

## **BICC St Vincent International Race Report**

The Internationals continue to come thick and fast throughout July, as we venture to St Vincent, against around 9,500 pigeons from France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Luxembourg. On top of this contingent the UK sent 317 birds to compete against Europe's best.

St Vincent is another racepoint situated in Western France, in the vicinity of Pau and Agen. St Vincent has been kind to UK flyers in the past and due to its location is another racepoint which the UK can look at with confidence, especially if the weather and the wind is in our favour.

Liberated at 7am on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July, was this to be Lucky Friday 13<sup>th</sup> for the UK birds? And would anybody be able to stop the Mark Gilbert juggernaut from continuing its journey through the BICC races?

### **OPEN**

Well we now know that the Mark Gilbert Dream Season continued into St Vincent! The first 5 in the Centre Section as well **1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Open**. Chris Sutton put together a superb article in last weeks fancy press, highlighting some of the methodology behind Mark's successes recently, it is worth a read. As for his other pigeons, here is a run-down on the next 4 that are in the clock and on the result.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Open** is one hell of a pigeon! "Southfield Melissa's Star" is the winner of the Pau International British Section in 2018. Looking in such fine fettle, she was doubled back into St Vincent and came so close to doing the double! Bred down from the superstar breeder "Starlight" when he was paired to "Southfield Melissa", the latter being a 1<sup>st</sup> International Bordeaux Hens winner, and Starlight 2<sup>nd</sup> International Tarbes.

**4<sup>th</sup> Open** is a 2-year-old pigeon proving his worth on the International scene. After several conversations with Mark over the last few weeks this is the time for the 2-year olds to shine. Agen, Pau and St Vincent are the breeding ground for the International performers of the future.

**8<sup>th</sup> Open** is another 2-year-old pigeon, this time a hen, yet again showing that if they are good enough then they are certainly old enough. She was clocked doing 718 YPM, just 13/14 yards behind the 4<sup>th</sup> Open bird

**10<sup>th</sup> Open** is somewhat of a veteran at 4 years old! These are the pigeons that Mark can go to time and again, just knowing they are going to come. A beautiful position to be in!

Splitting the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> arrivals of Mark are his close friends Geoff and Catherine Cooper. They clocked for **1<sup>st</sup> West Section, 3<sup>rd</sup> Open** and clocked a 2<sup>nd</sup> pigeon for **2<sup>nd</sup> West Section, 24<sup>th</sup> Open**. Catherine has sent me the following information on two great birds to be clocked.

“We timed a three-year-old chequer cock to win 1st section, 3rd open St Vincent International. The cock was flown widowhood, as are all the birds, cocks and hens.

The sire of this bird is Darkie, a son of George who won 1st Grand National Tarbes and has been a super breeder, responsible for many top performers. Darkie also bred 2nd International Agen for Mark Gilbert. His dam is also the dam of Stellar who had won 3rd National Agen. The photo shows him with his hen Lady of the Night who won the Section and 3rd National last year. This cocks last race was Pau International 561 miles, 904 kms, where he was 3rd Section. 2nd section was another three-year-old cock. His sire is a son of George and his dam is a daughter of Farmer George. His last race was also Pau International. This is the fourth year in a row that we have won 1st section from St Vincent International.”

Following on from Chris’s report last week in which Mark talked about testing these birds on the International stage to find the right ones early, pigeons that can be relied upon in these races, and the fact you don’t need many to come through. 1 superstar can really change your world! Well look at Geoff and Catherine, similarly to Mark, doubling pigeons back into St Vincent from Pau and scoring. Is this not exactly what sprint and middle-distance flyers do? Keep sending their best birds to win races! Why have more long-distance men cottoned on to this. Pigeons seem to be getting more and more capable of these wonderful performances every single year, two or even three huge performances in long distance events is becoming more and more common. Those star pigeons, the once in a lifetime birds, need finding as soon as you can. Only way to find them? Send them!

**1<sup>st</sup> East Section and 5<sup>th</sup> Open**, another stunning long-distance loft, Mr and Mrs Rhodes.

“Our St Vincent timer is two-year-old blue pencil cock, pure Freialdenhofen and son, Donkere Simons and Barcelona King lines. We have a strong colony of these sons and daughters of many of his champions, and they are starting to show now. He was trained with the Wingham lads to 100 miles, then had Alencon with the BICC, the first Le Mans race, then rested and sent sitting eggs 10 days. He has returned in great condition”

The trio of East Section pigeons were split by just 8 yards.

In next taking **2<sup>nd</sup> Section and 6<sup>th</sup> Open** are Kevin and Lee Buddle, no strangers to the result sheet in these races.

“Our 2nd East Section, 6th Open BICC St Vincent prize winner is a good consistent cock we call 'Big Steve'. He won 9th East Section, 17th Open BICC Pau 545 miles 3 weeks prior to St Vincent. 'Big Steve' has also won 3rd Section P, 50th Open NFC Tarbes in 2016 as a Yearling & 36th Section G, 138th Open BBC Bordeaux in 2017. He is a 2015 bred bird that is SU rung as he was bred by our friend in Dundee Steve Bannon. His Sire is a son of G & C Cooper's 'Wiggler' and his Dam is a pigeon of ours which Steve has, and she was jointly bred between

Dave Hales and us being a daughter of Dave Hales '35', 2nd Open BICC Marseille, 98th Open NFC Tarbes and our 'Amoy', 1st Open BICC Pau 2009. In preparation for the season he has had 3 x EECC Races from Cannappeville and Pithivers and the BICC Alencon race before being rested until BICC Pau. After his return from Pau he was rested for 10 days then given a couple of 20-mile trainers with the young birds before St Vincent marking. Raced all season on Widowhood and only seeing his hen on return from training races. Feed here consists of Verselle-Laga Superstar Plus & GEM Irish with our own fatty grains added sparingly after each feed."

Simple things for the Buddles, nothing overly complicated, just quality birds sent to the races with the right preparation. Notice again how "Big Steve" was at Pau just 3 weeks before, a recurring theme here.

**3<sup>rd</sup> East Section and 7<sup>th</sup> Open** is Alan Annis flying his reliable Mick Parish bloodlines. This natural cock is a yet another repeat performer, having been 47<sup>th</sup> Open St Vincent in 2017 in the BICC.

Just outside the top 3 in the East Section but in **9<sup>th</sup> Open, 4<sup>th</sup> East Section** are H & P Archibald.

The single entry was clocked and pooled to the guns! Great flying from a fantastic fancier.

"The hen I timed in was my single entrant and she is now a winner of a BICC merit award having been 6th and 8th and now 9th St Vincent. She is the nest mate to "The Proof" who has been 2nd & 3rd open and twice 1st sec P Tarbes NFC the last two years. She was lightly raced this year having been quite badly hawked on her first channel race from Alencon with the BICC, so she only had Bedhampton 100 miles trainers with the Wingham club until she had recovered, then she had a Le Mans 220 miles with the local club, then just some private training of 40 miles and in to St Vincent.

Her breeding is the Pau Hen who was 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> Pau with the BICC and 28th Hens International 222nd international 2011. She was twice on the day from Pau, she is R O Jones of Wales bloodlines. Her sire is a son of L & K Buddles Tom, winner of BICC Certificate of Merit when paired to Day 30, both of these pigeons have flown over 500 miles on the day. I would like to congratulate Mark Gilbert on a fantastic season he is having."

### **CENTRE and EAST SECTIONS**

As has been the case on several occasions this season, the Centre and East Section both figure in full on the Open Result. The only other section to clock pigeons was the West Section and you are in for a real treat here

### **WEST SECTION**

Geoff and Catherine Cooper have done what they do best, clocking two super birds with previous performances to take the first two in the Section. But what of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Section? What about Paul Addicott? Well I hope you're sitting down! For a start, he's good friends with Nic Harvey which means he must be a little bit mad, but just have a read of this and see what you think, it may open your eyes somewhat! Take it away Paul. **3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> West Section** from St Vincent.

"Hi John, first of all I want to congratulate Mark Gilbert on another win at the highest level. I was over the moon to do well in the section. How he feels when he wins these races I can only dream, brilliant flying. The two cocks I timed were having only the second race of their life. They had a couple 18-mile tosses at the early part of May then they went straight into Cholet, 10 sent, 8 home. No further training at all, just loft flying. Then into St Vincent International. All birds were fed a mixture of farm beans, wheat and barley and mixed corn from the local feed mill. As this race approached I added Gerry plus and Irish mix, the birds were bouncing around the loft, so I sent them with confidence and it paid off. The first cock is a Trueman Dickens x Ian Benstead, second pigeon is Trueman Dickens x Sid Miles from a hen I had off my good friend Bill Stribling of Weston Super Mare. For anyone thinking of having a go at international races, if you want a buzz when a pigeon arrives, give it a try as you won't be disappointed."

2 yearling cocks having the second race of their lives! I for one am going to keep my eyes peeled for these cocks next year. Interesting to note the bloodlines of the pigeons. Tried and tested at these levels, I believe the Benstead birds would quote often go to International races with their "L-Plates" still on and do very well.

In **5th Section**, the 3<sup>rd</sup> fanciers to clock in the West Section, Strawbridge and Williams, who have been devastated by hawks this year but still keep going, delivering excellent results.

"Our time at St Vincent has been a consistent racer from a young bird. She was 15<sup>th</sup> Open BICC young bird Falaise and as a yearling she was in the first ten twice in the G.G.D.C. In 2018 she had Alencon, Cholet, Poitiers and just left alone for St. Vincent. She was raced on the roundabout system. Her Sire is a son off the Padfield Family and has been a top stock cock for us, he is a Son of "Padfield's Invincible".

Her Dam was bred by Gareth Watkins and is out of a son of the Padfield Family birds "Iron Lady" x Son of "Indy" and a Dtr of "Tom Thumb", 25<sup>th</sup> Open, 1<sup>st</sup> West Sec, 1<sup>st</sup> G.G.D.C. Barcelona and "Marie" 17<sup>th</sup> Open, 9<sup>th</sup> Sec, 8<sup>th</sup> GGDC Bergerac, 495 miles. Also 23<sup>rd</sup> Open, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sec, 1<sup>st</sup> GGDC BICC Perpignan 665 miles in 2009. In 2010, 20<sup>th</sup> Open, 1<sup>st</sup> Sec, 1<sup>st</sup> GGDC, Perpignan 665 miles.

Hopefully she will go to Barcelona in 2019, but that is in the hand of the pigeon God. This year we had 29 old birds taken by either the peregrine, goshawk or sparrow hawk."

Incredible results that are being put up by this partnership in the face of this sort of adversity.

Fairly short and sweet for St Vincent itself with just the three Sections taking the positions, well done to all. I have a little bit of housekeeping to catch up on now.

With the International season being quite frantic, along with dealing with a couple of Nationals, sometimes fanciers don't get the recognition that they deserve for one reason or another, and we have to back-track a week or two. That is the case here for a few fanciers.

Nick Walker finished in **10<sup>th</sup> Open** from Barcelona but a communication error on my part meant that this information has been delayed. I have always said that I want to ensure that as many birds as possible are recognised through these reports and if you feel you have missed out for whatever reason, I am more than happy to publish information after the race report has been sent in, such as this one. So, this is from Nick.

"This is the first time I've sent to Barcelona, sending a single entry. I only broke this hen out 2 years ago, she was bred by Paul Stone of West Drayton for Mr & Mrs J Cody of Uxbridge and was given to me by Sonja when Jim sadly died 2 and a half years ago. She is a 6-year-old and was sent on a 4-day old youngster after only having 2 races this year before Barcelona. Her first race was Alencon in the BICC in which she was 292nd Open. She then went to Honiton in the club. Last year she was 74th Open, 22nd Section BICC Agen."

Yet another pigeon in this report with previous form. Well done Nick!

Next up, more Barcelona catch up! Graham Townsend clocked a rocket to be **2<sup>nd</sup> Open** behind Mark Gilbert. The information went to press last week but not the photos I am afraid, so they have been included in this report to again give Graham and the pigeon the recognition that they both deserve.

With the Barcelona weekend also having Le Mans going on, it makes it quite intense. Rodney Oakes of the North Centre Section was well up in the Section result and Rob Jarrett was kind enough to assist in getting me some information over and a picture as well.

"Hi John, Rodney's pigeon is Cuesters x Zwols. The Cuester side coming from Premier Stud and the Zwols from Red Star Lofts. The pigeon was raced on a fairly typical roundabout system and was heavily fancied when sent."

Again, as I have stated, I am more than happy to catch up on any items which may have been overlooked in the last couple of weeks, as the old bird season starts to draw to a close. The young bird racing has started, and I just hope and pray we can have a little cooler weather for these babies as it's been tough enough for the older pigeons. Let's all pray to the weather Gods! I can be contacted on email on [johnghentbicc@yahoo.com](mailto:johnghentbicc@yahoo.com) for any news you may have.

The BICC seems to be going from strength to strength and I am sure I am speaking for the whole committee when I say a massive thank you to all members for putting your trust and support in what we are trying to achieve here, which is to offer great racing to as much of the UK as possible. We understand the distances involved with marking and how the programme starts but stand back and take a look at some of the results that have been had

by some fanciers that aren't on the South Coast. There's great results and recognition to be had, you just need to grab it!

Finally, could all fanciers who read this and are provisionally in either the top 10 of the Open or in the first 3 in their Section for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Le Mans race please send me the information of their birds and a photo on email to the above email address please. It means I can provide quality reports to you all with information straight from the horse's mouth!

Speak soon

John Ghent

Joint Press Officer BICC