

BICC Guernsey YB & Any Age Nationals 2019

The first young bird race of the season for the British International Championship Club was held on the 18th Aug from Guernsey a total of 209 members sent 2439 birds which were liberated along with a combined Any Age race in which a further 1201 old birds were entered by 193 members. Steve Appleby, the club weather adviser said that at first light the Channel Islands were under full cloud cover and the chances for a race did not look good, but the images that are received every 15 minutes from the weather satellite, identified a window of blue skies moving from the west towards Guernsey. This clearance extended across the channel almost to the English south coast so the convoyers were made aware of this development giving increasing prospects for a race. After discussions with the Race Controller Mark Gilbert a decision to liberate was agreed and when the clearance reached Guernsey, with blue skies and broken cloud, at 8:15am the B.I.C.C. convoy were liberated and left the Island immediately. The channel was clear with very good visibility and winds generally came from the WSW averaging 20 mph. Several Islanders who witnessed the release made comments to the affect that a good race would follow on.



Bernie & James Wilson 1st Open BICC Guernsey YB National 2019

The overall winners of the young bird race was Bernie & Jamie Wilson a father and son partnership from Dagenham, East London. Jamie is from a long line of pigeon fanciers, his uncles are the Mahoney Brothers from Basildon who previously won the BICC from Falaise and his grandfather on his mother's side was Jim Mahoney, who took Jamie to a pigeon sale when he was nine years old and they acquired 8 birds to set him up and like most young lads starting with racing pigeons, Jamie's first loft was a commandeered rabbit hutch in his

parents back garden. His parents also encouraged him and although at the time he was too young to join the local club, his Dad joined with him and the B & J Wilson partnership was formed. "I didn't mind" his mother said "keeping pigeons gave him something to focus on, which is good for a young lad" so the rabbit hutch was quickly replaced by a loft at the bottom of the garden, which is where Jamie still races to now, although he has his own family home nearby.

North road racing is very popular in the Dagenham area, due mostly to the geographical nature of the Thames crossing being busy at Dartford, so to train his birds for the south road, Jamie has to leave home at 4:30am to miss the bulk of the London traffic in order to gain a few miles for his birds online. "It would be much easier to continue racing north from Dagenham" said Jamie "but I was determined to try my birds across the channel and now the hard work has paid off" and although he can race in the Thames Federation as an individual member, he added that his uncle Pat Mahoney is a huge help by taking his birds to the Estuary Club for him, whilst Jamie works as a London "Black Cab" driver.



He continues to race on the north road having allocated just twenty young hens to train south for the BICC races, and when his winning pigeon came, he was sitting waiting for the last pigeon from an earlier north road young bird race from Newark. Two birds came straight online for the channel but landed on the house roof, so his initial thoughts were that it was the late young bird straggler along with a stray, as his birds do not normally land on the roof before trapping. They quickly trapped so Jamie realised they were from Guernsey and was clocking their rubbers when a third one landed, which was also clocked just seventeen seconds after the first. He was shaking with excitement as they were quicker than expected and his mother spent the rest of the day refreshing the provisional result on the BICC website. "you are still top" she would continue to shout, because she had encouraged Jamie to enter the birds in the BICC as it would have been Jim Mahoney's

birthday on the day of the race, and his mother had said “do it for grandad” and he certainly did it in style with three very close together in the result.

He races a family of Soontjen pigeons which he had bought from Rob Fenwick and Chris Howard in Doncaster, who had a stand the Old Comrades Show. He was impressed at their results which were displayed for all to see and an order for youngsters was placed. Over the following seasons a friendship was formed with them visiting Jamie in Dagenham on occasions, with little nuggets of advice regarding the racing system freely passed. But sadly Chris Howard suddenly passed away last year and Jamie would like to dedicate his win to him by calling his hen “Chrisy Girl” which he plans to send to the last BICC race from Fougères if they hold their moult.



Jamie Wilson's system for trapping with rubbers

As I mentioned in the first paragraph, the BICC also hold an Any Age race which is combined with the same liberation. The winner is Micky Watts of Southminster who has well and truly mastered the art of racing old hens late into the season and I have lost count as to how many times he has won. I think it is around twelve nationals now and I remember that in 2015 he won the NFC as well as the BICC old hens' races so his methods certainly suit his birds. He obviously targets these races and makes no secret of the fact that he keeps a few old hens on the darkness system with his young birds, trains them together during the summer months in the early hours, before pairing two hens to one cock after the cocks have finished racing in July. He also demonstrated his adapted nest boxes when he recently won the first three positions the BICC Le Mans race with his hens, in which the hen clocked third

to his loft that day, beaten by two loft mates to be third open, had responded to his motivation techniques once again only this time won 1st open.



Micky & Sally Watts 1st Open BICC Guernsey Any Age National 2019

"Iris"

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**1st East Sect 1st Open
British International Championship
Club Guernsey Any Age 2019
Bred & Raced by
Micky Watts, Southminster**



©Chris Sutton

Named "Iris" after his mother, Micky said she was half Frans Zwols breeding and half Vandenabeele, which he bred in combination with his friend Lee Bastone who has also won the BICC more than once. With both families being excellent for the middle distances it was a perfect "friendship" cross for the club mates to try.

Club Secretary Carol Francis has asked me to mention that calls to her on race day prolongs the updates to the website leader board, which ironically is the very reason some members make the call. In these days of news being available almost instantly, we should remember that Carol works as fast as she can to update the provisional result and as more fanciers use the website to verify it will help. In the meantime please allow her a little time to keep on top of the workload on race days and as I am referring to the website Russell Bradford informs me that we recently reached 500,000 page views this racing season to date, which is a milestone worth reporting. Also please remember that if you are in the top three of your section in the provisional result you should send your details to my email biccpressofficer@gmail.com within five days of the race, in order for me to include them in the follow up section report. Chris Sutton 01530 242548 or 07792 356330