



BICC FALAISE NATIONAL RACE REPORT.

The first race of the 2017 fifteen race programme for the BICC took place on the appointed day, Saturday 29th April from the French town of Falaise which is situated in the Calvados department of the Normandy Region of North West France.

There has been a human settlement in the region since prehistoric times and is the birthplace of William the Conqueror who was born in the castle situated on the hilltop that overlooks the town.



Falaise Castle

A total of 4,056 birds were liberated at 9 am into blue skies and a light south east wind to race the 150 + miles to the shortest flying members in the south of England.

Here's race advisors John Tyerman and Mark Gilbert's initial report on the liberation:-

"The convoy of 4056 BICC National pigeons have been liberated from Falaise at 9am (Sat 29th April) into blue skies and sunshine. They

cleared well in a light south east wind. The channel visibility is excellent and winds are forecast at around 11 mph from the south east. Although it is currently fairly overcast in the UK this is forecast to break up mid morning. Good luck to everyone.”

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



BICC convoyer Steve Adamson with the transporter and trailer

And here is the Race Advisory team’s more comprehensive report on the build up to liberation:-

“For our first National race of the season from Falaise we had a very good entry of 4,056 birds and thankfully the weather remained favourable. With the new marking stations at Hull and Spalding, Chief Convoyer Trevor Cracknell started the collection process on the Wednesday evening and arrived at Norwich early Thursday morning. Both convoys had a busy day going round the numerous marking venues but managed to arrive on time at Horndean on Thursday evening which is the last port of call before proceeding to the Portsmouth ferry. The sea crossing was calm and by mid morning on Friday both Transporters were at the Falaise liberation site where the birds were later fed and watered by Steve and Trevor. We had earlier spoken to our weather Advisor Steve Appleby and he gave a favourable report for Saturday’s race which was relayed to our Convoyers on site. Spoke with Trevor on Friday evening and he reported all was well

with the pigeons. Steve phoned as arranged around 7-45 am on the Saturday morning giving a full favourable weather report for the Channel and line of flight and again this was relayed to Trevor at Falaise. Trevor confirmed we had blue skies and sunshine at Falaise but as it was still a bit chilly we agreed to wait till 9 am for a liberation. The liberation took place as scheduled and the birds cleared well helped by a light south east wind. Channel conditions were good and from the leading velocities the south east wind ensured a fast race. Well done to Mr & Mrs Harris on a fine win.”

***John Tyerman and Mark Gilbert
Race Advisors.***

Below I reproduce Steve Appleby's weather report for race day:-

Weather report

At first light our convayers Trevor and Steve found they were under welcome clear blue skies at Falaise. This was the general picture over northern France and the channel. Data obtained from the metrological buoys moored centre channel identified a light south, south east wind averaging 12 mph and visibility endless. Early on, most of England was under full cloud cover which for many areas failed to break up until late morning, allowing the sun to appear. Race controllers John and Mark were informed of these developments which resulted in a liberation at 09:00 hours. The slight easterly element in the wind as usual had a bearing on the where the early pigeons were recorded. Generally the weather conditions were very good as supported by the leading velocities for this our first race for the B.I.C.C.

Steve Appleby weather advisor.

So we move on to the race itself which was flown in good conditions with clear visibility and a helping south to south easterly wind. Let me make clear from the start that the following positions are based on the provisional result which is based on fanciers' first bird timings. If some fanciers have recorded multiple timers then the final result may well differ considerably. So here we go.....

Leading the way at 1st Centre section and 1st Open with a “brisk” velocity of 1819 ypm was one to the Portchester loft of Mr & Mrs Steve Harris and daughter.



Steve Harris with the partners' BICC National winner from Falaise

*This is what the family had to tell me about their National win:-
“Firstly we would like to congratulate all the section winners as well as
several members having good results in our local Area.*



1st Open BICC Falaise for Mr & Mrs Harris & Daughter

Our winning pigeon is a 2yo Hereman Ceuster cock, raced on the widowhood system. He had two prep races down the west coast with the Solent Fed prior to this weekend. This young cock has already shown real promise, winning 3rd Fed Kingsdown, 2nd Fed Exeter, and 1st Fed Guernsey as a young bird. As a yearling last year he won a coach single bird nomination race, incorporating the NFC Saintes, as well as 1st Hampshire 2 bird & 15th Open Bergerac Classic.

I was never intending to race the first BICC race it only came about with a conversation with my wife, Yvette. I happened to mention to her how well the birds looked and the wind was good for my loft location, but I was intending to send to the first CSCFC race the following week, and she suggested that the wind may not be right next week and I should seize the moment and send them to the BICC. How right she was, this has now lead to the bird being named, 'Yvette's Decision'

This cock also came up in conversation during the closed season when on a loft visit to my loft, John Gerrard looked at my birds and handled a few, and predicted that this cock would win a National, he said he has everything he looks for in a winner, so I'd like to extend my offer to him to come back and pick another one soon!!"

Congratulations on your National win with what appears to be an outstanding racing pigeon.

In the runners up spot with a velocity of 1793.7 ypm was one to the Templecombe partnership of Mr & Mrs Hodges. The Hodges' pigeon tops the west section narrowly beating the J & D Staddon timer into 3rd Open with a velocity of 1793.08.



Mr & Mrs Hodges 1st West section 2nd Open BICC Falaise

This is what they had to tell me about their 2nd Open winner:-
"First of all we would like to congratulate the winner Mr & Mrs Harris. If it's anything like our partnership the wife (Prilly) is invaluable, she cleans feeds and exercises the birds as I leave for work at 6.45am. The pigeon timed to take 1st West section 2nd Open is a dark chequer hen raced on a jealousy system. This system is derived from three systems – Richard Turner's, Arien Verreckt, and Kevin Hurst. The east 2 west book is, in my opinion, a must have book if you race hens. Her breeding is the best of Sheldon Leonard the sire being a son of Universal Showman (Janssen) x Lady Sisgo F&J Vandenhede. The dam is a Daniel Aerens. The hen has also been 1st section N.F.C. "

As mentioned above, in third Open position we have a bird racing to the lofts of John and David Staddon at Evercreech, who, as many will

know, are “regulars” at appearing at or near the top of any National race, whether it be with the BICC , NFC or BBC.



David and John Staddon 3rd Open BICC Falaise

David had this to tell me about their latest top performer:-

“Just pipped for the west section victory were John & Dave Staddon of Evercreech. The partners are regulars to my reports on BICC races as 3 time recent winners of the BICC as well as many 1st section victories. Dave kindly sent me the following details. Gareth we sent 28 birds to this first BICC race from Falaise and at the time of writing we have 27 home. The birds were gappy in their return but were all in good condition as is the norm with the BICC. We would first like to congratulate Mr & Mrs Harris on their win and also our fellow Glastonbury FC members Gary & Prilly Hodges on their section win. It is well deserved as they are one of the best partnerships around. We timed are good red cock 222 (we shall have to think of name for him as he keeps winning good prizes). He is a 2013 cock bred from our Mark Gilbert stock. His father is from Southfield Supreme, Drum, Gerrie & Lazer Gun lines and has been a prolific breeder for us. The dam is a daughter of Southfiled Pau and she is also a fantastic breeder. 222 has won many 1st club races and pools, he has flown Tarbes twice scoring 199th Open but in truth this trip seems to stretch him.. He also won 5th Section 18th Open NFC Messac 2016 winning over £1000. He was our pooled bird for this race and our nom bird in the local High Littleton club. He was sent after two short inland races with the WOESRC and raced on our Chaos widowhood system.

We also timed a yearling hen a minute later and she looks like she will win 3rd West section 5th Open. This blue hen was having her first look at the channel so this was a very promising performance from her. Again she is from our Mark Gilbert stock. The father is the same cock as the 222 and the mother is a daughter of our Miracle Pair. These are without doubt some of the fastest and most reliable pigeons we have ever owned. She had the same preparation as 222 and was raced on the same system. Finally I would like to say a huge well done to my old man. He is a legend at getting our birds spot on for the nationals and long may it continue.”

The Havant, Portsmouth partnership of Kevin Bakes and Alan Blake come in next at 2nd Centre section 4th Open with a bird on 1789.9 ypm. Kevin told me that he only decided to send at the last minute on Thursday as this was the partners' first race of the season.



Kevin Bakes of Bakes & Blake 2nd sect 4th Open BICC Falaise

This is a new partnership of two established fanciers who have now joined forces to compete in National racing. The bird they timed is a three year old widowhood cock of Hereman – Ceusters bloodlines having his first race of the season. The cock recorded 9th Open BICC Alencon last season. The partners entered 7 cocks with 100% returns. Obviously Kevin and Alan are over the moon competing in their first race together. They would like to say congratulations to Steve Harris who was 1st Open and they look forward to their next race.

Next we have yet another top class West Country fancier at 3rd West section 5th Open on 1772.05 ypm, none other than Phil Newton of Weston Super Mare.



Tess & Phil Newton 3rd West section 5th Open BICC Falaise

Phil clocked a three year old Dark Chequer cock that was sent to this race sitting 4 day eggs and feeding ready to wean youngsters. He is full of winners his sire has been a great racer for Phil winning numerous positions at all levels including 6th sec. 10th open BICC. Tours 3,655 birds also 10th sec. 48th open Tarbes CSCFC. His dam is a daughter of Springfield whirlwind which won for Phil St Nazaire CSCFC 2,691 birds. In preparation for this race he was given one 25 mile training toss before racing then two races with the Bristol south road fed one from Kingsdown 45 miles and one from Westbay 44 miles. The birds are fed on Phil's own home made mix purchased from local farms and trapping mix from Tim and Steve Jones at Countrywide feeds. No additives are added to the drinking water but Phil does add a tonic to the corn made up of natural ingredients e.g. Garlic, lemons, onions etc, the recipe for which was given to Phil by club mate and friend Paul Kilcoyne. Paul's wife makes him boil it up on a camping stove in the back garden as she says when he made it in the house the smell was unbearable!! Phil would like to congratulate the winner and all section winners on their performances.

Multiple National and International winner, the great Mark Gilbert of Windsor comes in next at 3rd Centre section 6th Open with a pigeon doing 1762.3 ypm. Mark clocked a three year old round about hen of Leo Hermans bloodlines which was having only her second outing in the race basket this year.



©Chris Sutton

Mark & father Geoff Gilbert. Mark 3rd sect 6th Open BICC Falaise

In 7th Open position and also taking 4th Centre section with a velocity of 1758.4 ypm is one to the Portsmouth loft of Jason Ross.

This is what Jason had to say about his race:-

"I would like to congratulate Steve and Yvette Harris on a great win and start to the season.

My bird is a Vandenabeele cock bred from my original Tony Carter birds. His Dam bred my 1st and 2nd NFC winners plus many more good birds for me. Unfortunately

she died this year, so this is the last cock bred from her. His Sire is a Janssen cock purchased from the spring exchange in 2011. My Falaise timer was raced on roundabout and has been in my 1st batch of birds in both races so far this season and has already been 7th Fed 1,853 birds



this year as well as a very consistent young bird. I would like to thank the whole convoying team as my birds came back in fantastic condition as usual from the BICC races.”

Peter Abrook of Thorneess comes in next with a bird on 1753.6 ypm to take 5th Centre section and 8th Open. Peter’s timer is a 3 year old Bricoux x Janssen cock flown on round about which has had three inland races this year in preparation for Falaise and has always been consistent.

Peter Abrook's winner of 8th Open BICC Falaise



The partnership of Mr & Mrs D Waterhouse from Portsmouth come in at 6th Centre section 9th Open with their timer recording 1735.35 ypm. This is what David told me about their race timer:-

“We would first like to congratulate Steve Harris and family on their great win .my pigeon was bred down from I bought from Darren McFadden crossed with Crammond and Langstaff the first race of the season he was 1st club 1st Fed Kingsdown we race him on roundabout and feed Gerry plus and Vanrobeys superpower.”



David Waterhouse with his 9th Open BICC Falaise

Finishing off the top ten of the Open result is one to the Oakley Green loft of Stuart Sheffield with a velocity of 1730.10 ypm. Stuart clocked a two year old blue hen of Van der Bulk bloodlines whose parents were purchased from Micky Collins of Birmingham. The hen has had two inland races from Yeovil and Honiton this year in preparation for Falaise.

Round the sections now and the winners in the Centre and West sections have been covered in the top ten Open winners so we'll move on to the winners in the North Central section. The top spot here goes to a 2 year old blue widowhood cock bred by B&P Loom of Wyboston and racing to the Hitchin loft of John Black.



John Black 1st North Central section 32nd Open Falaise

John's widower finishes at 32nd Open on the provisional result. Last year the same pigeon was 5th section Messac and 4th section Saintes , a pretty handy tool to have in the tool box John, with the potential for greater things to come perhaps?

Runners Up in the North Central section and provisionally taking 60th Open with a velocity of 1633 ypm is one to the Lutterworth, Leicestershire loft of Mr & Mrs Jeremy Wright. Jerry clocked a three year old widowhood cock which is of 75% Chris Raes bloodlines and is also a grandson of Jerry's 2002 NFC Old Hens National winner. The cock had just two preparatory races from 70 and 100 miles before going to Falaise.

Les Berry and son Les, of Great Glen in Leicestershire come in at 3rd North Central section with a bird on 1624 ypm. The two Les's timed a yearling black cock of Van der Merwe bloodlines and raced on round about in only his second race this year.

In the North East section, the winner was clocked by Peter Davenport of Withernsea. Peter's pigeon recorded a velocity of 1642 ypm over the 334 mile course to finish at 51st Open provisionally. A super performance for this time of the year and at that distance.

Peter Davenport with 1st North East Section



This is what Peter had to say about his section winner:-

"The bird is a C & C Lambrecht dark chequer cock bred by Andrew Jacklin of Barton upon Humber and gifted to me as a squeaker. Falaise was my first race with the BICC as I joined this year with the new marking station at Hull being just a short drive away. The section winner had 3 races in the build up to this race, one from Newark 56 miles and twice at Huntingdon 95 miles. He had previously won over the channel last year in the Withernsea & District Homing Society having a 6th club from Clermont and 1st club Arras."

P & D Elwood of Kings Lynn come in at 2nd North East section with a pigeon on 1548 ypm. Peter and David clocked a 5 year old blue hen sent feeding two big young birds and sitting eggs. She is of Senechal x Flor Engels bloodlines via Tommy Hall of Kings Lynn and had just one 100 mile preparatory race this season before Falaise.

Third NE section on 1507 ypm is one to the Bury St Edmunds loft of Shaughan. T. Nicholson. Shaughan clocked a yearling blue hen of Kipp & son bloodlines which was sitting 10 day old eggs. She has been a consistent performer for the loft winning a 5th & 7th club so far this year before being lifted from 153 miles into Falaise at 237 miles.

The North West section winner was clocked at the Alveley loft of R Scriven with a velocity of 1692 ypm and this one finishes at a very creditable 22nd Open position on the provisional result.



Ray Scriven 1stNW section 22nd Open BICC Falaise

Ray clocked a yearling spare hen that was trained throughout the winter months alongside a kit of 7 or so hens. She won as a young bird

and her nest mate was gifted to Mike Staddon for whom he won 3 x 1sts as a young bird plus three good Combine positions. Bloodlines are Hofkens x Mark Gilbert Deweerdt.

Bruce Johnston of Kidderminster comes in next at 2nd NW section 28th Open with a pigeon doing 1682 ypm. Bruce's timer is a 2 year old dark chequer w/f widowhood cock of Mick Chadwick Jos Thone x Ian Barnbrook bloodlines. He has had just one short inland race this season, from Frome the week before Falaise and was allowed with his hen on the night before basketting.

Then we have a terrific pigeon racing all the way up the west side of the country to the Huyton, Liverpool lofts of Bauress & Murray and recording a velocity of 1660 ypm over the 332 mile course to finish at 3rd NW sect & 44th Open. Unfortunately, at the time of going to press I was unable to contact the partners for details of their gallant pigeon.

Over in the East section the pigeons had to struggle against the at times fresh south easterly wind and taking top spot here and finishing provisionally, at 27th Open was one to the Oxted partnership of R & N Steptoe on 1682 ypm.



R & N Steptoe 1st East section 27th Open BICC Falaise

The Steptoes clocked a yearling hen, her Dam being a daughter of their 1st Open LSECC Guernsey winner and her sire a grandson of their 1st SMT Combine winner "41". The hen "06" was sent to last year's first y/b race returning about 3 weeks after last race looking

immaculate despite having obviously spent some time out “sleeping rough”. Falaise was her third race this year.

**Nightingale & Draper of Grays in Essex timed one on 1670 ypm to finish at 2nd East section 37th Open.
The partners only joined the BICC for YOUNG BIRDS IN 2015 ONLY SENDING 6 YOUNG BIRDS IN EACH RACE . THIS HEN HAS HAD GOOD PERFORMANCES**



IN THAMES NORTH EAST COUNTIES in 2016 winning 10TH OPEN, 6TH OPEN & 9TH OPEN this season.

SINCE YOUNG BIRDS SHE ONLY RACED UP TO LE MANS AND CARRIED ON THAMES RACING.

SHE IS 100% HEREMAN CEUSTER THROUGH PREMIER STUD BREEDING. SHE IS A MEDIUM SIZED HEN AND OBVIOUSLY LOVES THE ROUNDABOUT SYSTEM AS DOES THE COCK SHE IS PAIRED TO WHICH WON THE NORTH ROAD RACE LAST WEEK AS WELL SHE WAS WELL FANCIED AND POOLED TO £10 SECTION.

Kevin Foster comes in to finish off the top three in the East section with a bird on 1640 ypm to finish at 52nd Open provisionally.

Here's what Kevin had to tell me:- “I timed a 2yo chequer pied widower hen. She is a de Meyer from direct Arthur Farrar birds. She was not raced as a yearling until July so is a relatively fresh pigeon only having about 5 races in her racing life. Although returns were a little erratic I had 9 out of 10 sent by 5pm.”



Well it seems to have been a very successful race to kick off the BICC season. Let's hope it continues in the same vein! It was good to see the Hull marking station, under the supervision of Reg Wright, start the season with a good send of 68 pigeons to the Falaise race, which must be more than 300 miles for most of those from the area who competed. Well done lads. On the other side of the country, the Liverpool partnership of Bauress and Murray also have to be congratulated for clocking at more than 300 miles so early in the season.

One spoiler to an otherwise excellent weekend was the fact that the engine on one of the transporters blew up on the M25 on the homeward

journey! Steps have already been taken to purchase a replacement vehicle in time for our next race in two weeks time.

Some information now from club Treasurer Russell Bradford:-

“Profuse apologies to all of the Harrow members who attended the Northampton Marking Station who use the Tauris ETS system. Their pigeons had to be rubbered as the ETS (only for Tauris) wouldn’t work. Sorry lads!

Carol is preparing a list of around 100 non payers to go out to the marking stations. Great shame these people don’t pay on time albeit those who have paid the late payment fee this year hopefully won’t put themselves in the same situation in 2018. It now gives the marking stations extra work to check entrants have paid – extra work they need like a hole-in-the-head.

Slowly but very surely computer technology is becoming a factor with the BICC. We now have nine marking stations that will be using the electronic spreadsheet this year. An important step forward as it is a major help for the secretary to download Data directly into the race software from the marking stations, and a big help in calculating all the arithmetic for the I/C’s with entry money and pools. Mysoft have as always been super-helpful in updating our software, and downloading the programs to the marking stations.”

One final appeal on behalf of Rita and Eddie Good, who run the BICC Marking Station at South Ockenden. Members who use the station seem to disappear faster than Usain Bolt in an Olympic 100 metres final once their birds have been race marked. This leaves just Eddie, who has heart problems, and young Rita to help load the crates onto the transporter with Trevor. If this practice continues then the Marking station will close. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED. So play the game and help out.

I have included with this report, a photo of young Harvey Watson of Penzance who has been taken “under the wing” so to speak of the BICC in 2017. Harvey has Cerebral Palsy and underwent an operation at Bristol Children’s Hospital on Friday 20th April. The photo shows Harvey in obvious good spirits the day after, his hopefully life enhancing operation.

On behalf of Harvey's family, I would like to thank all those fanciers Nationwide, who have generously donated pigeons to be auctioned on the Elimar website in order that the family can raise the funds to pay for the operation and the extensive aftercare and physiotherapy that will be required if Harvey is be able to live anything like a normal life. A special thanks from me, to all the fanciers and BICC members who I contacted and who generously gave of their best to help this brave young lad. You know who you are and so do I and so do the family – many thanks to you all. To those fanciers who I contacted and who have yet to reply, please make every effort to help this courageous young boy. The auction sale is still ongoing on Elimar. Your help will be greatly appreciated by Harvey and his family.

Gareth Watkins

