

### **BICC 2019 Agen International race and Winners Report**

The British International Championship Club race from Agen was flown in conjunction with the FCI International on the 29<sup>th</sup> June. Just under 1000 birds from the UK contributed to the twenty-two thousand entries from other European countries, with many fanciers entering yearlings for their first International experience. Although it was not going to be an easy task as high temperatures were forecast for many days prior to the race and the heatwave was setting records in France. Many fanciers held their breath waiting for news of a liberation when the International from Agen held over due to light rain and poor visibility at the race point. But as they were liberated very early the next morning, the real test of endurance and tenacious sprit began. At the end of the first day, just six birds had been recorded home in the north eastern area of France, but a few brave birds that were with them had a little further to go and were compelled to roost for the night. A week previously, whilst speaking to Mark Gilbert, he explained that if a second day bird in the UK was over the channel before nightfall, it would be timed in before 7:30 in the morning. Those that had rested in France would be after 10:30 to his loft which is 40 miles from the coast. So, when I saw John and Theresa had timed early along with three other members, it became apparent just how special these birds were in the International race.

All four pigeons must have been with the leading French pigeons and forged ahead, out to open sea, as the daylight was fading into darkness. Such endurance and fearless pigeons are rare and as if to give a lesson on patience, the winner took one whole week to home from the same race the year before, so she had rewarded her owners for not condemning her abilities too easily.



**John and Theresa Gladwin 1<sup>st</sup> Open BICC Agen International 2019**

In his own words, John Gladwin describes his race; "I have been trying to decide on a name for my BICC Agen winner, which has been difficult as last Sunday was the anniversary of my

father in law passing, who was a pigeon fancier and a long distance fanatic. Also, my oldest daughter has been very ill since April, so we were torn between the two, but have decided on "Tip Top Tora" after my daughter, who is in recovery at the moment and was very pleased us, when we went to see her on the day that we had won. I would also like to put all of the praise on my wonderful wife Theresa, who has done so much for the pigeons this season. More to the point, other than feeding, I think she is a better fancier than me. I say feeding because if I did not measure the food out for her each day, they would be like beach balls. Mind you it works well in the stock loft, with cracking plump youngsters in the nest. She does all the cleaning out and the other less glamorous jobs and exercises them for me each day. With me having to travel two hours each way to and from work, I do a minimum of 12 hour days and more often than not 14 hour days.



In preparation for this race, "Tip Top Tora" was raced in the Thames Federation for the first three inland races. and then sent to all the BICC national races. They are flown on the roundabout system, but when they came home from the second Cholet race, I let some of them pair ready for Agen International. We had lost the cock she had been paired to earlier in the season, so she decided to pair to her half-brother and laid on the eighth day after the Cholet race. She was then rested until the Friday morning prior to marking when she was singled up from 35 miles, along with my other choices for this race. Due to work commitments previously mentioned good friend Paul Thomas who took them to marking for me. Thanks Paul.

We also had a race from Messac on the day of the Agen race and the pigeons made very hard work of it, so I was not very hopeful that the Agen birds would get very close to the UK on the day. However, when I saw the first birds on Pipa close to Arras, I said to John Cowlin we have a chance if we have a pigeon with those birds. I had pointed out Arras two years ago and tried to organise a race from there as I firmly believe if Essex members are going to win from the International races, that is the line our birds need to come through and judging by the time "Tip Top Tora" came, I think she made the UK on the night but unfortunately just run out of light. She has shown real determination to get back to her first eggs of the year, flying through the high temperatures in France, to get up and continue

the next morning.



**Frans Zwols and John Gladwin**

Her breeding would be considered more sprint to middle distance, being a “Formula 1 lofts” Frans Zwols, however she has always come home fresh as a daisy even when she has had 10/12 hours on the wing. I said to John Cowlin 12 months ago, “she is either useless or she will come from a long race”, as she is always in the middle of the pack. So, with this in mind I sent her last year and she took a week to come home, but I decided to keep racing her this year hoping she had learnt from that experience. This year she has been in the middle of the pack again from most of the BICC races, but she did score from Alencon. However, each time she was in super condition and did not look like she had left the loft. This was the same with three other Frans Zwols pigeons in my loft, which had been coming alright and always looked in great shape on return, so I had chosen these four for this race. I had also crossed some distance birds with the Frans Zwols and these along with four other distance pigeons, were my team. I was lucky enough to clock four pigeons on the second day, of which three were pure Zwols and the Zwols cross.



I really like the International racing when it comes around although I have never put a lot of preparation into the pigeons until the races are getting close, but having a disaster in 2018 from Agen and seeing John Cowlin clocking in the same bloodlines, I decided to have a real go in 2019, and have adjusted my feeding methods from the sprint to preparing them for distance races. Unfortunately, some of my fancied pigeons had a hard race from Alencon, so I decided to miss Pau International and go all in for Agen. To achieve this goal, I have been feeding a little heavier than in the past, and I have not trained after the 3 inland races, apart from the one 35 mile single up. They have been fed Superstar plus, switched to a high energy mix for the last few feeds before marking, knowing they would get all the carbohydrates they needed in the basket.

The bloodlines of "Tip Top Tora" are pure Frans Zwols, with her sire being "Frisian Boy", a grandchild of "Boy" and "Queen" which has proved to be a very useful breeder, especially hard day birds. A yearling daughter flew the program and won 1st from Perth, 2nd from Ripon and 7th from Thurso, she also won 14th fed and 23rd Amal Ripon, 45th combine Perth and 51st Combine from Thurso. In just four weeks she flew from Thurso at 510 miles, flying 20 hours 15 minutes in a very hard race when only 79 birds made it home by the end of the second day. She had also flown a very hard Perth, a distance of 372 miles, flying 9 hours 42 minutes and Ripon, 195 miles flying 3 hours 29 minutes. Her full sister, also a yearling hen, won 1st section 2nd open BBC National, 3rd Hullbridge club and 3rd Open Thames from Salisbury, having been beaten by a loft mate by one second, 13th section 17th open BICC Guernsey O/B and of course now 1st and 30<sup>th</sup> open BICC Agen National and 56<sup>th</sup> Open Agen International.

*"Tip Top Junior"*

NL03-1737748  
 Sire, G/Sire and G/G/Sire of 100's of winners  
 56th International 22000b+  
 3 x 1st Open BICC Winners, 2nd Open BICC  
 1st 10,944b 1st 19,916b 1st 16,000b  
 1st 10,994b 1st 10,015b 1st 3,156b  
 1st 2,939b 1st 2,540b 1st 2,500b  
 1st 2,405b 1st Open BICC  
 1st North West Combine  
 1st Liverpool Amal 1,362b  
 2nd 16,000b 2nd 16,281b  
 2nd 10,015b



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Their dam is "Tip Top Goldmine" an Inbred daughter of "Tip Top Junior" when paired to his own daughter. She is also a useful breeder of many good birds to win and score at club, fed and national level. As I mentioned, the winner had paired to her half brother, being from the same sire, which was my second bird clocked from Agen and all being well, he will be

sent to one of the other internationals or maybe Bordeaux depending how he bounces back in the coming days.



*@Chris Sutton*



*@Chris Sutton*

Theresa and I would like to finish by saying well done to all that got birds on a tough weekends racing and a huge thank you for all the people that have contacted us giving congratulations, they were all much appreciated”.

If you have any news or views please contact me at [biccpressofficer@gmail.com](mailto:biccpressofficer@gmail.com) or telephone 01530 242548. Chris Sutton.

