



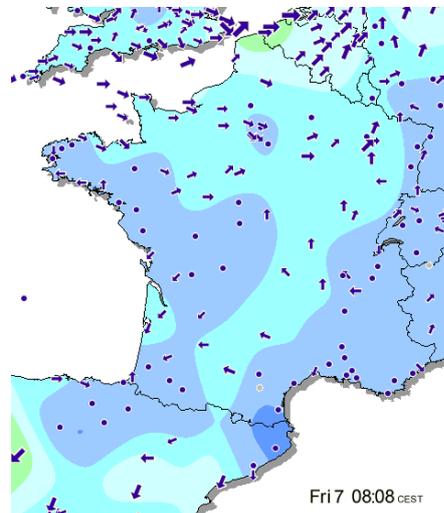
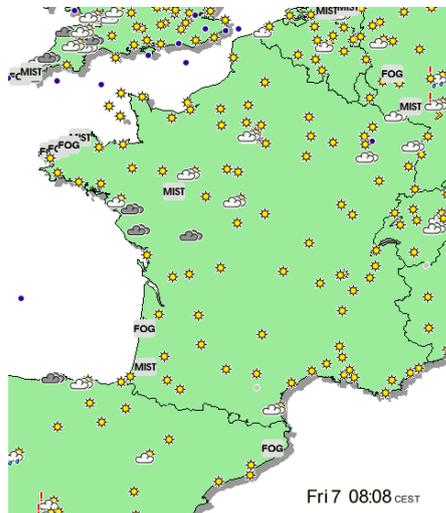
BICC BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL RACE REPORT.

Well “the BIG ONE” is here, by that I mean the Barcelona International race of 2017. This is the race that most long distance enthusiasts dream of winning as it has an entry of some of the best long distance pigeons from the best lofts in the UK and mainland Europe, competing over the marathon course from the Catalan capital on the shores of the Mediterranean in North East Spain.

The 2017 entry of 17,094 pigeons was some 636 birds down on the 2016 entry but still an impressive number considering that this race is over more than 600 miles to most competing lofts. The entry was made up of the following numbers by competing country:-

Belgium 7,944; Netherlands 4,489; France 3,152; Germany 1,202; UK 277; Luxembourg 30; Franco – Belg 65.

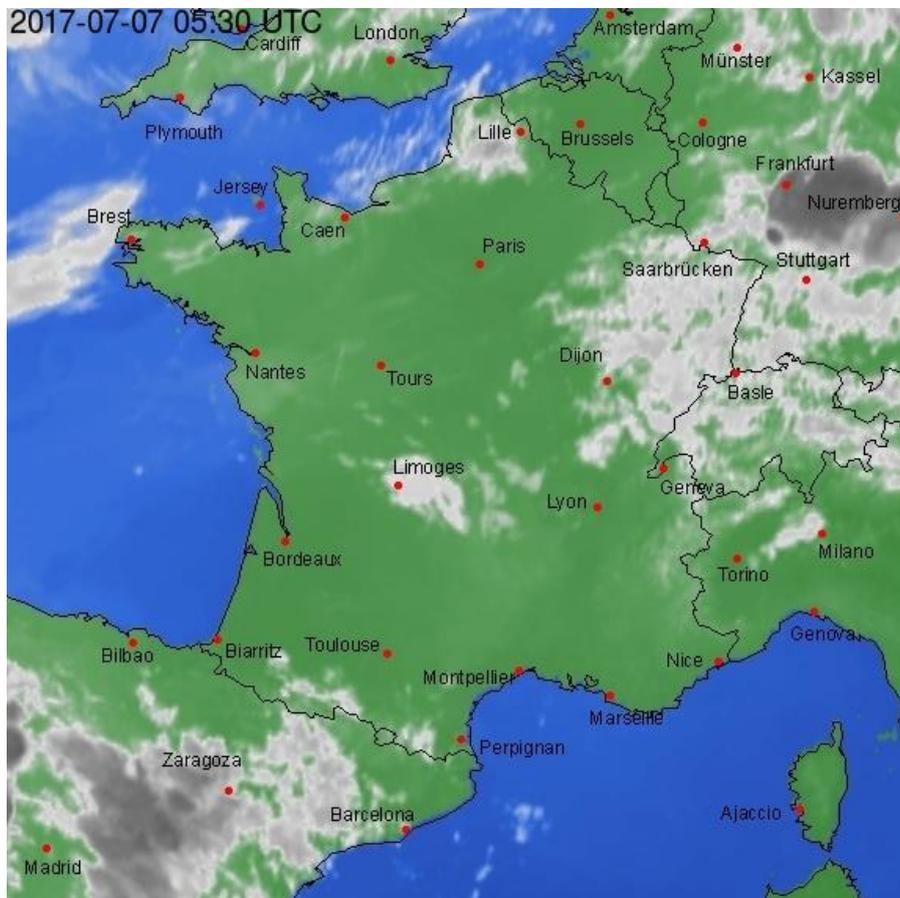
The convoy was liberated at 9.05 am CEST [8 am BST] on Friday 7th July. Conditions were perfect with high cloud, sunshine, excellent visibility and a light north, north west breeze blowing.



There were no day arrivals on the Continent and so it was an early start for many fanciers with thousands of bleary eyes scanning the skies for a sight of their first arrival.



Barcelona Transporters ready for liberation



Satellite image of the route from Barcelona

The first bird to be clocked was to be found near the North East France /South West German border at the loft of Fred and Yannick Ungerer and this one recorded a velocity of 802 mpm. Further pigeons then began to come through, mostly in the same area of North East France/South West Germany with the exception of one “loner” clocked on the Cherbourg peninsular in North West France by Cath Busnel and recording a velocity of 681 mpm. There then followed multiple timings into northern France and Belgium before the eventual winner of the 2017 Barcelona International was clocked at 11.58 am BST at the loft of Leon Roks at Standaardbuiten in the Netherlands, recording a velocity of 1148 mpm.

More than a thousand pigeons were clocked on the second day in Continental Europe with many being timed on the French and Belgian coast, just a short distance to the East of Dover. However, no pigeons were clocked into the UK on the second day. It was therefore another early start for the British contingent and they were rewarded when at 8.39 am the outstanding Essex father and son partnership of Rob and Andrew Wilton flying under the banner of D Wilton & son timed their five year old hen to record a velocity of 506.4 mpm over the 701 mile course. The Wilton’s have an outstanding record of success on both the North Road with the London North Road Combine and also on the south road with the BICC, BBC and NFC. Earlier in the season they notched up yet another Combine win with the LNRC so this was a loft “in form”.

*There was then a long wait until 12.00pm before another bird made it back to its home loft, and this one to the Lovedean, Hampshire loft of Bob Bate recording a velocity of 458.5 mpm over the 674mile journey. Incredibly, just 12 minutes later, at 12.12 pm, a four year old hen closed her wings after her 757 mile[much further, nearer 1000 miles, if you take into account the dog leg] and swooped into her home loft in Cwmtillery, deep in the Welsh Valleys, to bring a smile to the faces of **Vince and Dave Padfield**, her velocity proved to be a winning one of 512.50 mpm. They didn’t have long to wait before their second pigeon arrived home at 13.55 pm!!! This one looks good enough for 2nd West section 3rd Open on 491.20*

Anyone who knows anything about long distance marathon races into the British Isles over the past 20 or so years will recognise the name of the Padfield Family of Cwmtillery. The brothers’ performances at the distance during this time have been truly remarkable given their geographical position far to the west of the main drag when their pigeons also have to battle against the prevailing westerly wind. Nevertheless their pigeons’ consistency at the top level in International

racers with the BICC and at National level with the WSRNFC and NFC is nothing short of phenomenal.

In 2009 the Padfield's were runners up in the Barcelona race to Mr & Mrs R & I Elliott of Chadwell Heath in Essex. They repeated the feat in 2015 when they were again runners up to Dave Delea's great hen again homing to a loft at Rainham in Essex. Add to these two near misses from Barcelona a 2nd Open Palamos plus numerous National wins in Wales from Pau and Tarbes and you have a truly outstanding CV of long distance success at the top level.



***Dave & Vince Padfield
1st & 2nd West section 1st & 3rd Open BICC Barcelona***

Here's what an obviously delighted Dave had to tell me about their winning pigeon's preparation for its tilt at Barcelona :-

"The preparation for all the birds was the same - after rearing a pair of youngsters they were raced on the roundabout system having 3 inland races and two overseas races Fougères and Messac. The NFC Messac race was a hard race but we had them all home . The last pigeon to drop was our first pigeon from Barcelona "05", after 11 hours on the wing she looked immaculate. We then set her up for the 3-day slog at Barcelona.



1st Open Barcelona BICC for the Padfields



3rd Open BICC Barcelona for the Padfields

Our second pigeon “26” was only 30 minutes in front of her flying 10 ½ hours this fly was just what they wanted. We left them to run with their partners a day before basket ting. The winning hen was 5th Tarbes National last year and the cock had previously flown Tarbes twice. We didn’t send him last year because we only sent 5 as we were going to try and win the car in the NFC and didn’t want to send more than 5 as only 5 birds counted for points to win the car.

The breeding of the two Barcelona birds is very similar as the dams of both timers are full sisters containing the very best of Peter Titmuss Herron's Pride and Ken Hine's "Charvill Kayleigh" bloodlines through "The Ken Hine Hen". On the sires' side we have the best of the old tried and tested Padfield Wim Muller bloodlines that have won literally scores of top prizes at National and International racing for the brothers since their introduction in the early 1990's.

Congratulations to Vince and Dave on finally achieving their lifetime's ambition of winning THE BIG ONE. Thoroughly deserved.

A comprehensive loft report on the Padfield loft can be found on the BICC web site as they have won the Jim Emerton Trophies with the BICC on a number of occasions over the past few years.

*Runner Up in the Open and topping the East section with the first bird clocked into the UK is a five year old chequer hen prepared for the job in hand by the outstanding Essex partnership of **D Wilton & Son** of Chadwell St Mary. Dave Wilton has now sadly passed away but Rob and son Andrew maintain the partnership's name in respect for Dave's memory.*



D Wilton & Son 1st East Section and 2nd Open BICC Barcelona

As I mentioned earlier in this report the Wiltons have an outstanding record at club, Fed, Combine and National level at all distances whether it be a 60 mile dash or a 600 or in the case of Barcelona a 700 mile slog. In this, their first attempt at preparing a bird for the ultimate test of Barcelona at 701 miles, they relied on the long established long distance bloodlines of their good friend and King's Cup winner Mark Bulled of Harlow and the hen certainly didn't let them down. Here's Andrew's take on the race:-



“The hen we timed from Barcelona is a five year old hen she was sitting around twelve day old eggs. In preparation for Barcelona she was sent to two different Combine Chanel races and also both Poitiers BICC races and has been trained twice a week from the coast since the last Poitiers BICC race. She's been a good hen for us scoring a few good National positions in the past and she's flown Tarbes three times. Last year she was our second bird from the NFC Tarbes race and scored. Both her parents were bred for us by Mark Bulled of Harlow, her sire being bred from two Lerwick Combine winners paired together and her dam being a daughter of “Die Hard”, Mark's top cock and Hall of Fame winner and the sire of “Legacy” his NFC Tarbes Grand National winner. We would like to thank Mark for giving us such good pigeons over the years and helping us to be able to clock birds from this type of hard long distance race. We are “over the moon” to have done so well from Barcelona on our first attempt sending a few well experienced pigeons. We would also like to congratulate Dave and Vince Padfield on winning first and third National a brilliant performance and well done to all others who have clocked birds in this very hard Barcelona race”.

Well done the Rob and Andrew along with Mark Bulled, three thoroughly decent people and top class pigeon fanciers.

*Next in at 1st Centre section 4th Open velocity 458 mpm was a three year old to the Lovedean, Hampshire loft of **Bob Bate**. Bob's timer has a Welsh connection as the three year old chequer pied cock of Jan Aarden bloodlines, was bred for Bob by none other than Terry Gardner*

of Portskewett in Wales, himself no stranger to success in difficult International races with the BICC.

*When basketed the cock was feeding a 7 day old youngster. This is what Bob had to say:-
“Congratulations to Vince and Dave on their first and third Open result, also I would like to thank a good friend Albi Deacon for taking my single entry to Ash.*

The pigeon I clocked is a Jan Aarden bred by Terry Gardner from Caldicot. His sire and dam is full of long distance blood lines.

He has been an exceptional pigeon for his age. We named him Endeavour. Flown Bergerac as a yearling, 26th Open Classic. The following year sent to Pau and was 55th Open Classic, and then four weeks later sent to Tarbes NFC.



Bob Bate 1st Centre section 4th Open BICC Barcelona

His preparation this year was only Coutances and the NFC Messac disaster in which he turned up late next day. All racers are fed on 50% Gem moulting and 50% beans with tit bits of red band and peanuts.”

*The name of Goddard of Tilehurst in Berkshire is another that appears regularly at or near the top of the result sheets of the BBC and BICC when the race is long and hard and here Dave Goddard who competes under the name of **R. J. Goddard & Son**, comes in with a six year old on 457 mpm to finish at 2nd Centre section 5th Open.*



Dave Goddard and grandchildren Lily and Darcy admiring “Ruby Blue” 5th Open Barcelona

Dave clocked a six year old blue hen on her fourth trip from Spain. She was bred by Mick Parrish and her previous performances include 31st Open BICC Perpignan; 31st Open Barcelona; 1st section 6th Open BBC Barcelona and now 2nd section 5th Open BICC Barcelona.



Dave Goddard's Ruby Blue 5th Open BICC Barcelona

I'll let Dave give the readers the full SP on his gallant hen Champion Ruby Blue:-

“Champion Ruby Blue” blue bar hen.

Flew Barcelona 2014

Barcelona 2015 12th sec 38th open 710 mls

Perpignan 2015 4th sec 34th open 640 miles

Barcelona 2016 1st sec 5th open

Barcelona 2017 2nd sec 5th open

Bred by Mick Parrish Great Burstead, Essex from a long line of distance pigeons.

Ruby was retired to the stock loft sitting on eggs after her great performance in 2016.

Racing in 2017 was well under way but I decided to try her again at Barcelona.

She sat on the aviary of stock loft for a week sulking so my decision was made I gave her 3 x 15 miles tosses, lifted her in to Countances 168 miles taking 5 hours no stress, then one single 15 miles toss a week before basket then off to Barcelona.

She was sent feeding a 5 day baby. Beans hopper fed , Gerry plus hand fed plus black rape, sunflower hearts, peanuts from health shop plus vitamin B12 added to water with no medication.

To see her drop on the loft at 2.14 was something I will never forget cannot explain how good it was.

I take my hat off to all who timed outstanding pigeons but a special mention to the winner Dave and Vince Padfield - defeat is easier losing to champions.

This performance of Ruby means so much to me I would like to thank Cameron Stansfield for our long discussions on extreme distance racing which has motivated me as much as Ruby.

I thank the BICC Committee for all their hard work to make this all possible.

But don't forget top long distance pigeons make us look good, without them the clock is empty but it's also luck.

To all the members who are still waiting keep the faith could be your turn next year on the road to long distance racing.

I have had an enjoyable season adding this to the 1st 5 section Tarbes. Ruby will not be going in 2018 not adding to my 4 times Spanish diploma winners.

Enjoy the moment.”

*In at 2nd East section 6th Open is the 2016 Europa Cup winning partnership of **S R & W H Knox** of Tyler's hill, near Canterbury in Kent.*



Bill Knox 6th Open BICC Barcelona

Bill Knox is the active partner here and yet again we see a top class long distance fancier with a consistently excellent family of long distance pathfinders producing another top class result in a hard marathon race. Bill timed a 5 year old Mealy cock having his sixth International race and now named "Proactive". He has been a steady performer previously having flown Agen on two occasions, winning 71st Open; Pau 43rd Open; Marseilles 14th Open; Perpignan 20th Open. His bloodline is the reliable Kirkpatrick strain going back to G Dawes and N Barrett. He was sent sitting 12 days eggs and had just two races this year in preparation, both with the EECC being Boves 120 miles and Fontenay 200miles . He was sent a little heavy but returned in excellent health.

*No further birds made their home lofts on the third day and it was not until 7.31 am on the fourth morning that **Mark Gilbert** of Windsor timed his 6 year old round about hen to finish at 3rd Centre section 7th Open covering the 707 miles to its home loft with a velocity of 359 mpm.*



Mark & Karen Gilbert with NFC trophies won in 2011 season. Mark's timer finished at 7th Open BICC Barcelona International in 2017

When I spoke to Mark he was pretty despondent as he knew he had let the bird down, reason being that he had let the other hens out for a fly on the Sunday afternoon. When he went to let the hens out again on Monday morning he saw one hen that seemed reluctant to fly and then realised that it was his Barcelona pigeon that had obviously been home since the previous afternoon. Gives the rest of us mere mortals hope when even the greats make the odd mistake!! Commiserations Mark. Breeding shows that the hen is a granddaughter of Brockamp's Euro Diamond . Preparation in the build up to Barcelona was a couple of short Channel races followed by Poitiers 1 & 2 with the BICC and then off to the Catalan capital.

Mark has asked me to pass on his congratulations on to Dave and Vince Padfield on another outstanding performance [and so say all of us] –job done Mark.

*The Aylesham, Kent partnership of **Mr & Mrs Steve Rhodes** is another partnership that regularly appears high up on BICC International race results and they are there once again timing a 3 year old at 7.55 am on the fourth morning to record 343 mpm over the 680 mile course from North East Spain to South East England. The pigeon was actually found in the loft as Steve's brother had been at the loft at 5 am and opened the loft up for the racers to have their freedom. When Steve went to the loft at 7.55 the cock was sat in his box waiting for him!*



Steven Rhodes with his 8th Open Barcelona winner

The pigeon is a beautiful dark velvet cock of Jan Aarden bloodlines bred by Steve and Lesley Wright at the House of Aarden. Bloodlines are basically Jan Polder with De Barcelona 862, De Barcelona Missy, Broken Warrior and Warrior Princess in the pedigree. The cock flew both Pau International at 553 miles and Perpignan International at 598 miles in 2016 so he was well versed in the trials and tribulations of the International race circuit. This season he has been raced unpaired in the early part of the season having outings from Messac at 226 miles and Poitiers at 271 miles in preparation. He was then mated 14 days before basketting and sent to Barcelona on fresh eggs. This performance adds to the Rhodes' great two bird performance from the difficult BBC Zaragosa race. Steve has asked me to congratulate the Padfields on an outstanding performance flying into Wales.



*Yet another top class fancier comes in at 3rd West section 9th Open, none other than **John Halstead** who clocked a 4 year old widowhood cock at 3.18 pm on the fourth afternoon to record a velocity of 309 mpm over the 697 miles from Barcelona to Dorset. The pigeon is now named Nyland Reco which was John's single entry. The father to this cock is a son of Nyland Ashley who was 2nd Open Barcelona in 2008. The dam was purchased from Graham Clift of Tirley in 2012 and is from his daughter of "Tuff Nut" when mated to a son of "Brian's Blue", therefore 100% Brian Denny bloodlines.*



***John Halstead 3rd West and 9th Open** Nyland Reco is so named because of his amazing RECOvery rate from any race or difficult fly, had been in super condition for the last 4 or 5 weeks and in his final prep race on 17th June even managed 4th Club from Fougères 191 miles in a 4 ½ hour jaunt. He previously flew the very difficult Palamos race in 2015 homing literally hours after the race closed and in 2016 he was 444th Open NFC Messac 6440 birds.*

That then is the initial report on the BICC Barcelona International race. Let me assure members that I will give due coverage to any Barcelona pigeons that return home after this report has been sent for publication. All you have to do is give me a call on 01443 / 435684 or email to Gcymro@aol.com and I'll do the rest. This request also applies to those members who clock successfully from this weekend's two BICC races from Le Mans and the St Vincent International. As you can imagine my time will be extremely limited in preparing two race reports in time for the publication deadline. I will not be able to do this without the members' cooperation. So please help me to help you.

I can also inform BICC members that race reports will now appear on the PIPA, Toppigeons and Herbots websites.

Gareth Watkins