

Marius I Sepciuc came to the UK eighteen years ago when he was just seventeen.



He brought with him his love of long distance pigeon racing and once settled, began to race from his home in Kingsbury. Known to his friends as "Julian" he joined The Harrow Club in north London which has around 40 members, most of them Romanian and they are the backbone of the sport in that area. I have come to know many of them over the years when delivering pigeons for various one loft races, consequently great friendships have been formed. One such friend is Julian, who called me in June to express his delight of winning 2<sup>nd</sup> Section 6<sup>th</sup> Open Pau. He was over the moon with his result and wanted me to convey his congratulations to Mark Gilbert for winning the race, but this time when he called to say he had just clocked from Narbonne and was top of the leader board, my excitement matched his and I was very pleased for him as I know how much it means for the Romanian fanciers to win such a race with the British International Championship Club.

Julian is a father of six children and was due to take them on holiday with his wife Alina that very evening, but as the news came through that he had taken first place, they decided to delay the journey in order for me to visit the next day.



When I arrived, I could feel the excitement the children felt that their Dad had won the British National, along with the holiday to come later that day. I could see the pride in Elisei, his eldest son's eyes as we drank coffee and talked over the race.

In 2017 Julian had reared 40 youngsters at his loft in Romania and 35 at his loft in London to make up a team of 75 young birds for the channel races. Unfortunately, one night in March, a Fox got into his young bird section and killed more than half of them. Julian was devastated but continued to race the remaining birds which allowed him to begin this season with 24 old birds, which were all destined to compete in the International races.



He sent to all the club races with the Harrow before entering the first International race from Pau when he was 2<sup>nd</sup> section and 6<sup>th</sup> open, but with the difficult racing this year his team had dwindled to just a few, so he took time out to carefully set them up for Narbonne. Early season they were raced on the roundabout system before being recoupled for the channel races, but the winning hen had lost her partner from Pau and after a couple of weeks she repaired with another partner to build a new nest. The only problem was that from the six old birds Julian had left, his most promising hen would be sitting 7-day eggs on basketing for the race which he felt was far from ideal. In order to increase her motivation, he borrowed two small youngsters from his friend and she looked after them for four days before going to Narbonne.

The bloodlines kept in his loft are mainly Ken Hines 600 mile pigeons, with one or two introductions lately from Belgium via Desmet. He had become good friends with Kenny after the first introduction in 2007 and was always welcome at his lofts. He also brought pigeons from Romania although he said they were mainly one day long distance birds and he needed something more relaxed to get started again the next day. On the day of the race it was clear that the heatwave would affect them, and the afternoon thunderstorms were going to stop them crossing the channel. So early on the Saturday morning he began to wait as his wife and children were preparing for their journey to Romania. He was assisting Alina when he saw a pigeon descending from the sky and his hen entered the loft at twenty past eleven to go straight back to covering the little youngster in the nest. When he verified he quickly realised he was top of the leader board and his dream of winning the BICC could actually come true.



A nervous few hours followed before he received confirmation of his win, but he now had to tell his children the trip would have to be delayed, but only for one day as I could be there by 9am on the Sunday. When Julian came to the UK he worked hard and steadily built a successful plastering business. He also began a small back garden loft and his enthusiasm for the long-distance races motivated him. He found a good friend in Ken Hines and indeed most of his bloodlines are through their pigeons. He also had every intention to go



back home to be close to his mother in her golden years and has been building a new house back home in Romania on his parents plot. He showed me photos of a very nice new pigeon loft situated above a large garage with dowelled sections and a corridor running along the front. There is large garden for his children to play and his mother's house is just 100m away. His Mother has been looking after his pigeons and as the house is nearly complete, he plans to move his family back home for good very soon. Life is very busy in London, he wants to spend more time with his children and give them much more space to run around. Julian's father raced pigeons in Romania but unfortunately, he passed away due to illness when Julian was just five years old, so he values family life and feels it's time to go home and take care of his mother, "England is my country, but Romania needs me" he said.

I am so pleased my friend will be able to reflect fondly on his time here in the UK along with the kudos the realisation of his dream to win the BICC will bring. Over recent weeks I have been writing that a small loft set up could indeed challenge the best lofts in the International races, by sending well prepared and well bred pigeons to compete with the best lofts in Europe. I wish him and his family the very best for the future.