

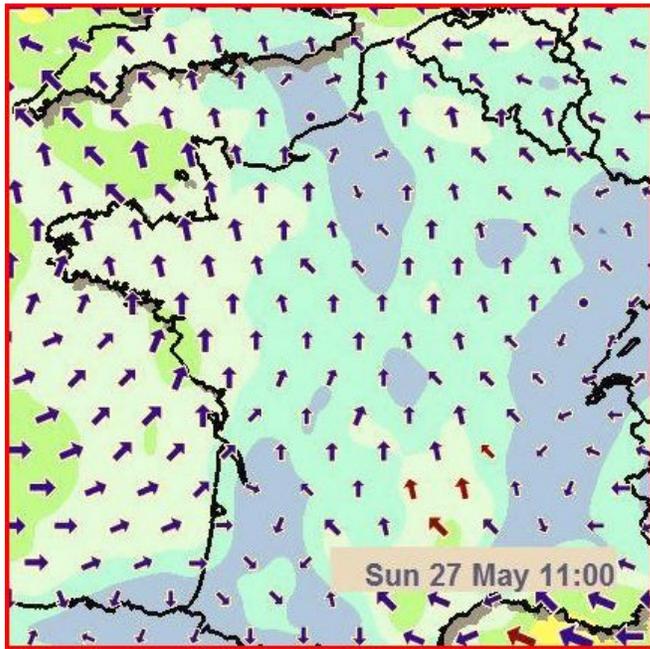
BICC Cholet National Race Report

They say you can only play with the hand that you are dealt with and so far, this season the BICC has been dealt a very tough hand! As the weather and winds seem to have alternated on a weekly basis from pretty damn good to, shall we say, “fairly testing”, the BICC seems to have copped the testing ones every race up to now. The first two races were a challenge that we seem to have passed with flying colours, with generally speaking good returns and good racing, with excellent performances put up all over the country. As we moved towards Cholet it was very much a case of “same conditions, different week.” Incredibly the club managed to secure a send of 2,853 birds, despite lower sends from some marking stations towards the East of the country, which was understandable given the conditions forecast. As testing a weekend as it was, the race control team did a superb job, a real team effort from the weather adviser, race advisers and convoyers, keep up the good work everyone! Here are their reports as always. Firstly Steve Appleby, then John Tyerman and Mark Gilbert.

Weather Report

The main improvement from Saturday was the overall increased visibility especially in the channel. The various web cams located along the French coast gave views looking out to sea of approximately 5 miles. The image captured from the camera at the Octeville yacht club situated on the Cherbourg peninsula shows the good visibility. The satellite image of the flight path from Cholet to the channel identified broken cloud and blue skies all the way. Winds generally were light over France from the south which was sustained up to the French coast line. Over the channel they became south, south easterly, but changed to more easterly direction over the English mainland (see chart). So, with all the relevant weather data analysed a decision to liberate was made. Our convoyers Trevor and Steve were happy to see the B.I.C.C. convoy leave Cholet at 06:30 hours in one batch heading north under broken cloud and blue skies.





Race Advisors Report for Falaise National.

Yet another very difficult weekend for the race Controllers of all organisations racing from France. For BICC Cholet National, John Tyerman was away in France en-route to Bergerac on holiday but agreed to speak to both Mark and Steve to give a weather update from Le Mans on the Saturday morning. Although the French weather was good on Saturday it soon became clear that the English Channel was virtually fogbound all day and no race was possible from Cholet, so a holdover was called. Steve, our weather expert remained in close contact with Mark and our Convoyers Trevor and Steve at Cholet, and he was confident that a race was possible for the Sunday. Birds were liberated at 6.30am on Sunday 27th May, into good weather and a light SEW. A fairly testing race ensued and despite the holdover returns seem to have been reasonably good. Well done to our winners.

Mark Gilbert, Steve Appleby and John Tyerman
BICC Race Advisory Team.

A change from the previous two races with the West Section hugely benefitting from the wind direction from Cholet, taking a clean sweep in the Open with the first 13 fanciers all coming from the West Section! We'll kick off with the Open and then look at the other Sections. As you may have noticed in the first couple of reports, as oppose to just recognising the first 10 birds in the Open and the first 3 in the Section, we are striving to get the information together for the first 10 fanciers in the Open and the first 3 in the Section, regardless of multiple clocking's. This, we believe, is going to make for informative reporting and give the due recognition to the fanciers who work so hard to secure those positions. As we realised at a fairly early stage that Mr and Mrs McClements had several birds in the early positions, this makes this style of report much more important in our eyes.

OPEN

2nd Fancier on the result sheet is Zbignew Nowak of Plymouth, clocking a yearling which was rattling along at 1798 yards per minute. A native of Poland, Zbignew tells us a little about the new star of his loft.

“The pigeon which was clocked first from the race in my loft, has come from my old stray which has come from Poland. I have raced these in Poland before 2006. The father of the pigeon which came first, has come third in the same race in my loft. I would like to congratulate Mr and Mrs McClements for having the first three pigeons from Cholet.”

Staying in Plymouth, we have Luscombe and Williams as **3rd Fanciers on the result**. An incredible couple of weeks for the Luscombe family with another sibling winning the NFC Messac race the week after Cholet. The pigeon clocked for Luscombe/Williams partnership is a Staf Van Reet pigeon, warmed up for the season with regularly 15-mile tosses in the evening. The pigeon has been clocked inland consistently so far this year and was also at the NFC Coutances race the week before Cholet.

The flyers who were **4th to clock** need no introduction from me, Dave and John Staddon. Dave kindly sent me the following information detailing the birds that he had drop together in this race from Cholet. Flying to their number two loft at Dave's home, which was established in 2017, they only have yearlings to fly in 2018.

"Hi John, firstly I'd like to congratulate the winners John and Jill McClements on a fabulous performance, they are two very hard workers for the sport and nicer people would be hard to find. We'd also like to congratulate all section winners and fanciers well up in the open result.

This proved a fast but erratic race to our loft. Returns have not been good in our area, with lots of birds away from all lofts including our own which is obviously disappointing. We'd calculated a time of approximately 5 hours 20 mins to our loft for a good bird but then Mark Gilbert called me to say that there were birds in Plymouth ahead of time, so we were willing home an early arrival. Then at 4 hours 29mins our first cock arrived dead out of the south and really trying hard, we knew this was a good time. He is bred in the purple but from our long-distance lines. The sire was purchased cheaply by dad in Blackpool from those great long-distance fliers Barry & Pete Winter and is known as "Winter Gem". He is from "Pearler", a full brother of "Little Gem", 1st & 14th Open Tarbes, this when "Pearler" was paired to "Image", a sister to "Little Gem". "Pearler" is now sire to the Winter's latest star, taking 8th & 41st Open Tarbes NFC. The mother of our timer is home bred and a full sister to "John's Joy", 2nd Sec G 10th Open Tarbes NFC, 560 Miles on the day in 15 hours 21 mins. She is from two Geoff & Cath Cooper pigeons, a son of "JW" and a daughter of "George", 1st Open Tarbes NFC, making this cock a close relative to the hen which won 2nd Sec G 9th Open NFC Coutances the week previous.



Our 2nd bird arrived only a minute or two behind from the same direction, he is remarkably a full brother to the first pigeon. Our third bird, a hen, arrived less than a minute later, she was bred from the race team at our Evercreech loft. She is bred from a son of our Champion racer "Unbreakable" 4th BICC Carentan Nat, 19th CSCFC Bergerac, 30th BICC Tours Nat, 65th NFC Tarbes Nat, 73rd BICC Perpignan Nat, 75th BICC Falaise Nat, 79th CSCFC Carentan, 102nd NFC Saintes Nat, 157th NFC Tarbes Nat, 173rd NFC Fougères Nat, 31st Alençon BICC Nat 6823 birds & 63rd Falaise BICC Nat 3278 birds. The dam of this hen is a full sister to our 1st NFC Coutances Winner from 2016 of Hereman Ceusters bloodlines.

We had a great day overall as we also won 1st SW Section 2nd Open in the CSCFC Messac Race.

All birds are raced on chaos widowhood and are being fed to on Versele Laga corn to a Mark Gilbert system. These birds will now be prepared for the next BICC race from Poitiers. Finally, we would like to thank Clive & Jill Rogers for their hard work in running the Radstock marking station with their excellent team of markers. They provide our local fanciers with a brilliant corn store and training services and deserve the success they have been enjoying this season, we greatly appreciate it, Clive & Jill."

5th Fancier on the result is Dave Johnson of St Austell, I am going to allow some coverage of him shortly before we round up the Section winners, along with a couple of other birds from Cornwall



6th are the Cooper partnership, and as always Catherine has been kind enough to send the information over to me regarding their timers.

“We were sat in the garden with good friend Baz Nicol when at just over 55 mph a two-year-old dark cock landed on the trap. We clocked a son of “Farmer George”, 1st International

Bordeaux and "Wollongong", 1st International Pau. He was very wet when he landed, yet we clocked a second pigeon, a hen 28 seconds later which was completely dry! The second pigeon clocked was a two-year-old granddaughter of "George", 1st Grand National Tarbes and "Misty", a multiple top prize winner."



7th on the board is R and R Wilton, another convert of the Chaos System which has been utilised so well by the Staddon's. The Wilton pairing have been using the system for just under 3 years now and love it! Simple racing with devastating results at times. Following 50 years in pigeons, racing natural, widowhood, roundabout, they are still learning, and the Chaos System has really helped to peak the interest after all these years in this wonderful hobby of ours. The clocked pigeon is a Hereman Cuester bird.

Back to Plymouth again for the **8th Fanciers** on the result sheet, this time to Terry Lee and Terry Dwyer. This yearling hen is proving to be a real asset having been clocked in 4 races so far this year, including being the first pigeon from 2 Channel races. The pigeon has some Vandabeele in it, as well as some Mark Dorrington blood which came in from pigeons loaned to the pairing from Mike Underhill.

The strong partnership of Brooks Brothers and Wilcox continued the West Section theme to become the **9th Fanciers** from the West to clock in the Open result. I troubled Stuart Wilcox for some information and this is what was provided by Stuart.

"Hi John, we timed a cock from our distance family which is based on the Brooks Brothers family mixed with the lines of Legacy, Isla Rainy Day Boy, Little Gem and George, all top national and International winners! The dam of the cock was 2nd Section, 16th Open BICC Agen and the sire is a grandson of 1st International Pau! All pigeons are flown widowhood with the main focus being all BICC races."

Rounding off the **Top 10 Fanciers** in the Open is Joe Raeburn. Some distance blood did the damage for Joe in this race. Mainly his own distance bloodlines which come down from Wilf Reed on one side and Joe's Saintes Section winner on the other side. This yearling round-about had paired to another hen, which incredibly topped the Federation on the same day as the Cholet race! The next step now is for the yearling hen to go to Tarbes, following conversations with Mark Gilbert over the Winter, Joe has decided to give it a go with the yearlings at the Grand National this year.

Cornish Clockers

I for one am more than happy to put to press information that is sent to me, subject to it being relevant and an enhancement to the articles which we put together. Therefore, a huge thank you to Perry Liddle for sending me this information on Dave Johnson, **5th to clock in the Open Result**, and some other top performers into Cornwall. I don't think we will ever appreciate how difficult it must be to fly into Cornwall from France, it's a beautiful part of the world and maybe one day I'll be able to fly there, who knows!

"When the birds were liberated at Cholet with the BICC at 06:30 there was a journey of around 290 miles ahead of the Cornish competitors. Flying with a helping south easterly wind, this race was very much not the norm for the Cornish birds; as they are normally hampered by a prevailing south westerly wind that adds many miles to the journey. In these conditions, the Cornish birds romped home, however on reaching the Duchy they were met with dense fog which was just beginning to clear when the first arrivals were clocked.

They do say that pigeon racing is all about "horses for courses", "having the right tools for the job" and all I can say is that the two birds that appear highest on the result are both from high quality long distance stock and when given the chance they have certainly shown their owners what they can do.

First to clock was Dave Johnson, who timed a yearling dark chequer roundabout hen at 11:44 to record 1636yph for the 292 mile trip. This is the same hen that Dave timed last week to be in the first 10 of the section at NFC Coutances and knowing that she was in good form, Dave had enough confidence to make her his £1 and £5 nomination. On this occasion Dave said that she came like an absolute bullet, folding her wings like a peregrine in full stoop as she raced towards the loft! It was awesome to see! Dave was clearly still buzzing from the excitement of seeing her drop when we spoke, so she really must have been something to see! The hen is beautifully bred, being from Dave's old Logan Family when crossed with a Jimmy Shepherd "Southwell" obtained from Murray Newman of Hampshire. Congratulations Dave, a really good bird on the day!

Second in the clock was the loft of Lee Luscombe and Mr and Mrs Wright. Lee clocked their 2yo blue w/f roundabout hen at 12:19 to record 1478yph. Interestingly, this hen was one of the partnerships timers last week at NFC Coutances when they had three drop together to figure high in the section, so clearly, she is in top form. Furthermore, she is a beautifully bred House of Aarden, Jan Aarden, granddaughter of Champion Padfield's Blue Badge (BICC

Certificate of Merit Winner) and Champion De Cas (1st International Barcelona Ace Pigeon 2009 – 2010). Again, a good bird on the day, well done to the partnership.”

Thanks again so much Perry for sending this over, I really appreciate it.

WEST SECTION

As you can see from the Open Result, the West Section has been very well covered so far! Therefore, we'll look at the remaining 5 Sections to highlight the top performers there.

CENTRE SECTION

1st Place in the Section goes to Mr and Mrs Harris and Daughter, with a 3-year-old. The trio's pigeon is no stranger to the limelight, having been 2nd Section Old Hens NFC National in 2016. Bred by the father and sister, Linda, of Mr Harris, the bird did not race in 2017 having spent a year in the stock loft. It's going to be difficult to put her back in there now after a performance like this one! They would like to congratulate the winners and say a huge thanks to all involved with the race, as they 4 out of 5 on the day, all in excellent condition.



2nd Section is another partnership, K Farr and J Woodhouse, clocking a 2-year-old pigeon into Aldershot doing 1505 YPM, just nudging them ahead of Mark Gilbert by 4 yards having covered 292 miles from Cholet.

Mark Gilberts first bird in the clock secured **3rd Section** for the Windsor loft. Another superb performance from Mark, peppering the result with many birds up in the Open result.

EAST SECTION

Alan Jackson clocked a yearling at 309 miles on a tough day for the East Section to take **1st Section**. Alan sent 10 birds and provided me with this little insight into his timer.

“This pigeon was bred from a pigeon from Gosling & Jarvis when paired to my London and South east Classic Club Tarbes winner, this was his third channel race and he was 22nd section 38th open Falaise earlier this year”

In **2nd Section** is Micky Connolly and Son. Micky sent me over the following information.

“I fly with my son Michael and we have raced North Road all our pigeon lives, being many times Federation Champions, Club Champions and winning Combines, in both short distance and long-distance races. This season we decided to compete on the South Road, turning our pigeons South with no training whatsoever! Straight into the first race which was Falaise, our goal being to get good returns until they learn the ropes. We have loved racing in the BICC, a great new challenge and our returns have been terrific. The pigeon we timed from Cholet is a yearling chequer hen and she has been our first pigeon from all three races so far. Her sire was bred by Robbie and Andrew Wilton and her dam is a Casaert from Billy Lynch. Finally, congratulations to the Open winner and all the Section winners.”

A great story there from Micky about how you can be successful with pigeons, even if you are a little unorthodox with things! They are homing pigeons after all, north, south, east or west, it doesn't matter to them!





Tom Williams from Orpington is in **3rd Section**. Tom's widowhood cock is a consistent performer and Tom has highlighted some great details of this class act.

"Here are some details of my 4-year-old widowhood cock that was 3rd section from Cholet at 301 miles. He is a very good and reliable cock who is named "The 80 cock". He has been 15th Section P, 116th Open Tarbes with the NFC, 129th Open Saintes with the NFC and 14th Section P 226th Open Saintes with the NFC. As we can all see the wind was against the birds in Kent but "The 80" held his line and came from the South. I train my birds from Devils

Dyke in the hope they will know every blade of grass when they cross the channel at Brighton.

His sire is my "Mr Reliable" who has scored three times Second Section in the L&SECC from Tours, Bergerac and Tarbes. He has never had a night out in his life. His Dam is a daughter of "Fred", a merit award winner for Darrol Luxford from Tarbes.

I sent my whole team to Cholet all 8 of them, I clocked 7 of them and the other one was waiting when I got home from clocks that night. It was a very hard race and they all came home in very good order. For this I thank the BICC team responsible for our birds, Mark Gilbert, Trevor Cracknell, John Tyerman and my very good friend Steve Appleby, a first-class weather man. Thanks guys, you all do a first-class job. My thanks also go to Tom Firmager and his team at Bromley marking station."

NORTH EAST SECTION

It was a tough race up into the North East Section and after nearly 10 hours on the wing a bird dropped in Mildenhall to give a Section victory to L. Rix and Son.

As it says above, **1st Place** in the North East goes to L. Rix and Son, they also took **3rd Place** in the Section. Unfortunately, I did endeavour to get in contact with the winners of the North East Section but to no avail. I would however like to recognise them so will continue to try and will bolt the information onto another report if possible.

2nd Place is Shaun Ewing, proving that patience that really reward you in this game. Have a read of this from Shaun himself.

"The bird is a 2013 bred hen which was lost off the loft as a youngster, re-appearing as a yearling and being raced for the first time as a three-year-old. It's first Channel crossing was in 2017, and it had been to Alencon two weeks ago with the BICC, as it came so well I sent it to Cholet rather than keep it back for Poitiers as planned."



All about knowing your pigeons, what they are capable of, and striking whilst the iron is hot! Well done Shaun.

Jacqui and Terry Ivatt are in **4th Place** and were the 3rd fanciers to clock in the North east Section. The bird was bred by themselves from a De Rawn Sablon hen. This particular hen

has bred several winners for the partnership, when crossed with a specific Janssen cock. This pigeon was also the first pigeon to the loft from the recent BICC Alencon race.

There does seem to have been a lot of repeat performers that have been clocked in good positions in this race, birds that have been in the hunt at their loft for a few races and have now finally come to the fore.

NORTH CENTRE SECTION

Phil Lane and Son are in **1st Place** in the North Centre Section from Cholet. Here is what Phil had to say about the bird that came well to the Wootton loft in this race.

“Just a brief description of my bird which was 1st North Centre Section on the Cholet Race.

He is a dark chequered cock, a 2015 bred bird. He is notably the worst tapping pigeon in the loft (only sat out 2 minutes this time). If he would only trap when he comes home, he would have won many 1st prizes. His breeding is Van-De-Drishé, both parents were purchased at Frank Tasker's entire clearance sale.”

I know we have all had one or two of those in the past Phil! A serious frustration and even more blood-boiling when it happens to be a super racer as well!



Marek Krasowski of Bedford clocked a Jan Aarden to grab **2nd Section** in the North Centre. This 3-year-old blue hen flew 350 miles on the day in 7 hours and 21 minutes.



In my previous race report I mentioned that Dominic Gruzelier could well make his own legend! So close to a Section topping performance last time out at Alencon, Dominic's team was again very close, this time in **3rd Section**. Sending only 5 birds to take on 345 miles, it may be that Dominic has found a superstar as this hen is the same hen which scored 2nd

Section from Alencon just two weeks before. Being inbred to his best racing cock, a pigeon called "Willow", which has scored twice in the Top 10 in National competition, the hen is raced on a form of widowhood at the Gruzelier loft.



NORTH WEST SECTION

Having had conversations on the day of liberation with Russell Bradford, we both recognised the fact that "today could be the day" that the North west Section really makes a name for itself with the East in the wind. And whilst there were some excellent pigeons clocked in the Cholet National into the North West, the North that accompanied the east in the wind just seemed to slow the birds down somewhat as they made their way up the country. Nevertheless, some excellent performances still need shouting about!

1st and 2nd Section were both taken by M&C Lee, who live in the village of Alfrick, about 6 miles outside of Worcester, sending just 8 birds, what a great performance. The details of the first pigeon are below.



“Hi John, some details of my blue chequer hen 1st sec NW. She flew NFC Coutances last week and was 4th bird to loft, not paired at all, just shown to some cocks in the aviary. The sire is a Deweerdt and dam is of Brian Denny blood lines.”

3rd Section are the Section winners from Alencon, continuing their great run of form, Matthews and Harris of Bridgnorth. As the North West Section continues to strengthen it is

an amazing feat to get back up towards the top of the result sheet yet again, this 3-year-old pigeon covered 378 miles in just over 8 and a half hours.

4th Section and the third fancier to clock is John Rodway, a familiar face in the BICC results. John had this to say about his own bird, and a little congratulation to a fellow club member.

“Firstly, congratulations to my fellow club member, Micky Lee on winning first section by a wide margin.

My first bird was an eight-year-old dark cock sent sitting eggs. The previous week he was in the NFC Coutances race where he was well behind the leaders. The bird was gifted to me by another club member Richard Pugh, who is well known for his distance success from Barcelona. The race for myself was very erratic with my arrivals well-spaced out. This was probably due to the torrential storms which many parts of the country were experiencing on that day. My returns were six out of twelve.

Thanks to the convoyer and race advisors on doing their best on a very tricky weekend. Also, thanks to Evesham marking team.”

I love what John does and hope to speak to him in more detail about his efforts with the birds, racing totally natural. It works for him and how many of us can honestly say we have 8-year-old race birds in the loft!

So, now the result is complete, I just wanted to recognise the furthest flying bird on the day. This one has gone to a newcomer into the BICC, encouraged by the opportunity that has been offered by the Chirk marking station and the band of brothers that are putting in the efforts up in the North West. Lee Davison is a well-known fancier in the Midlands National and the National Flying Club, so to be able to write about him and have him competing in the BICC is an absolute privilege. Lee clocked a 4-year-old bird flying 449 miles on the day, and over 10 and half hours on the wing for **5th North West Section**. No doubt a performance that he will be looking to improve upon in the coming weeks with the BICC races coming thick and fast.

“Scarlett”

GB14Z19829

**1st Liverpool Classic Poitiers 2017
3rd West Sect MNFC Poitiers 124b
44th Open MNFC Poitiers 986b
4th Liverpool Classic Bordeaux 2016
9th West Sect MNFC 117b
128th open MNFC Bordeaux 1496b
Bred & Raced by
Lee Davison & Sons**



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“This 4-year-old grizzle hen was steadily races as a young bird but got injured and has a very badly smashed keel bone. She was rested and brought out a year later and since then she has put up some great performances. Her sire is a grandson of “Indy”, bred by Armstrong and Wheatley. The dam is the number 1 stock hen “MAX 79” and she’s a daughter of the famous “Max”, the only bird ever to win the MNFC twice. “MAX 79” has been a super breeding hen at this loft, breeding winners with every cock she’s been paired to. “MAX 79” and her nest mate “MAX 80” will now be paired to her half-brother to keep these lines running through this stock loft. “MAX 79” has bred two section winners, one in the NFC from Cholet at around 450 miles and one in the Midland National from Bordeaux at 600 miles. “MAX 80” has bred a 2nd section winner as well.”

Thanks to everybody who has made this race and the report such a success, there’s nothing else for me to add this week except have a great weekend from Poitiers, a superb race point which should give the whole country a really good opportunity if the weather stays as it is set to be! Like I keep saying, the Internationals are nearly upon us and I cannot wait to recognise the great pigeons that are going to be clocked in that 7-week spell!

That’s your lot for this week! As always, contact me as soon as you can after Poitiers, johnghentbicc@yahoo.com, and then we can continue to create these great reports together in the coming weeks and months ahead.

John Ghent

Joint Press Officer BICC