

### **BICC Narbonne International 2019 race and Winners report**

The penultimate race of the International series took place from Narbonne on the 29<sup>th</sup> July after a two day holdover due to thunderstorms in the northern area of France and Belgium, which also heralded the end of the excessive heatwave that has been experienced all over Europe. A total of 18094 birds were liberated at 6:15am UK time, into a clear blue sky with a light south east wind and a temperature of 19 degrees.

My friends on the continent consider Narbonne to be an excellent race point in the race calendar and it is held in high esteem by all the participating countries. Not only is Narbonne at a great time of the racing season for good weather but due to its location, being around 131 miles north of Barcelona and 34 miles north of Perpignan, the line of flight for the UK is an excellent one, thereby avoiding some of the early geographical challenges of the previously mentioned racepoints. Fanciers in the north of France know this too, and will send their very best racing pigeons knowing that this Mediterranean race point gives them a very good chance of scoring highly in the international result, with all the benefits we would be wise to take into consideration, although we do have the added obstacle of an open sea crossing.



**Clayton & Geoff Preece 1<sup>st</sup> BICC Narbonne International 2019**

The winners of the British International Championship Club from Narbonne were the father and son partnership, Geoff and Clayton Preece from Dover with “Nellie” a two year old hen that is considered to be the second pigeon ever, to be recorded on the day from Narbonne into the UK, and I had been to this loft before in 2014, when they timed “Wiggins” to be the second bird ever to be timed on the day from Perpignan, a record which will always be held by his loft mate “Jack Jones” as the first pigeon to do so, racing to the same loft in 2010.



Amazingly these two pigeons feature very prominently in the pedigree of “Nellie”, with “Jack Jones” being her direct sire and her dam being a direct daughter of “Wiggins”. “Blood will tell” and with a pedigree like that it is understandable that they were confident in timing her, indeed when the French fanciers were timing in the evening around 5:30-6pm it looked very possible, was not for the sea crossing at the end of a 520 mile fly. But she did not let them down, and an hour later she dropped on the landing board at eight minutes past seven, to record a velocity of 1273 ypm. Out of 18094b she was just out of the top 100 in the International result, being 119<sup>th</sup>, and yet another fantastic performance for a UK loft against the very best in Europe, with the added obstacle of the English Channel. I asked Geoff to describe how she arrived at his loft and he said “it was one of those moments when you are getting ready for the birds to come, being inside the loft making sure everything is in place for them to come home to, when you hear something hit the landing board and you wonder if it is a late arrival from an earlier race, only to be delighted that you have a pigeon from Narbonne International, at 560 miles on the day”



**GB17D10238 "Nellie" 1<sup>st</sup> Open BICC Narbonne International 2019**

Their hen GB 17 D10238 now called 'Nellie' is a blue pied hen initially raced on the widowhood system, but she had paired to a hen and was sitting eight day old eggs in the corner of the hens section. As a yearling she flew the channel ten times but only up to 250 miles, and this year she had flown the channel three times before being sent to BICC Cholet 300 miles and was rested for two weeks before being sent to Agen International 502 Miles when she was 46<sup>th</sup> National and scored in the top 25% of 22,768 International pigeons. She then had a three week break before going in the basket for Narbonne International at 559 miles. A great National win for her with the addition of being the only pigeon on the day in the UK and a super International position being provisionally 121<sup>st</sup> out of 18,094 pigeons, less than an hour away from winning the International.



**Clayton Preece with "Jack Jones"**

She is a daughter of “Jack Jones” which scored in 13 Internationals including 1<sup>st</sup> BICC Perpignan National 2010 flying 596 miles on the day and the dam is an inbred daughter of “Wiggins” which scored in 12 Internationals including 1<sup>st</sup> BICC Perpignan National 2012 and 1<sup>st</sup> BICC Perpignan National 2014, flying 596 miles on the day. They timed the second of their three entries very early the next day at 7:50am to be 6<sup>th</sup> BICC National with GB17D10251, a chequer cock raced on a widowhood system. This cock had exactly the same training as a yearling as ‘Nellie’ and the same prep for Narbonne this year. He was their first pigeon from Agen 19<sup>th</sup> National and scored in the top 25% of 22,768 pigeons. His sire is a 50% Morsnowski and 50% “Jack Jones” and “Wiggins” with the dam being direct from Bernd Morsnowski.



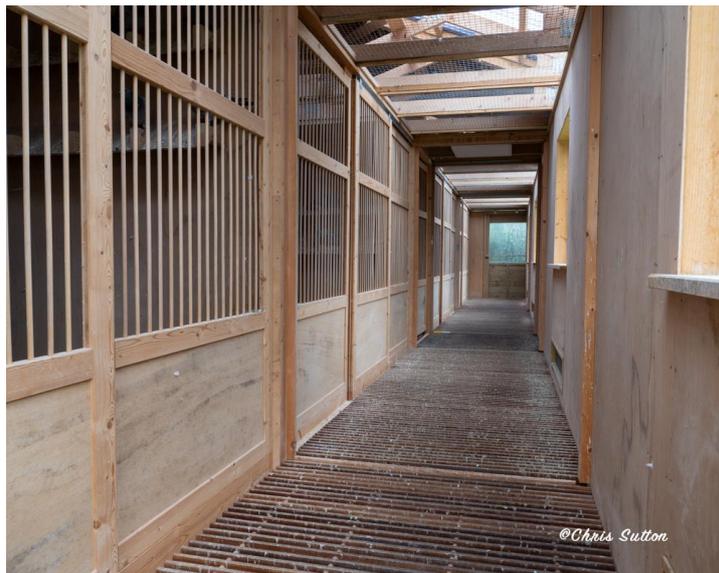
### **The lofts of Geoff & Clayton Preece of Dover**

They also timed their third and final entry, a French late bred hen which came home at 13:20 on the third day to add yet another International to her schooling. At the end of day three around 50% of the BICC entries were recorded home with non-flying less than 559 miles which is a return rate that most long distance races would be very happy with. Back in 2014, when I first visited Geoff and his son Clayton, they did think they would have to give the pigeons up due to their bloom affecting Clayton, but instead they had a complete rethink as to how the birds were housed, and built a new loft in order to minimise the buildup of bloom in the loft. A deeper airier loft with fewer pigeons per square meter was constructed with a wide corridor running the full length to enable them to care for the birds, without being on top of them. Appropriate face masks are also used at all times and with grid floors all through, there is now a new optimism between them both and after talking to Clayton for an hour or two, I realised this young 20 year old fancier is going to be a great



### **The use of suitable face masks**

fancier, who along with his father Geoff, are making a name for themselves on the International long distance stage, both at home and in Europe. They use the natural products and loft equipment supplied by Klaus Gritstein and thank Piet and Otto Klaus for all their advice.



### **Wide corridor running the full length**



**Wing of GB17D10238 "Nellie" 1<sup>st</sup> Open BICC Narbonne International 2019**

They asked me if I could thank, on their behalf the BICC for facilitating the race, gaining the permits, producing the results and the press coverage. They use the ipigeon ETS system which they think is excellent, the use of which has led to their confidence in the system, texting facility and the user friendly operations, so would also like to thank ipigeon for their sponsorship. Lastly and most importantly, John Chipperfield, Nigel Langstaff and Mark Gilbert for transporting the UK Narbonne pigeons to the Belgian marking station on behalf of the BICC.

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