

The winner of the British International Championship Club has managed to continue racing at the top level regardless of major challenges in his life over the past two years. He is a man that is stoic with a drive that matches his passion for racing at the very top level. He has put up performances beyond expectations in recent years and his first open position in the clubs second race from Le Mans is no exception.

In the two years since his father passed away Stuart and his wife Linda have been busy building a new home at the location of the lofts, the existing family home has been demolished and a 4 bedroom home is nearing completion. As you can imagine, in order to fund this project they sold their house and they have been living on site in a mobile chalet whilst building works are undertaken. Although the house is at street level, the gardens in the area rise quite steeply up the mountain side and the lofts are situated high above the roof tops. Several steps wind their way up the hillside before reaching them and a large retaining wall keeps everything in place just past the footprint of the house. But when the footings were being dug to extend the retaining wall, the ground just in front of the lofts became unstable, a large crack appeared, and the ground threatened to slip. Consequently, one of the original racing lofts had to be taken down although Stuart is quite pragmatic about it and is making plans for a new set up once the house is finally finished.



Brett



Stuart-&-Brett-Treharne

The winning pigeon required delicate handling too as his early career has been fraught with its own challenges. As a yearling he was given one race and was lost, only to return weeks later, having been hawked. He had one short race at the start of this season and was then sent to Alencon with the British International Championship Club, but he went missing for 4 weeks and when he did return he was so flown out that he didn't race again until a short comeback race from Blandford Forum which is 77 miles, three weeks prior to Le Mans. The whole team was then taken off the roundabout system and allowed to go to nest, given three training tosses before being sent sitting seven days on eggs. Stuart had noticed the team were feeling well as they would exercise for around an hour although being on natural, so a few short chucks was all they needed to sharpen up their racing attitude. His nephew Brett has become a great help around the lofts and he was the first to spot him coming from the race and both felt just rewards for giving the pigeon time to get his act together.

He is bred from a direct son of "Topstar" the grandfather of three first international winners for Verstraete, when paired to a daughter of "Nadira" herself twice 1st international winner. The son of "Topstar" has bred Stuart three second nationals into Wales, twice beaten by loft mates from different hens. The daughter of "Nadira" has bred 1st national Ancenis and 1st section NFC when paired to "Alans Lad" their Saintes national winner. He arrived in perfect condition and didn't look as though he had been out of the loft. He handled full bodied and had lost no weight at all. They also had two yearlings close behind him which were Eijerkamp bloodlines crossed with "Alans Lad" the Saintes national winner from T. Marshall & sons. They returned in great condition but a little tired from their exploits. Stuart added "I would firstly like to thank my lovely wife Linda for all the help she has given me with the birds since Dad passed away, she is an angel and I would be lost without her. Also, I would like to thank all the people that have congratulated us over the past couple of days as it means a lot to us, thank you all for your kindness."

President John Tyerman and Mark Gilbert sent me their race controllers report; The BICC Le Mans National had a very good entry of just under 3000 birds. Marking and collection of the birds went smoothly and both Transporters arrived at Hordean on Thursday evening, where the birds were all loaded on to the larger Vovlo Transporter, and later caught the overnight ferry from Portsmouth to Caen. They arrived on site at Le Mans just after lunchtime on the Friday, they were later fed and watered and left to settle overnight. Our weather Advisor Steve Appleby had been checking the weather charts and he was confident that we would be able to have an early liberation on the Saturday morning. The race Advisory Team spoke early on Saturday morning and as the weather at Le Mans was bright and sunny the birds were liberated at 7 am into a very light north west wind. The Convoyers said it was a perfect liberation and the birds cleared immediately. Although the channel was clear the winds at times were in a clockwise direction and this overall seemed to slow down the birds progress. However, a successful race followed and it was interesting to note that the winner was in Wales with the 2nd open being recorded in the opposite side of the Country. Well done to the winners.

Steve Appleby kindly sent me his weather report; Despite an excellent flying day for this B.I.C.C. race from Le Mans the race turned out to be far from easy. Our convoyers on site Trevor and Steve reported conditions were perfect for liberation. The flight path though France to the coast was one of blue skies and broken cloud which was confirmed by our convoyers on their arrival back at Caen. The image captured of the skies over the Isle of Wight gave a general picture of the overall conditions in England. The wind flow chart shows a light westerly stream over northern France. In the channel winds were light and direction varied according to which area they were identified over. Visibility 5 miles to 11 miles. With all the relevant information received, race controllers John and Mark gave the green light to liberate. From a weather perspective identifying the reason as to why the race was difficult is somewhat mystifying as overall weather conditions were very good.

