



BICC PAU INTERNATIONAL RACE REPORT.

The first International race of the extensive BICC race programme took place from the French city of Pau nestling in the northern foothills of the Pyrenees after a two day delay due to bad weather. The 425 birds entered by British fanciers were liberated at 7.20 am UK time, alongside 9,932 birds entered by fanciers from all parts of Continental Europe.

The breakdown of who sent what is as follows:-

<i>UK</i>	<i>425</i>
<i>Luxembourg</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>1664</i>
<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>3784</i>
<i>Germany</i>	<i>1175</i>
<i>France</i>	<i>2862</i>

I should point out that the 2016 Pau International race is the first time that fanciers have been able to enter an unlimited number of pigeons, as in previous years the entry has been strictly limited.

And now for the “culture vultures” amongst the readers I give you a brief history and geographical location of the city of Pau.

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."



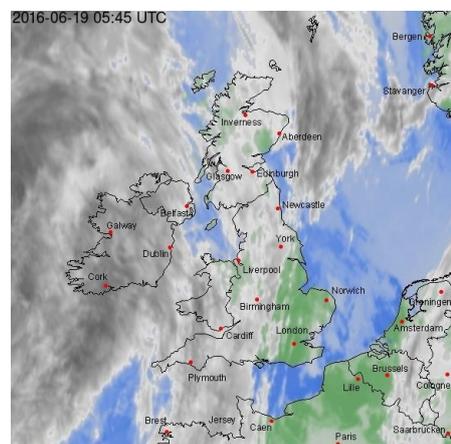
The location of Pau is shown on this map of the historical and cultural area of Gascony.

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 to the south 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.

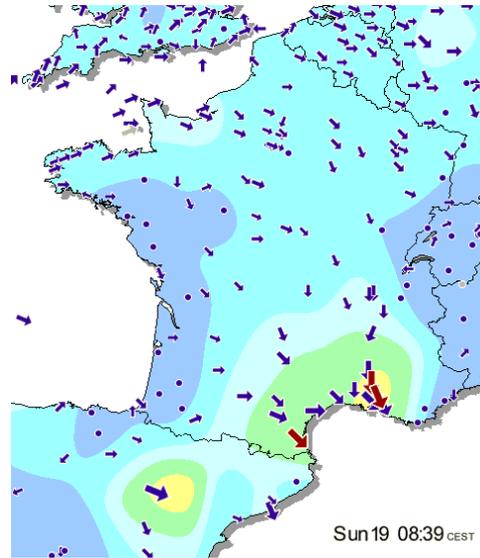
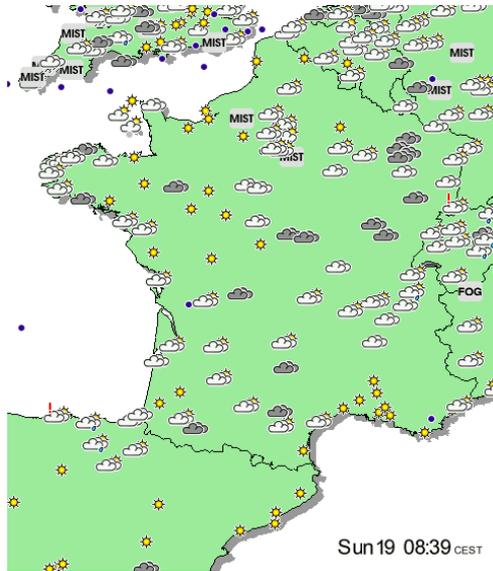
Pau is located 200 km (124 mi) west of Toulouse, 30 km (19 mi) from Tarbes and Lourdes, 25 km (16 mi) from Oloron.

So to the race itself, and with bad weather forecast to cover the UK spreading from the west during the day of the race and extending from Wales to Kent by the time birds were expected to reach the English Channel, little hope was given of day pigeons making it into the UK by nightfall.

Pigeons began to be clocked in France, to the north east of Paris from 6 pm onwards



and these French arrivals took the form of an arc of arrivals from the French coast in the north west around to the north and north east of Paris.



Many did not think that a pigeon would be able to cross the English Channel until late morning on the second day - and yet a number of pigeons must have done so on the day of liberation , as shortly before 5 am, Mark Gilbert optimistically looked out of his window at the driving rain and saw his first arrival perched on the loft!! Needless to say he was hurriedly clocked at 4.59 am to become a comfortable winner of this very difficult race. This brave three year old must have crossed the Channel on the night and judging by the time of his arrival, in torrential rain, he was literally within “spitting distance” of his home loft on the day.



I spoke briefly to Mark on the second morning of the race and he had this to tell me about his courageous pigeon.

“He’s a three year old blue cock bred from a son of “Southfield Supreme” when Supreme was mated to a daughter of Brockamp’s “George”.

The dam is a direct daughter of Brockamp’s Perpignan 06 that won 1st National 2nd International Marseille.”

The dam is in fact a full sister to 1st International Marseille and has now bred two BICC winners in International races for Mark, including 1st St Vincent International and now 1st Pau International.

Mark’s second in the clock is a three year old cock and his sire is a double grandson of Carteus’ George . His dam is a direct daughter of Southfield Supreme.

Third bird home is a three year old hen whose sire is a direct son of Golden Verguel and her dam is a daughter of Euro Diamond, so all three are bred in the purple.

A comprehensive loft report on Mark can be found on the BICC web site. Congratulations Mark on yet another remarkable performance.

In second spot in the BICC Open result and topping the East section with a velocity of 807 mpm, is a two year old chequer hen to another BICC International race winner from Pau in 2012 – none other than the extremely likeable Herne Bay fancier John Chipperfield.



This hen is also full of International winning bloodlines from Jacobs Brothers, Vertelman & son and Jan Theelen with a 1st International Perpignan and 2nd International Perpignan from the various sources in her make up. She has been raced on the roundabout system and was allowed in with her mate on the Sunday before basketting for Pau on the Monday. Her preparatory races this year have been two inland races followed by Alencon 1 & 2 with the BICC and then off to Pau for her first bash at International racing. John was telling me that she

homed in torrential rain and looked like a “drowned rat” when she landed.

Mark Gilbert clocked further arrivals later in the morning to finish provisionally at 3rd, 6th 13th & 14th Open as I write this.



Alan “Wally” Turner otherwise known as the “nearly man” of International racing as he has had innumerable top ten finishes without yet actually winning one, clocked to take 2nd East section 4th Open vel 706 mpm.

Alan clocked a seven year old cock that was 7th Open BICC Perpignan in 2015 winning 1st in the GDSBNFC. He was sent feeding a big youngster with his hen having laid her first egg at time of basketting. His preparation for Pau was 3 x 60 mile ; 3 x 100 mile trainers and a single race from Boves with the EECC.

Robbie Harris comes in next at 3rd East section 5th Open with a bird on 703 mpm.

This 5 year old red cock has been raced on round about in the early part of the season and was sent to Pau sitting 5 day old eggs - his first nest of the season. He was bred by Mark Cowell and has Red Barcelona and Cyril Wells bloodlines in his make up. Preparation for Pau has been one inland race followed by three BICC cross channel jaunts.

Mark Gilbert’s third in the clock takes 3rd Centre section 6th Open vel 701 mpm.



Another of the “usual suspects” – fanciers who invariably clock well up on the result of International races, comes in next at 4th East section 7th Open with a six year old recording 695 mpm , this to the father and son partnership of Geoff and Clayton Preece. Geoff and Clayton clocked another 6 year old to record 618 mpm to finish provisionally 17th Open at time of writing.

Geoff and Clayton clocked the great champion long distance racer Wiggins and this is what Geoff told me about Wiggins and their other timers.



'Wiggins' Chequer Widowhood Cock – 50% line bred to Bill Woodall's Dragon's Boy / 50% Stoffel – Hermes/Marseille Star lines. This cock has previously won twice from Perpignan including 'on the day' in 2014, equalling his loft mate, Jack Jones's record. Pau 2016 is his 12th International Performance scoring Nationally in all.

'Wiggins' previously a double Perpignan winner with the BICC. Pau 2016 is his 12th International performance. Second in the clock and finishing at 17th Open is another 6 year old Widowhood Cock – Stoffel 270/Hermes lines, a super pigeon that seems to draw every tough race on the calendar!! None of them are easy. Pau 2016 is his 8th International Performance scoring nationally in all. Third in the clock and finishing at 57th Open is a two year old Chequer Widowhood Cock – a 'Jack Jones' grandson that has done very well on a particularly hard Pau 2016 initiation to International racing.



Triple Perpignan winners - Clayton & Geoff Preece

All pigeons returned in superb condition, very wet and red round the nose, to be expected in that weather. Well done to all those who sent, thanks to BICC for their usual organisation and congratulations to Mark Gilbert on a super winning pigeon performance.

A B [Tony] Coker of Wickford in Essex takes 8th Open with a bird recording a velocity of 693 mpm. The timer here is a three year old chequer cock flown on round about and containing Ronnie Evans & son bloodlines from the UNC. The cock has had no club races this season just a Messac race and then privately trained to 80 miles before going to Pau to home in torrential rain.

Yet another BICC stalwart and previous Barcelona winner with the BICC the great John Lane of Whitstable timed on 691 mpm for 5th East section 9th Open. John clocked a two year old cock which was trained but unraced as a young bird . He had Agen International last year as his only race and this season has had three BICC Channel races in preparation for Pau. Sire is a Mark Cooper Delbar which flew Thurso on the north road and Perpignan south. John's timer was sent unpaired/ celibate .

Finishing off the top ten is a true battler with a long string of "previous" to the outstanding Dover partnership of Lee and Dad Kevin Buddle. This is what Lee had to tell me:-

"Our bird is a very reliable 2010 Cock we call "Tom", this is his 6th prize from 500+ mile International races (all being within the top 30 open). With this position within the top 15 Open of the result he has won himself (and our 5th) BICC CERTIFICATE OF MERIT AWARD. He, as all our birds was raced on Widowhood and he had EECC Boves & BICC Alençon in preparation for Pau International. He is fed on Verselle-Laga Superstar Plus, Start Plus & Best All Rounder mixed together with added Sunflower closer to the big races.

His Sire is "BC" 2nd BICC Pau 545m 2009 (on the day & beaten by loft mate!)

1st Club Bergerac 2008 435m (single entry)

His Dam is "Amoy"

1st BICC Pau Int 545m (on the day) 2009.

61st BICC Tarbes Int 548m 2008

This pairing are also the Grandparents to our "Elsa" 1st Open BICC Narbonne 2014 557m

"Tom" has previously won:-

5th BICC St Vincent 2013

15th BICC Pau 2014

*22nd BICC St Vincent 531m 2014
27th BICC St Vincent 2015
30th BICC Pau (on the day) 2013.*



*In at 11th Open is one to Dorin and son Denis Melinte of Harrow and this is what Dorin had to tell me about his timer:-
“We have named him Cezar and he is a 100% Van Lint Pigeon blood obtained in the winter of 2011 from Mr Riley Jnr and*

was my first pigeon purchase when entering the sport in UK! ! I was told at that time that the 2 birds (red cock and Blue hen parents to Cezar) are Van Lint blood obtained by Mr Riley senior from Belgium in 2006 and the red was the old man’s favourite when he was racing! Cezar is a true Champion Pigeon in our loft as his nest brother broke our novice status in 2012 young birds season with a 1st Club position in Harrow South Road ! The following year as a yearling Cezar topped the ICSRF Fed in the first old bird race of the season with 2000+- birds competing and 3rd ICSR Fed race of the season 2013 then he was sent to 2 NFC races Messac and Chollet where he came respectively 24th and 34th Open. The following year as 2 year old clocked from Tarbes with NFC and 2 weeks later topped Central Section from Perpignan with BICC , As a 3 year old as I was interested only in extreme long distance pigeons I was going to race him Barcelona , and Perpignan again , but he clocked from Barcelona on 3rd day 37th Open almost fully covered in some kind of oil so we couldn't race him again that year! Now he’s proved to be back on track with his new feathers on this hard wet race and we are thinking of sending him to Marseille next !! As I mentioned before, they get plenty of fats 4-5 days before marking and recuperate them with loads of protein food and Recupfast from Jos Thone. Cezar has been to 1 inland race and 2 channels with BICC from Alencon. I would like to congratulate the winner and well done to everyone clocking on such a bad day!!!”

At twelfth Open is another partnership who regularly feature in BICC International race results – that of Steven and Sally Rhodes of Aylesham in Kent. This is what Steve had to say about his latest



successful dip into the International race scene:-

“Our game chequer cock was bred from a Roger Senecourt Jan Aarden bloodlines as his dam was from the late George and Maureen Bates’ T JAY and A JAY family. The cock was sent natural driving his hen to nest and he was sent as a banker to clock in case it was sticky race!! It certainly turned out to be a sticky one as it was raining all night and very heavy all next day. We were very pleased to see him soaked through but in very good order once he dried out!! HE will be rested up now ready for Barcelona. The following are examples of his deeds in International racing thus far:-

2010 flew Perpignan winning 49th sect 85th Open Tarbes BICC; 2011 flew Tarbes NFC and Marseilles; 2012 18th sect 19th Open BICC Marseilles; 2013 flew Barcelona and 32nd sect 52nd Open Perpignan; 2014 23rd sect Pau BICC; 7th sect 14th Open BICC Barcelona; 2015 21st sect 43rd Open Barcelona and finally 2016 to date provisional 8th sect 12th Open BICC Pau.” Not a bad pigeon that Steven!! No wonder he was your banker.

Over in the West section where the birds had to contend with a westerly wind and driving rain until late morning the winner was clocked by Rob Brooks of the Brooks Brothers partnership of High Littleton. This one finishes at 15th Open.



Rob clocked a six year old widowhood cock called Mendip Hope. He is a full brother to Mendip Magic which was 1st West Section 2nd Open BICC Pau two years ago. Hope was mated in February and reared two young birds prior to racing. His breeding is on one side Brooks Bros, famous family of birds

which have produced generations of long distance birds, such as Knocker 1st Classic Pau and the Chuckle Bros, multi National prize winning pigeons. On the dam’s side are birds from good friends Geoff and Catherine Cooper. A hen Geoff gifted Rob a couple of years ago bred the Dam. This hen also bred the Dam of Rob’s 5th National FC Tarbes winner. Mendip Hope was also 26th BICC Pau in 2014 when Rob won the section.

Rob has had a difficult year and would like to thank all his friends in the pigeon community who have helped him through, especially Stuart Wilcox and Geoff and Catherine Cooper.

Taking second and third in the West section are the Coopers, Geoff and Catherine. This is their take on the race:

Over the last five years in the BICC Pau International West Section has been won either by G & C Cooper 2012, 2013 & 2015 or Brooks Bros 2014 & 2016. Two very good friends having a battle!!

Our first bird clocked taking 16th Open, was a three year old widowhood cock.

His sire is a son of Euro Diamond and his dam is a daughter of Southfield Supreme, so both his grandsires were top International pigeons.[So a strong Mark Gilbert influence in the breeding here]

He flew Agen International and Tarbes lasts year. This year he has had all the BICC races. During his racing career he has won several prizes, including winning 1st as a young bird in 2013.

Our second bird which looks like being 3rd section is a two year old blue hen flown widowhood.

Her sire is a son of Starlight 2nd International Tarbes and her dam is a daughter of our top breeder George whose children are turning out to be excellent breeders themselves.”

In at 18th Open is one to Horley fancier Calum Edmiston. Calum



usually achieves good results in the BICC International races and here he is yet again with a chequer cock that was 2nd section Pau BICC last year beaten by loft mate.

The cock was bred by Dickie and Steve Pearmain from the Volkens blood that the Calum and the Pearmain's imported together in 2004/5. He was sent on the natural system feeding a baby. There has been no training this season but the cock went to Falaise, Fougères and Alençon in preparation for Pau.

David Hales, ably assisted by Duncan Goodchild, of Hockley in Essex finishes off the top twenty in the Open result clocking their 2015 BICC Marseille winner “Comfort Zone”. Here’s what Duncan had to say :

“Hi Gareth the bird we timed from Pau 575 miles is a 4 year old Red Chequer widowhood cock “Comfort Zone” last years BICC Marseille winner. He is basically Alan Parker x Hagen Brothers and had 3 races

as prep for Pau - 2 inland and BICC Alencon when he arrived at 21.05 almost in the dark on what was a testing day”.

At the time of writing this extended report there is only one bird recorded in the North Central section and this to Gavin Duggan to finish 1st NC section 71st Open vel 304mpm.

Gavin clocked a 5 year old containing Jan Aarden and Red Barcelona bloodlines. On the Sire’s side we have Red Barcelona and on the Dam’s side we’ve got 1st & 2nd Barcelona One Loft race 2010 (Ian’s Boy paired to Harrison & Hulls hen).



A full brother to this pigeon finished at 11th Open BICC Agen in 2013. The cock flew Pau 2014 but just out of race time so is now known as “Seaview Slowcoach”. Gavin says he now knows what they mean when they call it a marathon race as if the cock followed the main drag of pigeons he must have covered nearer to 800 + miles. Gavin says a big “Well done” to all who clocked especially Mark Gilbert to prepare pigeons to perform so well at this level.

A number of fanciers were fortunate enough to record multiple timers and I list here some of these top class performances:-

Mark Gilbert 9 pigeons on the result at 1st, 3rd, 6th, 13th, 14th, 19th, 23rd, 26th, & 33rd Open.

G & M Preece 7th, 17th & 57th Open.

L & K Buddle 6 from 8 sent on the result at : 10th, 29th, 35th, 36th, 45th & 48th Open.

Calum Edmiston 18th, 30th & 49th Open.

G & C Cooper 16th, 34th & 50th Open.

I have included with this extended report photographs of fanciers who feature in the first three of each section where pigeons have been clocked plus some of the other fanciers whose pigeons finished in the top twenty of the Open result. Photographs of the top ten Open winners appeared in my earlier preliminary report.

Finally, in closing this report, I have to pass on the many messages of thanks that I, and other BICC committee members have received from

fanciers whose pigeons were returned to the UK from the recent Poitiers/Le Mans aborted race. These messages have been, almost without exception, totally supportive of the decision to return the birds and all have mentioned the outstanding condition of the pigeons on their return. So take a bow the race advisory team for your coolness under pressure and in making the right call, and the conveying team for their dedication and skill in looking after the convoy when it was under their care. WELL DONE ALL.

Gareth Watkins

