. She is the same bird that Dave timed in the previous Alencon two weeks ago, however Dave has now checked his breeding records and has found that she is actually a Staf Van Reet bred by Eric Roberts of South Wales.”

Well it seems to have been a very difficult race due no doubt to the atmospheric conditions prevailing in Northern France, where numerous thunderstorms and electrical storms were prevalent. Yet BICC convoyer Trevor Cracknell reported excellent conditions between Alencon and the French coast with mostly good visibility and conditions in the Channel during his return sailing.



John Black, Dave Taylor and Joan Cook with Paul Loom



John Rumney and George all the way from Tyneside to mark their birds at Northampton



Marking at Northampton



Martin Wright [L] with IC Russell Bradford



Mick Bunney, John Tyerman, John Wills and Brian Wall Horndean marking for Alencon



One of the lads from North London at Northampton with Claire Bradford



Richard Howey and Mel Herrington

Having spoken to quite a few fanciers in the course of compiling this report, it seems that large numbers of birds returned on the second day. Let's hope the majority are safely home to fight another day before this report appears in print.

Gareth Watkins