

Race marking for the BBC's last old bird race of the 2009 season took place at Salisbury on Thursday 30th July when 167 members sent 926 birds to the **Bordeaux National**. The entry was down on previous years which is hardly surprising considering the losses that members had suffered in recent weeks.

Everything went smoothly at marking and the convoyer and driver had an uneventful journey to the race point arriving at Bordeaux at approximately 1830 hrs on the Friday evening. Tony Kane the convoyer was surprised to see hundreds of Dutch pigeons wandering around the car park and was actually able to pick up two which have since been helped on their way home. It was only later we discovered that the Dutch had liberated 41,790 pigeons from Bordeaux at 1330 that afternoon.

The birds were fed and watered in preparation for an early liberation on the Saturday morning but with Steve Appleby correctly forecasting a band of heavy rain crossing the UK and Northern France on the Saturday an early decision of a hold over was sensibly made by the race controller Nigel Rigiani which gave the members ample time to reorganise their Saturday activities. The birds were eventually liberated at 0615 on the Sunday morning into sunshine and broken cloud with a light SW wind at Bordeaux turning westerly through France and the Channel. With west in the wind it was to be expected that members on the East side of the country would provide the leading birds and this was the case with a blue pied cock being timed by **Mick and Tracy Carrick** of Chesham, Buckinghamshire at 17:11 flying 471 miles to record a velocity of 1261 to take **1st section D and 1st Open**.



Mick and Tracy Carrick

The 2 year old Litherland x Jaap jan Gerijk cock had been full of himself all week, he had already won 3rd Section ,25th Open Poitiers earlier in the season and this with the fact that a full brother had previously won 2nd open NFC Messac last month for Jeff Hull convinced Mick to place a kiss in every available box on the entry form which in due time will reward him with a cheque for £700+. Mind you this is not just a one bird loft as Mick also timed his sister 20 minutes later in time to record a velocity of 1222 to take **2nd Section D and 4th Open**. What a family of birds winning a 1st Open, 2nd Open, 4th Open and 25th Open National in a matter of a few weeks I'm sure that we are going to hear a lot more about these relatively young birds. One of the old school Mick has been into pigeons since the age of 3-y-o when he followed his father around the loft with his bucket and spade to scrape out at Stockton on Tees where they used to live, a full loft report on this successful loft must follow in the close season. In **3rd place Section D and 16th Open** was a five year old blue cock for Mr & Mrs Morris of Great Missenden.



Taking **1st section G, 2nd Open** we have that well known and successful fancier Eric Higginbottom of Sandhurst lofts, Berkshire who timed a two year old chequer late bred cock at 16:42 flying 445 miles to record a velocity of 1249. This 2007 late bred, bred down from birds from Peter Fox, Syndicate Lofts was not raced as a yearling but trained in 2008. This season his racing career started with the BICC Falaise race which he made a complete hash of, returning three days late. He was carefully nursed back to fitness and entered in the BICC Poitiers where he was 4th home out of 12 entered, only 15 minutes behind the first bird. Eric was delighted with this improvement and decided to send him to Bordeaux. Preparation consisted of three 80 mile single ups: courtesy of Toni Cripps, Jimmy Alan and Lenny Pascal. For good measure Eric also took 4th, 5th and 6th Section.

In **2nd Section G, 3rd Open** we have the well known fancier and charity fund raiser Mike Armitage owner of The Lion Brewery in Ash, Surrey. Often referred to as "**Mr Consistent**" he has been a successful club fancier for over 50 years since 1998 Mike and wife Sue have concentrated on Classic and National racing and this tremendous performance rates alongside many others which include: 1st BICC Le Ferte Bernard and 1st LSECFC Alencon.

Mike timed a blue chequer Marriot yearling hen, sent sitting chipping eggs at 16:45 flying 438 miles to record a velocity of 1225. This hen had been trained in the Lion Brewery Midweek Club and the parents have won many positions between them. These Marriots were first introduced in 1976 from John Grey of Hull and one of those birds bred in 1977 "Hans Jubilee" turned out to be the foundation bird of Mike's loft bringing untold success to Mike's pigeon racing career with the descendants still breeding winners which are still performing at the top level over 30 years later. **3rd Section G and 22nd Open** was a two year old blue chequer hen for R Hampton of Bognor Regis.





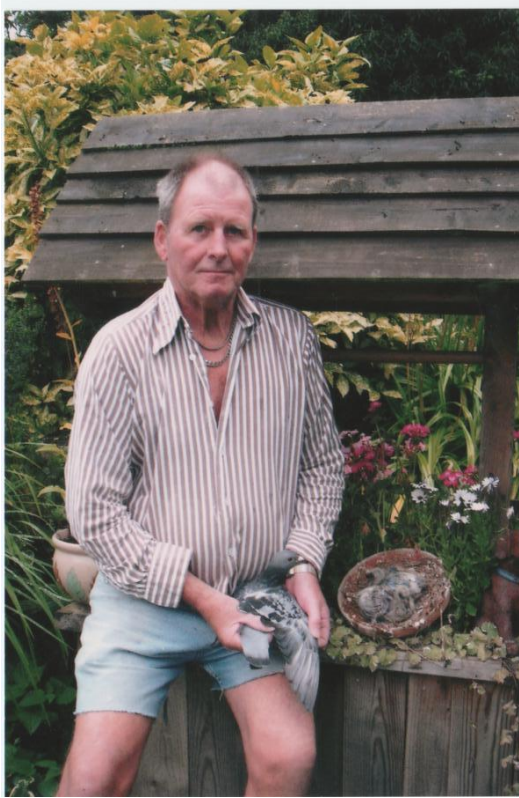
The **Section A winner and 6th Open** is a blue three year old hen timed into Portsmouth at 16:18 by Mike and Sue Betteridge flying 408 miles to record a velocity of 1192. This blue hen is a daughter of their BBC Messac winner when paired to a gift bird from Bomber Mellis. She had previously been 16th Fed Saintes last year and 64th Fed Bergerac three weeks previous. Details on this bird are sketchy because with Mike being ill and undergoing Chemo treatment this week they obviously have more important things on their mind. Tremendous flying Mike, I'm sure with you're your determination that you will keep fighting and we all wish you a successful outcome in the future. It was most appropriate that with Bomber Mellis associated with the section winner that he should time a two year old Mealy cock to take **2nd Section A and 7th Open** with Adrian Human's two year old blue hen close up to take **3rd Section A and 8th Open**. Adrian must have one of the most reliable distance pigeons in existence what a cracking pigeon his "**Ramsdean Reliance**" five times in the result from Palamos / Barcelona.

BBC committee man Richard Spooner continues his winning ways timing two of his Delbars flown on Widowhood to take **1st and 2nd Section E, 5th and 10th Open**. These two game birds were timed at 19:44 and 19:54 flying 551 miles on the day. The first was a three year old blue white flight shown with his wing fanned having only just dropped his third flight. Richard does not race his young birds but gives them a thorough training. As a yearling this bird had 8 races with three different feds down to the coast. Last year he returned from Poitiers badly hawked but recovered with no ill effects. This year after a shaky start he improved rapidly and the week up to basketing he was bouncing. The second pigeon clocked was a four year old chequer cock, a seasoned performer who in the last two years has scored in all 6 races sent to with the BBC winning: 20th Open Messac, 127th Open Poitiers, 28th Open Bordeaux in 2008 and this season : 71st Open Messac, 216th Open Poitiers and now 10th Open Bordeaux, not so keen on Poitiers but what a super pigeon.

Richard had all 8 entries home by midday on the second day which he believes is an endorsement to our convoyer Tony Kane's care and attention. Mind you the fancier in this case plays a huge part as Richard has now entered BBC's races on 10 occasions and has won his section five times a strike rate of 50% - some flying.

In **3rd Section E, 48th Open** was a two year old chequer hen for G A Baker of Shifnal flying 538 miles.





The earliest bird in Section C to take **1st Section C 12th Open** is for Melvyn Bird of Andover who timed a yearling blue chequer hen flying 439 miles at 17:09 to record a velocity of 1181. This hen sent feeding two youngsters is bred down from birds obtained from a German fancier ten years ago. Melvyn cannot remember the fanciers name and therefore refers to the strain as “German George” which were obtained by a chance meeting of this German fancier in a pub in Andover. The next time this fancier visited Andover he brought over half a dozen youngsters for Melvyn and birds bred down from these are currently doing the damage as one from the same family had recently topped the Wilts Fed from Bergerac only three weeks previous. From the attached photograph of Melvyn holding the hen with two youngsters in the nest bowl to his side you can see that the hen is intently watching the young in the bowl. In **2nd Section C, 50th Open** was Tommy Burns of Marlborough with Crowley and Green of Compton Bassett taking **3rd Section C, 51st Open**.

I do not need to introduce the winners of **1st Section B, 29th Open** as the performances of Mel and Sue King are well known to us all but did you know that this was their third section win from Bordeaux in the last five seasons. Once again they timed one from their top winning National family of Vandenneele's, a blue cheq hen “Stourcrest Hester”. This hen is a nest sister to “Stourcrest Pheidippides” who was **2nd Open CSCFC** Lessay this season. This pair bred from their champion “Stourcrest Thetis” retired to stock this year, a winner of 2 x **2nd Sect**, 2 x **4th Sect** and **12th Sect** in National & Classic races to Bordeaux South and Carlisle North. Full brother to “Stourcrest Typhon”, **3rd** and **7th Open** Bordeaux. Dam is “Stourcrest Tolane” a full sister to **2nd Open CSCFC** Truro Young Bird and half sister to **1st Open NFC** Nantes. As we all know Mel and Sue have winners galore from this family at the top level however I have previously associated them as being widowhood fanciers so it would seem that with a hen having success this time then a different system may be operation – further questions to be answered in due course.



In **2nd Section C 40th Open** we have Tony Cottrell and Ollie Richmond of Wimborne who are never far away when the prize cards are being distributed with Mr and Mrs Owers of Bere Regis only decimals away to take **3rd Section and 41st Open**.



1st Section H, 35th Open was Kevin Johnstone of Jersey who timed his single entry a three year old blue cock called "Birthday Surprise" as it gave him this pleasant surprise on his birthday. This Janssen x Jan Aarden was gifted to him by Ray McMonagle who has since left Jersey and returned to Ireland. Full of winning blood it was bred by Paul Davies from his dark cock that also bred Glen Moon's Poitiers National winner.

2nd Section H and 75th Open was L H Le Ruez with Paul Davies taking **3rd Section H and 117th Open**.

Well that's old bird racing over for this season and I'm sure that all members have at least had an enjoyable season if not like some a successful season. Our new convoyers Tony Kane and Ken Smith have really provided us with excellent racing and deserve our thanks and congratulations. All we need now is to have a good young bird and old hen race from Lamballe on the 22nd August so get your entries in – and good luck to you all.