

The fourth race of the British International Championship Club program from Poitiers is the preceding race prior to the start of the International series of seven races, beginning with Pau. It is a competitive club and every race is keenly contested by all who enter, even those who have International aspirations will send their birds for one last race to boost their fitness and also increase their motivation to win.

Due to inclement weather on the scheduled day of release, the pigeons were held over for one day and moved to Cholet to give a better chance of liberation on the Sunday and at 8:40am a total of 2,859 birds entered by over 320 lofts, were released at CHOLET On arrival at Cholet the Convoyers confirmed the good weather conditions that were expected. The birds were rested a short while before being liberated at 08:40 into blue skies and broken cloud and cleared the site immediately. Winds though France were light from the north east but the convoy on reaching the channel would pick up a light southerly. Visibility over the open sea was over twenty miles.

David and John Staddon have raced very successfully as a father and son partnership for years, and indeed I have personally visited their loft to photograph a National winner on, four or five occasions. So, it was no surprise to me at all when the provisional result came through to see their name at the top of the list. I did have a little smile to myself as they had moved the loft location to David's house and I knew that they would be happy to have continued success there. When I called to arrange my visit for the next day it was fresh news to them and a somewhat shocked David said they had another two pigeons very close together with the winner and we realised something special had happened that day. It was very exciting for them so I asked David to put his thoughts down in his own words; "Wow, what a buzz !!!, Provisional 1st, 2nd & 3rd Section 1st 2nd & 3rd Open. This was totally unexpected as our birds had performed very poorly at the previous NFC race. Vets were consulted and only a minor ailment detected so the birds were sent to Poitiers with no remedy. Our confidence which is not normally short..... was quite low.....pigeon racing is truly full of ups and downs.



John & David Staddon

No matter how long you have been in this game and we have been lucky enough to previously win the BICC three times as well as the NFC, it still sets the heart pumping to win a big one. Whilst we were hoping we had timed good birds to receive the call from Chris Sutton to confirm we were provisional 1st Open BICC Cholet was gobsmacking, in fact, I

think a few F words were my first utterances much to Chris's amusement. We would like to start by thanking the BICC race controlling team and conveying team for giving us a fantastic race on a very tricky weekend of weather. Whilst we would have preferred the birds to stay at Poitiers as prep for the longer races, we totally understand why the decision to move was made and the race and returns vindicate this decision. At the time of writing, we have 28/30 of which the majority were yearlings.

Our provisional winner a 2yo chequer cock has now been named "Hughie" in memory of our good pal and club secretary Hughie Eades who we sadly lost suddenly 3 weeks ago.



Hughie was a great friend and worker for our sport and he loved the nationals and classics. I am sure he would be proud of our achievement in this race, so there can be no more fitting name for our winner. "Hughie" was our first pigeon from the previous BICC Cholet race finishing 2nd West Section, and whilst that was his first notable performance, he has now stamped himself a top racing cock with 2nd Section followed by first section, first open. As mentioned in the previous report he was bred from a son of Geoff & Cath Coopers 1st International Pau Winner Wollongong when that cock was paired to our previous number 1 breeding hen "The Miracle Hen". Both of these breeders were sold to Terry Lee & Terry Dyer in Plymouth at our Blackpool auction 2018. This proves that we do indeed sell our very best pigeons through our friend and auctioneer Stuart Wilcox. Hughie is now all set for the BICC Agen International.



Wing of "Hughie" GB17N28196

We timed our provisional 2nd Section 2nd Open hen approximately one minute later. She is a beautiful yearling hen bred from the race team, she is mainly of Mark Gilbert Southfield Pau and Southfield Supreme lines. Mark's pigeons continue to give us success at the heart of our loft. Our provisional 3rd section 3rd open two year old hen came clapping in a couple of minutes later. She is the apple of my eye. She has already scored 68th Open BICC Poitiers and 31st Open BICC Agen as a yearling both exceptionally hard races, she now collects 3rd Section 3rd Open Cholet beaten by her loft mates only. She is bred from a son of "Freelands Gem" of Bill & Beryl Lewis, this champion pigeon flew Tarbes 6 years in succession never being lower than 88th open at over 600 miles. Her dam is another Mark Gilbert hen bred from a son of the Perpignan 06 and the famous 333. This hen is also the dam of our "Shapway G-Force" 1st NFC Ace Pigeon 2016 and "Shapway Evie" 1st NFC Ace pigeon 2018. This hen has all the blood to be a champion at the distance and will now be prepared for NFC Tarbes. We'd like to finish by congratulating all the section winners and by reminding you all that even when your birds disappoint you as ours had done recently, stick to your guns, believe in your birds and your system and they will come good again for you as ours have this week" Well said David.



Our Weather Adviser Steve Appleby sent me this report; At first light the convoyers at Poitiers found themselves under patchy rain and drizzle. This weather had moved up from the south far quicker than forecast. In fact, the poor weather was to affect the area for most of the morning. So, with this information to hand the race team made the decision to move the convoy to Cholet, where better weather had been identified. On arrival at the Cholet site the convoyers reported it was as expected with good conditions.



Guernsey Airport skies

After a short rest the BICC convoy were liberated at 08:40 into blue skies and broken cloud clearing the site immediately. The flight path to the channel was first class supported by the satellite imagery and seen by viewing the various webcams. Winds on the line of flight were light north easterly over France but became variable across the open sea. The channel was clear as can be seen in the image from Guernsey airport and visibility reached 25 miles or more. Steve Appleby & Mark Gilbert.

I will of course be following up with a section report as usual, so please do send me your information and happy photos to biccpressofficer@gmail.com or call me, Chris Sutton on 01530 242548 or 07792 356330. Carol Francis, our Secretary has been doing a fantastic job turning around the final results within a few days, please post all paperwork to her promptly to help her continue to provide us with a quick result and Russell Bradford produced a video for the BICC Facebook page with the following explanation. "At Northampton marking station we get the work done and hopefully mark the birds efficiently, but we do also enjoy the crack with our regulars. When we found out a day or so prior to marking for Poitiers, that Paul Loom had enjoyed yet another Birthday we thought we couldn't let the occasion pass by without proper recognition, and piece of quality cake regardless of expense, along with a suitable candle to match Paul's flamboyant sense of humour was presented to him. Watching in the background are Mick Smith and Mel Errington, who have helped with marking ever since a BICC marking station was opened in Northamptonshire many years ago, "Happy Birthday Paul".

