

**Barcelona “Blue Riband” National  
1<sup>st</sup> Open 1<sup>st</sup> Section D  
Mark Gilbert from Windsor  
With “Southfield Gold Lady”**

The 2020 Blue Riband Race from Barcelona had 42 members entering 140 pigeons (84 duplicated from the BICC). The birds were liberated at 7.50 UK time with the *weather conditions during liberation: intermittent clouds, light wind, north wind, good visibility.*

Thank you to Carol and Russell for their assistance in working with us again.

Time and time again we see some truly superb performances from Barcelona and this year has been no exception, with Mark Gilbert timing the only pigeon on the second day to claim the top prize, also adding another eight arrivals on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> days. After a gruelling 4<sup>th</sup> Day Tony Mather & Steve Haywood clocked their single entry “Barcelona 97” into Section E flying 834 miles at 7.23am. In Section A Luke and Les Cross with their single entry “Dawn’s Faith” who arrived home at 3.57pm on Sunday afternoon. On the East side in Dover, Lee & Kevin Buddle had the pleasure of timing “Ronald” their 2019 1<sup>st</sup> Open Marseille Winner and another on the 5<sup>th</sup> day. Up in Great Burstead Mick Parish on Monday morning timed in to Section J at 7.11am followed by his second arrival Tuesday evening. Simon Fear in Section D clocked one of his two entries late evening on the 4<sup>th</sup> day.

Congratulations to **Mark Gilbert** on a wonderful weekend of racing **1<sup>st</sup> Open 1<sup>st</sup> Section D 128<sup>th</sup> Open International** with “Southfield Gold Lady” a 3 year old chequer hen. Southfield Gold Lady is a direct daughter of “Golden Barcelona” and a Grand daughter of “Romee”.

**3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Open 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Section D.** The second bird is a hen, sire is a son of Kanibal Barcelona 4<sup>th</sup> International Barcelona and 26<sup>th</sup> International Perpignan, the dam is a child of Golden Barcelona the Gold wing winner with 6<sup>th</sup> Nat 23<sup>rd</sup> and 170<sup>th</sup> Belgium National Barcelona.

Third to be timed is from a son of New Laureaat 1<sup>st</sup> International Barcelona and a daughter of Kanibal Barcelona.

The fourth bird is from a son of Jella Jellmas Zwart Gold and a daughter of New Laureaat 1<sup>st</sup> International Barcelona.



## **1<sup>st</sup> Section E 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Tony Mather & Steve Haywood of Crich, near Matlock, Derbyshire.**

I dedicate this article to Barcelona 97 a brave pigeon, Ring Number GB15N73197 blue chequer hen.

It was back in 2015 that Tony Mather and I formed the partnership of T & J Mather and Steve Haywood and that is the best days work I have ever done.

In my opinion Tony Mather is as good as they come having 100% dedicated to the task of extracting a good performance out of a pigeon from French race points.

Sire: Red Chequer Cock from German distance stock which we collected at Blackpool show in 2015.

Dam: Bred by Masserella and is a Grandaughter of True Grit and Brave Heart.

As a young bird 97 was always behind the early birds but this never seemed to worry her. She ended her young bird season at North Midlands C.C Carentan 260 miles and took 6 months to get home, I was confident she had not been in any other loft by the state of her plumage and still holding 4 nest flights which she presently moulted through.

In 2017, 97 was 2 years old now and we still didn't know too much about her. She was sent out for Tarbes with the NFC where her training stood her in good stead, showing her ability to spend hours on the wing, rather than mileage done.

We started relatively quietly, she was sent to Tarbes as an unknown quantity. Low and behold she was the first pigeon back to the loft. (homed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day – hard race). So this was the time that I first noticed what a pigeon we had, showing the ability to look after herself and the thing that caught my eye was the amount of fuel left in the tank after 680 miles from Tarbes.

She was then put away until 2018 having had a first class moult and now looking a million dollars. After a very similar training to the previous season she returned to Tarbes with a little more confidence in her ability to get home. It was around this time that we realized that we had a pigeon that could master great distances and hours on the wing. Again she was first back from Tarbes but just out of race time.

2019 again she set out for Tarbes hoping that she could make it 3 times in a row but just prior to the Tarbes National race the mission was aborted and instead she was sent out to Bordeaux where she knighted out, making it home on the next day in the early afternoon. Once again I was impressed by how much fuel she had in the tank.

Through the winter of 2019 – 2020 we decided to extend the distance this pigeon had to fly and be competitive. We decided that there was only one place to test this pigeon and that was Barcelona, being 825 miles back to the lofts. (we shall now see how much fuel will be left in the tank?).

So now we come to the 2020 season and ooh what a season! I would say what with the early season weather, prolonged NE wind and the Coronavirus knocking the stuffing out of the early season, we found ourselves fortunate to get any distance flying and here I must salute you for getting this quality sport, all be it about a month later than usual. We started the season with the first race from Stratford – 60 miles on 6<sup>th</sup> June and the second race was from Falaise 295 miles where she homed in the evening on the second day. This put her right for the rest of the season having done some flying. She took back to her eggs and was allowed to rear one youngster. She was not trained again until she had laid her third set of eggs of the year. Back in to training and was sent to Salisbury the weekend before basketing for Barcelona. This was her 13<sup>th</sup> trip from over the channel. It is surprising what a difference a month makes to a pigeons primary flight moult. Again this shows a first class trait in her ability to adapt to the prevailing conditions. She went to Barcelona showing 1 ½ flight and safe wing and sitting her 3<sup>rd</sup> pair of eggs of the season (in excellent condition), showing us how adaptable a pigeon can be. Once more in her training for this marathon she showed her usual ability to give off the appearance that although there might be a light on but there's no one at home. Just her usual self sometimes I think you would need an earthquake to wake her up. So we come to Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July, marking day for the Barcelona race and Tony's off early morning with just her ladyship. On his wasy home he called in to say that she had gone and what fantastic condition that she was in. Tony also said that the only thing that can stop her is the hawk or the wire of the gun to which I heartily agreed.

We have always said that if she's alive that she's coming home and up to now we haven't seen anything to make us change our minds.

Now we come to the main event. Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July – Liberation. 7.50am. In 40c heat, in our opinion it was the heat factor that stopped a lot of pigeons homing.

The rest is history. "Barcelona 97" homed at 7.24am on Monday flying a distance of 825 miles to win 1<sup>st</sup> Section E 2<sup>nd</sup> Open only being beaten by a good performance from Mr Gilbert down in Windsor.

Then the celebrations started. It has got to be one of the finest experiences a pigeon flyer could have, both Tony and myself would like to thank the BBC for looking after Barcelona 97 so well.



Tony Mather & Steve Haywood

**1<sup>st</sup> Section A 4<sup>th</sup> Open Luke & Les Cross from Gosport.** We timed a 5 year old Chequer pied hen at our first attempt of Barcelona, she has flown over 400miles for us in excess of 6 times now, with her best result being 5<sup>th</sup> section 10<sup>th</sup> open Narbonne 566miles International BICC, 5<sup>th</sup> section 80<sup>th</sup> Open BBC Bordeaux 410miles. She is out of a mother & son pairing being 3/4 Matt Rakes Indy blood, the Dam was bred by Mick Bradley of Countryview lofts, and the Sire is out of her when paired back into to my dad's first ever pigeon 'Shoefayre' from G Matthews Del Bar.

We named her after my mum 'Dawn' as without the support from her over the years we wouldn't be able to send to half the Nationals and Classics we do, she has travelled up and down the country over the years because of our passion.

I would also like to say this was a dream result for me as Barcelona has always been a race I have wanted to attempt and never felt we had a pigeon capable until 'Dawns Faith' it was that much sweeter being able to share my success with my best mate my dad, any father and son partnership will understand the highs and lows you can go through racing and the disagreements mixing the old ways with the modern! that can happen along the way, but there is no



greater euphoria being able to share days like this with your farther. I hope there are many more to come, but I will cherish this race forever.



Luke & Les Cross

**1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Section G 5<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Open Lee & Kevin Buddle.** Our timer from Barcelona is a 6 year old cock we call "Ronald", named after my late grandfather & Dad's Father. After being paired in early February and raising a pair of babies, his hen was taken away after sitting between 5-8 days on their second round. He has then been flown all season on our Widowhood/Roundabout type of system, where the cocks and hens only get to see each other to run freely for an hour or two on return from the training races with the BICC & Local Club. They are only put together before race marking when it comes to the International races. Feeding here is very simple with every pigeon getting the same mix every feed seven days a week and is made up of 75% Versele-Laga Superstar Plus mixed with 25% Versele-Laga Best Allrounder and a few fatty seeds given the last five days before marking.

In preparation for Barcelona he flew, BICC Falaise, BICC St Philbert & BICC Poitiers.

He has been a super racing bird for us having previously won -

1st Open BICC Marseille 573m 2019

6th BICC Marseille 573m 2018

13th BICC Perpignan 593m 2017

29th BICC Pau 544m 2018

35th BICC St Vincent 531m 2017

39th BICC Perpignan 593m 2016

50th BICC Mont De Marsan 530m 2017

75th BICC Pau 544m 2019.

BICC Merit Award Winner.

The Sire of "Ronald" is a Grandson of G & C Coopers PD & JW which we brought from F Birch & Sons.

The Dam of is a Granddaughter of Mark Gilbert's "Southfield Supreme".

Well done to Mark Gilbert the winner and all that have timed from a very hard Barcelona here and in Europe.

Our second pigeon in the clock and provisional 2<sup>nd</sup> Section G, 10<sup>th</sup> Open BBC Barcelona is a 4 year old also flown on our Widowhood/Roundabout System. He has previously won 22<sup>nd</sup> Open BICC Perpignan 2019, 593 miles. His sire is

a full brother to 'Triple Two' our 2019 winner of 1<sup>st</sup> Open BBC Barcelona, his Dam is a daughter of 'Game' 3<sup>rd</sup> Open BICC Perpignan, 7<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Perpignan, 15<sup>th</sup> Open BICC Pau etc... in preparation for Barcelona he had BICC Falaise, BICC St Philbert & Combine Exeter.



Ronald 1<sup>st</sup> Section G



2<sup>nd</sup> Section G

**1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Section J 7<sup>th</sup> Open Mick Parish of Great Burstead.** Always a hard fly Barcelona, well done to Mark, and what a good bird flying up to Derbyshire. My bird is a blue 2 year old late bred Cock having had a couple of 100 mile coastal trainers with the local club then a 250 mile channel toss. Sent feeding a couple of young, not something I particularly like but he came through. Bred down from my old Palamos/ Barcelona birds with the dam being from Mick Tuck's Eric Cannon blood.

My second bird from Barcelona is a 4 year old chequer cock. Preparation was 3, 100 mile coastal tosses with the local club and a 250 mile channel trainer. Sent sitting eggs, his sire is from my old Palamos/ Barcelona birds. There is a bit of a story to his dam. She has been passed around a bit. She was purchased at Ken Hines bereavement sale by a friend of Pat O'Sullivan. She is from the Titmus cock and Charville Jane. Pat's friend packed up pigeons and gave her to Pat. When Pat packed up he gave her to me. She is also the dam of my 3<sup>rd</sup> bird from Agen this year, which Pat bred for me when he had her.



Mick Parish 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Section J

**8<sup>th</sup> Open Mr & Mrs Simon Fear of Hayes.** The 4 year old I clocked late on the 4<sup>th</sup> day has the last two years flown Tarbes, taking 10 days to arrive home in 2018. The sire was a Massarella youngster I obtained of Nico Volkens lines. The dam was a gift pigeon bred by Ken Hine which didn't have a ring on it. It is a grandchild of Brian Long's Red Barcelona.

**1<sup>st</sup> Section C Stuart Wilcox from Bristol.** Our timer from Barcelona is a 6 year old cock called Mario. This cock came in as a young bird and as it had a Belgium ring on it I reported and it belonged to Mario Martens of Belgium. I am not one to keep strappers and I done everything to lose him, he went to Swansea one day, London the next, still he came home and then I sent him to Lamballe with the BBC and he homed in good time, so from then I learned to have a bit of respect for him. He has crossed the channel 32 times and is never far behind, last year he flew Tarbes and Bordeaux being fresh when he landed from both so the decision was made to prepare him for our first race from Barcelona. He flew Falaise, St Philbert and Poitiers all in good time and was sent to Barcelona on widowhood. I was pleased as punch to see him return. His breeding is Marcel Aelbrecht x Chris Hebberecht and he was fed on Koopman Allround and Verkerk Sport from Beyers supplemented by energy corns from Countrywide.



Stuart Wilcox with Edward & Beau



**2<sup>nd</sup> Section C Dave & John Staddon of Ditchheat.** We only sent one pigeon and we were pleased to time him, even if it was on the 6<sup>th</sup> morning. This was probably the hardest Barcelona race in the UK for some years in our opinion. We timed a 3 year old chaos widowhood cock bred from an Andy Parsons sire when paired to a daughter of Geoff Coopers George 1<sup>st</sup> NFC Tarbes Grand National. He has been a steady performer up until now scoring 40<sup>th</sup> National Falaise 7,441 birds earlier this year. We hope this experience won't be lost on him for 2021. Well done to Mark Gilbert on an outstanding winner and Stuart Wilcox on winning our section.



Dave & John Staddon



Erik Neilson

**2<sup>nd</sup> Section A Jimmy Wearn & Erik Neilson of Ramsdean.** First of all I would like to congratulate Mark Gilbert with another great performance and also all the section winners especially Les and Luke Cross for a great performance again with only a handful of pigeons that they keep.

The chequer hen which is a Fred Bloor cross Ernie Deacon lines has been all over the world, Tarbes many times Zaragoza, now Barcelona. She hen was sharing a pair of eggs with 2 other hens and the baby was slipped nearer to the time of basketing she had 2 other races previously and then Barcelona.

The old girl has got us in the clock so we were more than pleased we would like to say well done to everyone that clocked and we would like to thank Clare and all her helpers for sorting out racing for this year.

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