



## **BICC LE MANS RACE REPORT.**

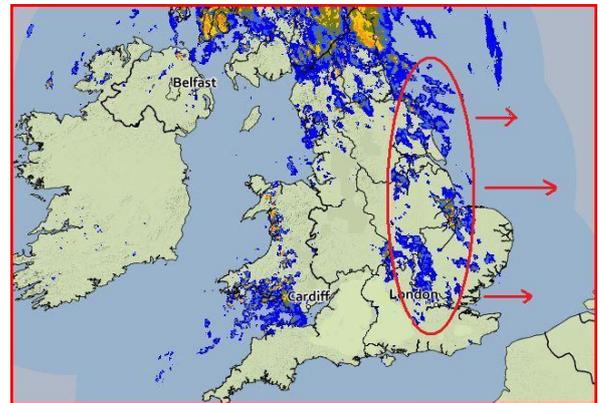
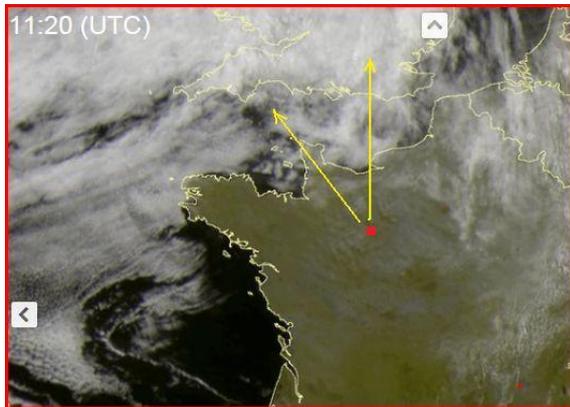
*A total of 3,192 pigeons entered by members of the BICC were liberated from the French city of Le Mans at 9 am on Saturday 15th July. This number is only slightly down on the number sent to the equivalent 2016 race, so obviously entries are holding up well under the combined pressure of some of the difficult races experienced by the fancy in general and competition from other National organizations that are also competing in cross channel races.*

*Here's the race advisors' report on the preparations for liberation.*

*For this National from Le Mans we had a good entry of 3179 pigeons. Marking and collection of birds seemed to go well and both Transporters caught the Thursday evening ferry from Portsmouth to Caen. By lunchtime Friday they had arrived on site at Le Mans where the birds were later fed and watered and left to settle overnight. On the Friday afternoon we had spoken with our weather advisor Steve Appleby and he was fairly confident we would have good conditions for the race on the Saturday, although he had some concerns about a weak weather front crossing the UK from west to east early on Saturday morning. We had contact with Chief Convoyer Trevor Cracknell several times on Friday and he reported it was warm and sunny at Le Mans and the French agent had told him Saturday was to be a good day for racing.*

*Steve phoned with a weather update just before 6 am on the Saturday morning and reported that conditions in France were 100% perfect but due to the weak weather front crossing the UK he recommended delaying the liberation till around 9 am, when he predicted most of the drizzly rain would have dissipated into the North sea, giving a clearer line of flight for the birds. This information was passed to our*

*Convoyer's Trevor and Steve and as recommended the convoy was liberated at 9 am into blue skies and sunshine, with a very light NE wind.*



*Winds in the channel were forecast to be West or SW force 4/5 .*



***The French coast at Wimereux***

*A fairly good race ensued but it was unfortunate that conditions in the West Country and Wales were not as good as other parts of the Country. It was pleasing to note that Ray Anderson from Washington (Tyne and Wear) clocked a super pigeon at 9-32 pm on the winning day flying 482 miles. Well done to Ray and to Kevin Foster on winning the race.*

*Just to keep members informed - On the return ferry journey our chief Convoyer Trevor Cracknell fell heavily into a 2 foot deep hole when alighting from the lorry cab in the hold of the ship. He was directed to park there by a Brittany Ferries staff member. Trevor is a fairly hardy character but sustained injuries to his back and shoulder so we wish him a speedy recovery.*

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

*Steve Appleby's weather synopsis for Le Mans.....*

*Analysing the weather conditions on Friday for Saturday race always signaled the green light. Saturday morning dawned with almost cloudless skies over France showing a clear flight path from Le Mans to the northern French coast. The channel again posed no problem although more cloud was identified moving along from west to east. Visibility was first class supported by the views from the various cameras situated along the French coast line. Moving onto England the main concern was a weather front carrying heavy cloud and patchy light rain moving across the country from west to east and also poor conditions over the West Country and Wales. After consultation with the race controllers it was decided to delay liberation giving time for the front to move away over the North Sea and secondly for conditions to improve in the West Country. Race controllers John and Mark decided 09:00 hours would be the correct time to liberate as delaying liberation proved important for the success of the race. Over France winds were mainly light and variable until the birds reached the French coast when they changed to westerly. Across the channel they were mainly westerly averaging 15 mph and over England west south westerly giving some assistance to the birds racing into the east of the country. Steve Appleby (weather advisor.)*

*Once again, I must emphasise at the start of this report that the positions quoted are based purely on members' first bird verifications. The final result might well differ.*

*The winner of 1<sup>st</sup> East section and 1<sup>st</sup> Open is a yearling widowhood cock racing to the Kent loft of **Kevin Foster** and recording a velocity of 1485 ypm.*



**Kevin Foster 1st Open BICC Le Mans**

*This is what Kevin had to tell me about his National win:-“I had one of those races that only happen once in a while at National level, so as you can imagine I'm over the moon with not only the win but the team performance.*

*The pigeons have been thereabouts for all the National races this year with the hens largely outperforming the cocks, and to be truthful I expected the hens to dominate from this race but on this occasion the cocks were at the front. In fact 5 of the 7 clocked before 2pm were cocks, which only goes to show that after 50 years with pigeons I still get it wrong!*

*My first pigeon is a yearling widowhood cock. He was bred by my partner in our breeding operation Tim Rodwell who now looks after all the stock birds.*



*The sire is from John Searle originating from Brian Denneys “Tuff Nut” and Chris Gordon's “Snydale Express”. The dam is from Tim’s good Koopman family of Kanibaal and Picasso lines. He's one we had marked down for next year’s National racing having flown consistently in his 3 previous channel races.*

*The second pigeon , another yearling Koopman cock bred by Tim , dropped just behind the winner with a Norwich pigeon but decided to serenade it before going in .*

*My thanks to everyone who contacted me to offer congratulations, also to the BICC committee for providing racing of the highest level to a growing membership. Finally to Tim Rodwell for breeding the winner.” Congratulations Kevin on your National win. A full loft report will appear shortly with Kevin’s cooperation.*

*In 2<sup>nd</sup> East section 2<sup>nd</sup> Open is a two year old to the Maidstone partnership of **Steve Tilley and Jason Shaughnessy** on 1478 ypm. Steve and Jason clocked a 2 year old mealy cock flown on roundabout and having his fourth trip across the “briney” this season. Steve tells me he was improving with every outing leading up to his near miss for top honours from Le Mans. Bloodlines are Staf van Reet x Soontjen. His sire was 1st club 3rd Fed and 9th Kent Combine Messac 2 weeks ago and previously has won Tours including 1<sup>st</sup> Fed Tours; 3<sup>rd</sup> Kent Combine and 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Kent & Essex Amalgamation / Joint Venture. The cock’s grand father also won 1<sup>st</sup> Open Kent Combine from Sennen Cove and is responsible for multiple 1st prize winners for different fanciers. A terrific line of top class performers in the pedigree there.*



*The Grays ,Essex partnership of **Packer & Clarke** come in next at 3<sup>rd</sup> East section 3<sup>rd</sup> Open with a yearling on 1472 ypm. The partners clocked a chequer cock bred from stock obtained from Gerry Clements from his Van Den Driessche pigeons. The sire*



*was a Grandson of Kronnen and the mother is a daughter of De Kapitein and has already bred a 6<sup>th</sup> Open National winner for Gerry.*

*The winner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Le Mans was only trained as a baby, and as a yearling this year, has had 3 inland races from Poole at 114 miles, Le Mans being his first channel race.*

*The Basildon firm of solicitors **Gibbs, Chaplin & White** clocked a two year old on 1466 ypm to finish at 4<sup>th</sup> East section 4<sup>th</sup> Open.*

*The partners clocked a Van Reet hen flown celibate. She has been one of the loft's most consistent performers winning 1<sup>st</sup> club from Poole earlier in the season. Le Mans was her second channel race of the season. The partners would like to congratulate Kevin Foster on his National win.*



*We then go down to Sandwich in Kent and the loft of **Neil Jones** where we find the bird taking 5<sup>th</sup> east section and 5<sup>th</sup> Open on 1465 ypm. Neil clocked a yearling cock sent driving his hen to nest. The cock flew Fontenay last week, 200 miles.*

*Bloodlines are as follows:- Sire bred by Tommy Sparkes of Coorman bloodlines whilst the Dam comes through John Halstead's Vandanabeeles and was only brought in in 2015. Neil tells me that the Sire is an East of England Open winner with multiple club, Fed and Combine prizes from all distances. Neil has now retired him to the stock loft where he is producing numerous winners.*



*Staying in the East section and 6<sup>th</sup> Open is to be found at the loft of **Fred Ager** who clocked another yearling on 1455.8 ypm.*

*Fred clocked was a yearling chequer widowhood cock that was shown his hen on basketting after two weeks apart. He is bred*

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*from Geerinx pigeons obtained from Foxwood lofts.*

*Fred's bird narrowly beats **Micky Watts'** yearling into 7<sup>th</sup> Open velocity 1455.7 ypm. Micky's timer is a yearling widowhood cock bred by M& D Evans from their world famous Vandenabeele stock. Mick only sent two pigeons and his timer was well fancied being pooled all the way.*



***D Wilton & Son**, fresh from their pigeon's great performances in the Barcelona International race where they finished at 1<sup>st</sup> East section 2<sup>nd</sup> Open with the BICC, come in with a bird on 1453 ypm to take 8<sup>th</sup> East section 8<sup>th</sup> Open. This is what Andrew Wilton had to say about his latest successful BICC race:-  
"Our timer from the BICC Le Mans race was a two year old cock flown on the widowhood system. He is a son of our cock that was 2nd in the BICC Le Mans race in 2014 and he is a brother of the blue cock we got from the first BICC Poitiers race this year taking 7<sup>th</sup> Open and the BBC race a couple of weeks ago. They are both through our old Super Crack and Vale Cahors line. He's been raced a lot this year having all the BICC races before leading up to Le Mans and had been sent to the BBC race a couple of weeks ago."*



*The Basildon partnership of **Mr & Mrs Wakerley** come in at 9<sup>th</sup> East section 9<sup>th</sup> Open on 1451 ypm. This yearling cock comes through good friends Dave and Gary Heywood's BICC Poitiers winner and is of Hartog bloodlines. This year he has had four races winning so far 26<sup>th</sup> UBI combined Carentan 2,229 birds; 13<sup>th</sup> NFC Messac 6,904 birds; 11<sup>th</sup> Open BBC Fougères 2,038 birds and now 9<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Le Mans 3,192 birds. Needless to say with a track record like that he was well fancied being pooled and single bird named. A terrific pigeon there for the Wakerleys. Well done.*



*In at 10<sup>th</sup> East section 10<sup>th</sup> Open is one to **Bryn Thomas** with a 2016 latebred Staf van Reet cock, that was given just 3 eight mile training tosses in November last year and then put straight into the widowhood loft this year. Le Mans was his fourth channel race. Bryn does not belong to a local club so all his racing is at National level. The cock's grandfather was 1st London N R Combine Berwick, and 2nd LNRC Stonehaven. The Thomas loft consists of 2 sections of widowhood cocks, which are raced on alternate weeks in the BICC and NFC. Bryn started the season with 9 cocks in each section and at the moment has six left in each section.*

*Around the sections now and as can be seen from the Open result the east section has proven dominant with the first ten in the section taking all of the top ten Open positions.*

*The Centre section was won by a two year old racing to the Catford loft of Mark Williams and recording 1446 ypm. Mark clocked a 2 year old round about cock of Zwols x Lambrechts bloodlines. The Zwols coming via Lee Ogden and the Lambrechts through Steve Foster. Mark's seven pairs of round about racers were mated in mid April and separated after sitting the first round of eggs for 10 days. The cock was raced weekly inland winning 1<sup>st</sup> club Wincanton and was then sent to BICC Alencon before going to Le Mans. Mark would like to congratulate Kevin Foster on his win and also give thanks to the convoyers on the condition of his pigeons on return. Mark sent three and got all three on the day.*



*In second place in the Centre section is one to Ken Wise of Isleworth with a yearling on 1370 ypm.*

*The Brighton partnership of D & J Novis comes in at 3<sup>rd</sup> Centre section with a yearling on 1366 ypm.*

*Then we go up to the North East section where we find the leader at the loft of Eddy and Clayton Oxborough who clocked a four year old widowhood hen on 1422 ypm to top the section. This was bred from*

*their stock team .The sire was from H&G Cook and son from Kings Lynn from one of his best breeding cocks, a Busschaert . The dam was from Graham Gilchrist and Brennan from Tyne & Wear from a daughter of Jimmy's Boy 1st Up North Combine Folkstone. She has*



*previously won 1st section BICC Falaise in 2016 so that's two section wins to her credit.*

*Eddy and Clayton would like to thank all the secretaries and clock setters in all the club's they belong to for all of their hard work*

*Robert Saunders' 3 year old comes in next at 2<sup>nd</sup> NE section velocity 1371 ypm.*

*Here's Robert's take on the race:-*

*"I got two three year old Widowhood Hens pretty close together and should be 2nd and 5th Section. These hens are sisters. Both have flown consistently this season and flew Alencon last weekend. I paired these up about two weeks ago and both were sitting for this race and they both went straight back on their eggs. Sire was Van Geel and the Dam being the daughter of my Tours 2011 National winner.*



*Well done to the winner, Kevin Foster and well done to all the Section Winners especially, Eddy and Clayton Oxborough.*

*I would like to thank Ness Point Marking Station as all birds that placed high up in the Section were marked through Ness Point Marking Station. I would also like to thank the Convoyers as I had seven out of eight birds home in top condition again."*

*Previous Le Mans winners with the BICC the husband and wife partnership of Mr & Mrs David Quantrill come in at 3<sup>rd</sup> NE section with a 2 year old on 1369 ypm.*

*Moving across into the North Central section now and the winner here can be found at the Rushden, Northants loft of Mick and Sue Smith recording a velocity of 1377 ypm. Here's what Mick and Sue had to say about the race:-*

*“We would like to firstly thank the convoyers for the great condition that the birds arrived home in. The four year old widowhood cock was first time across the Channel this year, after a Salisbury, Bedhampton and three times to Poole in the local club. As to the breeding of this pigeon: - the sire is a Deweerdt from Russell Bradford, and the dam is a Meritman cross with Graham Groom’s Geoff Cooper lines. The Great Dam won Tarbes twice for Graham in the Burton Latimer club. It was great to win the section after previously having had a second section and this definitely puts the icing on the cake to end my old bird season.”*



*John Black of Hitchin is in yet again with another good timer to take 2<sup>nd</sup> North Central section velocity 1344 ypm, with a yearling blue chequer widowhood cock having his fifth channel race of the season. He was John’s first bird in a hard Messac race with the NFC four weeks ago. The Dam is a daughter of Johnny Chipperfield’s good cock Bullet and the sire is a Grandson of Andre Roodhooft’s Golden pair from Sheldon Leonard ,Arklow, Ireland which is one of John’s best racing cock with 6 X 1sts and 2X1st Fed etc. Le Mans was a good race for John as he had five from six yearlings home in good time. J Gore & son of Whaplode come in at 3<sup>rd</sup> NC section with a 2 year old on 1321 ypm.*



*North west section winner was one to Nigel Matthews who is going into partnership next year with Neale Harris. Their first in the clock is down from Little Gem lines and the second bird which may well take 2<sup>nd</sup> section contains Wingdown bloodlines.*



*Ian Barnbrook comes in at 3<sup>rd</sup> NW section with a two year old on 1169 ypm.*

*Finally, we move over to the West section where the birds had it all to do battling against the prevailing westerly wind and the winner, a yearling, recorded a velocity of 1239 when racing to the Radstock loft of Tony Seery. Tony clocked a widowhood cock of Willy Thas bloodlines. This one had been trained with the Bristol Fed down to the coast and then sent to Fougères before basketting for Le Mans.*

*Next comes another yearling racing to the Abbots Leigh loft of R & J Whiteside doing 1103 ypm.*

*Steve Dickinson and Phil Newton come at 3<sup>rd</sup> west section with yet another yearling on 1077 ypm. Here's what the partners told me about their set up:-*

*“Firstly we would like to congratulate the winner and all section winners on their performances.*

*Our partnership is in its third season being successful at club level this being the best result to date at National level.*

*We are ably assisted by loft hand John Harris, Steve's father in law. This was the bird's sixth channel race of the season, he has come consistently all season and was sent to this race sitting eight day eggs. He is a full brother to GB15V49172 which won 1st west section 2nd open Poitiers 2 just a few weeks ago for Phil.”*



*in*

*There you go then, another excellent race for BICC members . When looking at the result it is obvious that the strong westerly influence of the wind in the English Channel and across mainland Britain had a major influence in where the winning pigeons were to be found. However, all those fanciers who I contacted expressed their immense satisfaction with the condition of their pigeons on return. This is testament to the care and attention of our two convoyers, Trevor and Steve and also to the design and manufacture of the BICC transporters.*

*In closing I would like to mention that Ray Anderson managed to get a bird on the edge of darkness all the way up there at Washington ,Tyne & Wear flying 482 miles on the day. Terrific pigeon flying.*

*As you can see from the above report there is a lack of information on some of the minor section prize winning pigeons. I have done my best*

*in the time available to contact as many fanciers as possible. If details are missing on some, it is because I either couldn't reach those fanciers, or they didn't take the opportunity to contact me as requested. I can only do so much in the time available.*

*Gareth Watkins*

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