

# British International Championship Club

## Falaise Provisional Race Report - 13.06.20

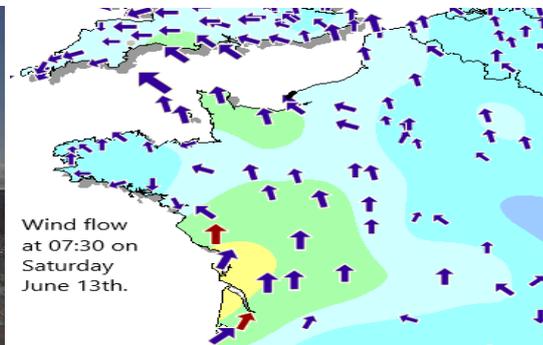
### The first race begins

The first race of the season took place from Falaise, in Normandy, in northern France. While the small town is better known as the birth place of William the Conqueror, on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June it saw the sky fill with an amazing liberation of 7441 pigeons. They were transported successfully by Walkers Transport and the BICC season was underway.

### The weather/race report

Steve Appleby, the BICC race and weather advisor, provided the following report:

“An early liberation was essential due to the forecast for heavy thundery showers to develop over the channel from about 13.00, which actually materialised. At first light as expected north eastern France was under blue skies with very little cloud cover. The image captured from the Yacht Marina at Octeville on the tip of the Cherbourg peninsula shows the sun rising in the blue sky. Mark Gilbert and myself agreed that with a clear channel and good line of flight liberation should go ahead. Our Chief Convoyer, Trevor Cracknell, confirmed conditions at Falaise were first class. With all the information to hand, liberation was affected at 06:15. The B.I.C.C. convoy cleared the site immediately into a liberation sky. Winds were light from the south east in France but over the channel they increased to 20 mph, mainly over the west side which is supported by the leading velocities. Visibility in the channel was 11 miles plus which was confirmed by the weather buoys moored in the centre. Conditions in England were also very good except for the north where it was raining during the morning.”



### The Committee Issue's statement

As the race was underway, the Committee issued the following statement that was placed on the website and the club Facebook site:

*The committee is aware that one crate was not sealed properly, and when the lorries arrived in Falaise and the curtains were pulled back a few birds were sitting on the top of the crates. The three members have been identified and all informed and accepting gracefully that they have been disqualified, and that their entry fees will be refunded on Monday.*

*The club can do little other than apologise to these members, and are grateful that they have accepted that the marking stations were under intense pressure on Thursday, and a mistake has happened.*

## The Provisional Open Winner – Mr and Mrs Rann & Son

Nonetheless, the race was underway and the provisional winner was timed at 8:01:59 am to take, 1<sup>st</sup> Centre South Section and 1<sup>st</sup> Open National (7441 birds) to Rod and Linda Rann from the Isle of Wight. The winning pigeon recorded an amazing velocity of 2236.881yph which is the equivalent of 76 mph! Rod picks up the story,

“I would like to thank all of the BICC officers for getting us over the channel to race this year; it must have taken a great deal of effort. I would also like to congratulate everyone who won their sections, in what turned out to be a great race. And I was pleased to see my club mate Trevor Willis taking 2<sup>nd</sup> Central Section on the Isle of Wight.

Now onto my bird, which is a 2 year old cock bird now named Staaljiager, which means jet plane. The dam of Staaljiager is a Jim Biss pigeon that I kept when I gave up racing in 2012 and the sire is a son of John Halstead’s 1<sup>st</sup> Open CSCFC, Countances.

After losing 17 pigeons to the hawks I had a complete re-think of my system and changed from widowhood to a completely natural system (inspired by Guy Reed and Fred Hayles). The birds now, have complete freedom around the loft and seem to have become, ‘street wise’ as I have not lost one since.

As little basket training was done, Staaljiager, was entered into his first race of the year to Honiton with the Solent Fed on over- due eggs and was the first bird to the loft. No training was done in the week and he was basketed driving to the nest at 8.00am on Thursday morning. We then had a ferry crossing and a one hour drive to Brighton to the BICC marking station, where an excellent job was done by the marking team. We took birds from eleven fanciers from the Island. My birds are all fed on the Versele Laga Black Label corn and fed to appetite. I would like to once again thank the convoyers for looking after the birds as I sent 14 and had all 14 back in a reasonable time.”

Rod also explained that he had given up racing in 2012 after a peregrine took his 1<sup>st</sup> Section Tabres winner but re-started in 2017. This new system seems to suit the birds, and it’s not often that pigeons raced naturally beat the widowhood or roundabout birds at these distances, but Staaljiager sped home on Saturday. Rod also added that he trains from all directions and often trains on the mainland which, as we know, is in the exact opposite direction to France. To keep his birds healthy, he has them tested regularly by the Pigeon Testing Centre, that he says do a fine job.



Rod and Linda Rann



Staaljiager 1<sup>st</sup> Open winner

### **The Provisional Top Ten Open Positions:**

The top ten positions were dominated by fanciers in the South West Section with 7 of the 10 positions being taken by fanciers from there. The other 3 were from the South Centre Section. D & J Staddon, of Ditchat, Somerset were 2<sup>nd</sup> Open, 3<sup>rd</sup> was Miroslaw Chweddrak of Ash, 4<sup>th</sup> Brooks Bros & Wilcox of Bristol, 5<sup>th</sup> D & F Barresi & Mr D Bull of Bath, 6<sup>th</sup> Stuart Wilcox of Bristol, 7<sup>th</sup> Mr & Mrs Hodges of Templecombe, 8<sup>th</sup> Mr T Willis of Niton, 9<sup>th</sup> S&S Bridges of High Littleton and 10<sup>th</sup> K & J Zerafa of Portsmouth.

### **The Provisional Central South Section Winners**

In second place to the Open winner, was fellow Islander, Trevor Willis. Trevor took 2<sup>nd</sup> Section, 9<sup>th</sup> Open with a blue chequer cock that had just deserted his eggs, and he was surprised when he came so well. "I was very happy to see him" said Trevor. The bird is a Jan Arden, van Wanroy cross, who was lost for 9 months as a young bird, returning to the loft in March 2019. As a yearling he was in the top 100 of the Central Southern Classic race from Bergerac being the first bird home on the Island. The blue chequer was raced on the natural system and had 2 training tosses to the mainland of 50 and 80 miles prior to going to Falaise.

Taking 3<sup>rd</sup> Central South Section was the father and son partnership of Kevin and John Zerafa of Portsmouth. They took 10<sup>th</sup> Open with a 3 year old dark chequer hen of Mark Gilbert's Southfield Supreme bloodlines. The hen was raced on the jealousy system with two hens being paired to one cock. The cock always stays at home as the motivation for the hen and Kevin said that they have 8 hens on the system this year. They have been members of the BICC for about 15 years and in 2015 were 1<sup>st</sup> Section, 11<sup>th</sup> Open Nabourne.



Trevor Willis



K & J Zerafa

## The Provisional South West Section Winners

1<sup>st</sup> Section and 2<sup>nd</sup> Open was the well known partnership of David and John Staddon of Ditchat, Somerset. John wanted to make the following statement on behalf of himself and David, before talking about the race.

“We'd first like to offer our congratulations to Mr & Mrs Rod Rann & Son on winning the national, a fantastic pigeon. Secondly we'd like to thank our President Mark Gilbert, Chairman Albi Deacon and the whole BICC committee for organising our first channel race of the COVID-19 affected season. Mark is a personal friend and I know first-hand the work he has put into getting the season back on track, hours of phone calls and zoom meetings etc. As members we should be proud of our club and every member of the committee who has backed Mark in his quest to get us racing from France. There have been many complications and hurdles to overcome but with the help of other key individuals they got the job done. Take a bow Ian Evans, CEO of the RPRA, David Bridges and John Waters and no doubt many others. All these people have been on the front foot from the beginning. Despite criticism and large amounts of scepticism these people have put in place the protocols for marking and clock checking that have allowed us to race during these difficult days. It really was a buzz to get the season underway. “

Sentiments that many will surely share and that said, John explained how the race worked out for him. “We had calculated the birds may do 60mph or just over with a south east start and mainly east in the channel. We did not expect our first arrival to make 75mph. I was all set, with the clock on, and the traps open and had literally just made a cuppa and was sitting down in the chair by the lofts. There was more than 30 minutes before they were due. I didn't see our yearling hen arrive but just heard feet on the trap. I stood up as her tail disappeared into the loft! What a buzz. My flying partner and dad hadn't quite arrived which was a shame. Our section winner is a yearling hen raced on our Chaos Widowhood system. She is bred from our stock loft. Her father is Red Farmer bred from the last son of Farm Boy of G & C Cooper when he was paired to Shapway Ruby a daughter of Mark Gilbert's Southfield Pau. The dam is a sister to John's Joy. John's Joy was 2nd Section 10th Open Tarbes NFC on the day for us. She is bred from Lord Peasedown, a son of JW and Georgina, a daughter of George 1st Tarbes Grand National - both birds bred by G & C Cooper. “

Miroslaw Chwedduk took 2<sup>nd</sup> Section and 3<sup>rd</sup> Open with a 2 year old blue cock. Miroslaw is originally from Poland and started racing 3 years ago. His father is a pigeon fancier in Poland and Miroslaw enjoys the middle distance racing, which is why he joined the BICC, he said. The family he races are, Leen Boer x Huyskens van Riel x Desmet Matijas and he imported these from Mr Kris Mazepa, in Poland. The blue cock was raced on widowhood and had received 2 x 40 mile training tosses and a 40 mile club race, before being sent to Falaise. The cocks don't see the hens before basketing; they only see them on their return. This is in part because of time and work commitments. Not a bad result at all, for someone who has only been racing on his own since 2017.

The Bristol partnership of Brooks Bros and Wilcox were 3<sup>rd</sup> Section and 4<sup>th</sup> Open. They timed a three year old hen who was previously 26th Open BICC, St Vincent. The partnership is made up of Robert Brooks and Stuart Wilcox and the lofts are based in High Littleton, at the same address that Harry and Trosky Brooks flew from, for many years. The main aim of the partnership is to compete in international long distance races. The hen was bred in the stock loft in Bristol and is bred from a direct Chris Hebberecht cock, a son of Talis, 1st National La Soutteriane when paired to Bulled's Blue. She was bred by Mark Bulled being inbred to Sergeant Cecil, who was 1st Open LSECC Tarbes and Legacy, who was 1st Open NFC Tarbes. The hen was flown on widowhood but had laid a sneaky pair of eggs. She will now be prepared for Pau later in the season.



D&J Staddon



Miroslaw Chwedduk



Brooks Bros & Wilcox

### The Provisional South East Section Winners

Taking 1<sup>st</sup> Section and 58<sup>th</sup> Open is Ted Gunn of North Stifford, near Tilbury. Ted said that he was, 'over the moon' with the win, when he timed his good 3 year old blue hen in her first race of the season. She had 6 x 50 mile training tosses in preparation and was then sent to Falaise. This blue hen has previously taken 16<sup>th</sup> Open Guernsey Old Hens, as a yearling with the BICC. This season she was sent on a celibate system and she hasn't been paired as such. When the birds return from training they are allowed time together before being split and returned to their own compartments.

2<sup>nd</sup> Section and 62<sup>nd</sup> Open, was taken by Brian Robinson's blue white flight, 2 year old cock. Brian bought the cock and a futility sale and he was bred along Mark Bulled's, Legacy lines. The cock soon paid Brian back with interest, when he won £3k at the Guernsey futility young bird race with the North East Counties Combine. Brian races the birds on the chaos system, with the cocks and hens always separated until the day of basketing. He had given the birds 4 training tosses prior to going to Falaise. Brian wanted to pass on his congratulations to Teddy Gunn, who only lives 2 miles from him, for winning the section.

Micky Sontag & Son were 3<sup>rd</sup> Section and 111<sup>th</sup> Open, with a 3 year old blue hen. This hen has previously flown the channel four times. Like Brian Robinson's bird, Micky's blue hen is also of Mark Bulled bloodlines. She is the grand-daughter of Mark's Tarbes national winner. The hen was raced on widowhood and given a fair amount of training in preparation for the race. She was sent for a 50 mile toss and 3 x 100 mile tosses on the local training lorry. Micky is a long standing member of the BICC and has won a few other section positions over the years but he was delighted with the effort this blue hen put in.



Ted Gunn



Brian Robinson



Micky Sontag & Son

### **The Provisional North West Section Winners:**

Gwyn and Joy Lloyd were 1<sup>st</sup> Section, 38<sup>th</sup> Open with a 5 year old pigeon racing to their home in Hereford. Gwyn and Joy's pigeon was a blue hen which is a Jan Aarden x Busschaert. She has been a very consistent pigeon winning several first places but was not raced last year after being hawked during a training toss at the start of the 2019 season. This year she only had 3 x 10 mile training tosses and one 49 mile race, the weekend before Falaise. She was sent to Falaise on the roundabout system, which they are trialling this season. They sent 12 birds and had 10 on the day all in excellent condition. Gwyn and Joy would like to thank the marking station at Radstock and the BICC committee for all their efforts to enable racing in these challenging times.

2<sup>nd</sup> Section and 57<sup>th</sup> Open was T & J Davies of Birtsmorton. Many people may know that this partnership is in fact Jeremy Davies, Manager of the RPRA one loft race. Jeremy races as T & J in memory of his late father, Tim. Jeremy timed a 3 year old blue chequer cock raced on the chaos system, but he likes to put the hens and cocks together for a night before basketing. The chequer cock's dam is from Darren McFadden, being a grand-daughter of Mark Gilbert's Southfield Darkie and the sire is Green machine, from Cowley and Green. The cock had a few training tosses from 30 miles and a 57 mile race before going to Falaise.

3<sup>rd</sup> Section, 65<sup>th</sup> Open was John Rodway of Rushwick. John's bird was a 4 year old blue chequer cock flown on the natural system and of mixed blood lines. It was sent feeding two large youngsters who were orphaned when one parent was lost and the other killed by the hawk. John explained that the pigeon has had a very mixed racing career. "It has flown France a few times, but often comes days or even weeks later. This is his first ever position in any race." Overall John said that his experience of the race was that it was fast and very erratic with his arrivals being very spaced out. He did have eight out of eleven home on the day.



Gwyn & Joy Lloyd



T & J Davies



John Rodway

### **The Provisional North Centre Section Winners**

Marc Bull, of Kingsley, timed a 2 year old chequer hen to record 1<sup>st</sup> Section, 103<sup>rd</sup> Open. The hen was sitting on a 12 day old youngster and Marc wasn't sure whether to send her or her mate to the race. In the end he made the right choice. The chequer hen is of Jan Theelen bloodlines and her dam was a stray that Marc reported and kept. He bred 4 young birds from the stray and he then lost her off the loft. Since then Marc has bought more birds from the loft the stray came from. Marc was, 'buzzing' about this section win; it is Marc's biggest win so far. Although he felt the birds needed more preparation for Falaise, as the hen had 2 x 60 mile races with the club before going, he was very pleased with the result. Marc has not

been able to train that much due to working additional hours as a key worker during the lockdown. Marc tries to take a relaxed approach with the birds, often due to work commitments, and races 12 pairs on the natural system. He lets them exercise for a few hours at a time to fit in with work.

Bernard and Linda Neal, also of Kingsley and close neighbours of Marc Bull, took 2<sup>nd</sup> Section, 117<sup>th</sup> Open with a 3 year old van Riel hen. They bred the pigeon themselves and she has already taken a few cards, but this was her best performance so far. Bernard and Linda were pleased with the performance and she was sent sitting 7 day old eggs. They race the birds naturally, keeping about 30 pairs and they paired at the end of March this year. Bernard and Linda like to train the birds a few times a week and this hen had been trained to 30 miles and was sent on a few club training tosses of 60 miles. Bernard and Linda were pleased with the performance and very happy to take the section card, as they only re-joined the BICC last year.

3<sup>rd</sup> Section was claimed by John Black of Hitchen. John congratulated the BICC committee and all the helpers for making racing possible. The bird John clocked was a two year old red chequer, widowhood cock bred in September 2018 by John Chipperfield. In 2019, as a late bred, he had five channel races up to Cholet which is 343 miles to John and he was 18th Section. This year, Falaise was his first race of the season and he came well to claim 3rd Section. The cock is well bred. His dam is Herne Bay Sophie, 1st BICC Barcelona National 2019, and his sire is a red cock that John bred in 2016. John also wanted to congratulate all the section winners.



Marc Bull & son Charlie



Bernard & Linda Neal



John Black

### **The Provisional North East Section Winners**

Kim Peacock and Bernie Byrne were 1<sup>st</sup> Section, 146<sup>th</sup> Open despite having to socially isolate for the last 12 weeks. They have been very grateful to fellow members who have picked their birds up for training, because as a result, their 5 year old blue chequer hen made it home to Kings Lynn to top the section. The blue hen's sire was from Willy Becket's bloodlines and the dam from the late Jock Ford of Van Dyke breeding. The hen has been a consistent performer, winning a few first fed cards over the years, before topping the section. Kim and Bernie race on a semi-roundabout system and this hen was keen to get to her mate on the day of basketing, so they were hopeful. In preparation for the race, she had 2 x 30 mile and 2 x 82 mile training tosses.

2<sup>nd</sup> Section and 185<sup>th</sup> Open were the partnership of John Simmons and Kevin Sparkes of Elmsett, Ipswich. Their 3 year old pied cock was raced on a celibate system. John explained

that he is currently undertaking a barn conversion and has not had the time to pair the birds this season. Unlike many of the other pigeons who homed from Falaise, this cock did not cover many miles in training. John doesn't think that pigeons need that much training and so the birds were taken on 5 x 8 mile tosses each morning for a week, before an 82 mile club race the weekend before Falaise. John and Kevin sent 3 and had 3 return - in really good condition John said. The bloodlines of their pigeons are Berstraet of Belgium and John explained the breeding of the pied cock as, "the double inbred hen, Topstar + Maxima using Xtra, the son of Topstar on the hen's side. On the sire's is a pedigree that also features Topstar and Maxima." John and Kevin have been members of the BICC for about 5 years and also topped the section from Le Mans in 2019.

Steve Cook took the remaining place in the North East Section, being 3<sup>rd</sup> Section, 188<sup>th</sup> Open with a dark chequer yearling cock. This cock is of Jansen bloodlines and Steve said that he was quite surprised when he came so well, because he hadn't given his birds much training, but the cock had flown the 118 mile club race the week before. Steve races the birds on a semi-widowhood system where the cocks and hens see each other a few times a week. Steve also said that he is developing another nice team of pigeons, as he has bought Farmer John and Shiraz for stock.



Peacock & Bryne



Simmons & Sparks' pied cock



Steve Cook

### The closing race remarks

That concludes the provisional race report for the first channel race organised by the BICC. There was a general feeling of appreciation from all who contributed to this report for the hard work and effort that the BICC Committee has put in to make continental racing a reality.

On further investigation of the reason for the birds escaping, it is thought that the string was ripped on one of the crates at the top of the wagon. This is because the new crates are slightly taller than the old ones. This is a problem that will be rectified.

There were over 100 members who paid by BACS which makes payments so much easier and safer. There are just a few members who didn't put their BICC codes in the reference box. The treasurer needs this done so he knows which member has paid for which entry, and so for future races please insert your BICC membership number and the race point name.

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