

Fougeres OB National

1st & 2nd Open 1st & 2nd Section D

Roger Lowe of Reading

A bumper entry for our first race of the season to Fougeres, with 174 members sending 2,796 birds. Along for the ride as well was the Premier 100 club with 71 birds.

It was another of those difficult weather forecasts again this weekend, where the time to liberate had to be spot on to avoid inclement weather coming through. The birds were away at 6am on the Saturday with a west north west wind on liberation.

Marking day proved very hard work for Southampton marking station with over 1800 birds passing through here. This is a record birdage for this marking station and we thank everyone involved for all your hard work and would like to thank the members for your patience in waiting.

It was great to see so many members on the east side enter with over 500 birds being marked by Kevin Foster and his team at Gravesend. Paulton, Ironbridge and Watchfield had lighter birdage than usual due to the westerly wind predicted, but we thank you all for turning up and marking week in and week out for all the clubs. It is not an easy task with so much involved in channel racing and the deadlines to meet.



Roger Lowe & Luke Oglesby

Congratulations to our race winner **Roger Lowe of Reading 1st & 2nd Open 1st & 2nd Section D**. First, I would like to thank Gary Bicknell and Luke Oglesby for all their help; Gary for driving me to the marking stations and Luke for all the help around lofts. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be flying. Having two birds arriving together from my 15 entries, the first over the pad was "Orbital Prince", son of "The One That Got Away" bred by Mark Gilbert from a son of "Armando" the 1.25 million euro pigeon when paired to a daughter of Gino Clicque "Golden Prince" bred by PIPA.

Dam of "Orbital Prince" is "Joint Breeding" also bred by Mark. It's sire is a son of PIPA "Daniel" Best Kittel blood lines when paired to a daughter of "Golden Prince" bred by Gino.

My second pigeon a yearling bred from my original family "Harry" blood x "Main Man". Main Man was winner of 2nd and 3rd Open NFC National Saintes and sire of many winners including "Main Son" winner of NFC National Sigogne 2018 now paired to "Dark Lady" my 2025 Sigogne NFC winner.

Sending 4 cocks and 11 hens I was expecting a hen first so you can never tell with pigeons.

I would like to congratulate all the section winners and thank all the hardworking workers especially Clare on all the hard work she does for the sport.

Very close to Roger taking **3rd, 4th & 5th Open 3rd, 4th & 5th Section D Mark Gilbert of Windsor**. We sent around 20 of our sprint team, confident the conditions would favour them, while also marking our middle- and long-distance birds to start building fitness for the bigger tests still to come. Based on the wind and line, we estimated arrivals around 10:15am if they were travelling well... and they certainly were.

At 10:18am, three of our sprinters hit the trap together, racing each other all the way home and clocking within five seconds of one another at 1474 ypm — exactly the kind of sharpness you want to see on opening day.

3rd Open – GB23-B01392 "392"

First to show was a three-year-old blue cock, a bird that has already picked up Federation cards but delivered his best performance so far in this opening race of the season. He trapped sharply, full of intent, and showed exactly the kind of maturity you hope to see coming into their third year.

He's bred for the job too. His sire, "Bulck 531", is a proven Marcel Sangers Van Den Bulck cock responsible for a long list of prize winners. His grandsire "Banksy" is something special — a hyper-exclusive son of Kittel paired to his own mother Olympic Rosita, putting the very heart of the Kittel dynasty directly behind this cock.

On the dam's side sits the exceptional Southfield Leonna, a top Heremans-Ceusters hen whose breeding record speaks for itself. She is mother of multiple winners up to 2,214 birds+, and grandmother to some of the loft's most decorated sprint performers, including: 2nd Section, 2nd National NFC Carentan 2023, 6th Section, 7th National BICC Guernsey 2023, Southfield 394 — RPRA Sprint Champion UK 2021, 42144 — 2nd UK Titan Games Sprint Award winner, 12 × 1st up to 2,433 birds, 8 × 2nd, and many more top results.

With that blend of Van Den Bulck speed and Heremans-Ceusters consistency, it's no surprise this cock is now stepping up and delivering his best work yet. A cracking start to the season — and a bird that looks set for more.

4th Open – GB23-B01406 "406"

Next up, taking 4th Open, was GB23-B01406 "406", a sharp blue hen who has already built a strong race record. Her standout performance before today was 9th National BICC Falaise 2025, and she's consistently featured at the top end of club and federation results.

Her pedigree shows exactly why she performs with such reliability. She is sired by the "Six Grand Cock" (BE21-4209003) from the Flanders Collection — a cock responsible for producing winners including 3rd Yearling, 18th Open Chalon-en-Champagne 11,094 birds, 1st Weymouth 1,443 birds, 2nd Honiton 1,111 birds, 3rd Wadebridge 829 birds, 3rd Exeter 1,456 birds, and many more.

Her mother is permanently paired to the same cock, and together they have bred the same run of top performers — a genuinely proven mating. The dam is a daughter of Southfield Kittel 09, who is (G)Sire of 1st, 1st, 2nd, 2nd, 3rd Sect NFC, 5th Nat NFC Guernsey, 11th Nat BICC Guernsey (5,281 birds) and a long list of top positions right down to 2,214 birds, when paired to 'Southfield 394' — RPRA UK Sprint Champion 2021.

With that blend of Flanders, Van Den Bulck, Heremans, and Southfield sprint power, “406” continues to show she’s one of the most reliable hens in the loft — tough, consistent, and fully capable of performing at National level.

5th Open – GB24-A55437 “437”

Taking 5th Open was GB24-A55437 “437”, a classy chequer hen already proven on the road and winner of the 2024 Berkshire Gold Ring. She’s continued that form into this season, showing the same sharpness and determination that made her stand out as a youngster.

She is bred from two proven racers at Southfield, both winners themselves and now producing the next generation of competitive birds. Her sire, GB21-N61265 “265”, is a consistent performer with results including 2nd Honiton (1,245 birds), 4th Truro (377 birds), 5th Weymouth (1,469 birds), and 8th Weymouth (1,699 birds). He is also sire of 12th Sect, 16th Nat BICC Falaise 2025, along with multiple other top positions.

Her dam, GB20-N70790 “790”, is equally decorated, scoring 5th Sect, 8th Nat BICC Guernsey 2023, 9th Sect, 11th Nat BICC Guernsey 2023, 13th Sect, 33rd Nat BBC Guernsey 2023, plus 1st Kingsdown (1,145 birds) and 2nd Honiton (724 birds). She too has bred several top performers, including 12th Sect, 16th Nat BICC Falaise 2025 and 5th Wincanton (1,277 birds).

Behind them sits real depth. Her sire is from Southfield Hans, who is grandsire of Southfield 394 — the 2021 RPRA UK Sprint Champion when paired to Southfield Kittel 22 who is grandmother of the 2nd UK Titan Games Sprint Award winner, and part of the same powerful Van Den Bulck family that has produced National-level sprint results year after year.

With this blend of Eijerkamp, Van Den Bulck, Lambrechts, and Southfield sprint lines, “437” is bred to be sharp, fast, and consistent — and she’s proving it every time she goes.

Three birds in the top 5 Open, all home early, all bred from proven lines, and all showing the sharpness you want to see at the start of a long campaign.

Congratulations again to Roger Lowe on a brilliant 1st and 2nd Open. Onwards and upwards!



Mark Gilbert’s 1st, 2nd & 3rd Section D winners

6th Open Garry Inkley of Hillingdon. I timed a 2 year old hen raced on the ‘PEEK A BOO’ system. She won as young bird, then as a yearling had a 3rd club but then in her first channel race she had 10 days out! Coincidentally the race was in the BBC from Fougères. She obviously learnt her lesson. I did not race her again in 2025 as she was paired to my 2nd open NFC Sigogne cock who was intended for Sigogne on a small youngster so didn’t want to take a chance on her going AWOL again. Her parents were both supplied by Peter Fox of Syndicate Lofts, her sire being direct from Solomon and Moonstone (predominantly Koopman blood lines), her dam is a daughter of Lawman and Little China Girl.

All be it was a difficult race the birds returned in excellent condition, testament to the convoy and the transporter. I would like to congratulate Roger Lowe on yet another great performance.

7th Open John Haynes of Fifield. John timed a 2-year-old blue chequer hen.

She has been first to the loft on several previous occasions, this latest performance represents her most notable achievement to date.

The hen is bred from a proven pairing. Sire: John's 1st BICC National Guernsey winner, a cock noted for both racing performance and value at stock. Dam: A double grandchild of Kittel, carrying established speed and competitive bloodlines.

This pairing has already produced club and federation winners. The hen's result from Fougères adds further evidence of the line's quality and consistency.



Garry's hen



Garry Inkley & Peter Fox



John Haynes



John Adams

8th Open John Adams of Watford. Congratulations to Roger Lowe on another terrific performance. My first bird is a yearling blue cock bred by Dicky Boggins from a cock of mine I purchased from Ponderosa . Porsche Bond Janssen x Herman Ceuster when paired to a daughter of the Golden Rossi from Andrew Wilton Herman Ceuster. Big thank you to all at the marking stations.

1st & 2nd Section A 9th & 10th Open Steve, Yvette & Lauren Harris. Firstly, we would like to say a big well done to our good friend Roger Lowe on another BBC win, also well done to all the team at the BBC putting on a great race.

Our first bird was bred by Eric van Utterbeeck of Belgium purchased through Asa Williams. These birds have performed really well for us over the last couple of years.

Our second bird is from our stock loft, out of a J & J Meeder cock from Holland when paired to our 1st Open BBC Fougères hen 2024. She was bred and gifted to us by none other than today's winner Roger Lowe.



Steve Harris with Beau & Ada



Paul Arnold

Topping the section on his first race with the BBC is **Paul Arnold of North Cheam 1st Section G 12th Open**. My pigeon is a blue cock, having his second channel race, he went to Guernsey in the Thames North club 3 weeks ago and came well from there. His sire is a son of my NFC Messac national trust winner in 2020, his dam I believe is a Pit Bull, bred from my very good friends Darren and John May, who used to live around the corner from me before moving.

Next up in **Section A is Jimmy Wearn & Erik Neilson of Ramsdean**. Provisionally 13th Open with a 2 year old blue cock.

2nd Section G is Vic Emberson of Banstead. The blue cock I timed to provisionally be 16th Open 2nd Section G was on his first trip across the channel. The Sire is a Leo Hereman bred by Neil Emberson and the Dam is a Gaston van de Wouwer bred for me by Rob Levingston of Esher Club, Three Borders Fed, bred out of a double grandson of Kassboer.

Mark Bulled of Harlow 1st, 2nd & 3rd Section J. Well done to Roger Lowe and Mark Gilbert, fantastic flying as always and all other section winners.

Also, to Kevin Foster and his great team that run the friendly and organised Gravesend station.

I believe I will take the first 3 in Section J in what turned out a very tough race for the eastern flyers despite the westerly winds.

This is probably reflected in the birds I timed.

My section winner is a 3 year old Legacy hen. Full sister to my 4th NFC Tarbes. She flew the tough Pau International last year and may be destined for Barcelona this season.

My 2nd section is a direct daughter of my 2nd open BBC Bordeaux hen when paired to a son of Mark Williamsons Lady B 1st MNFC Bordeaux, gifted to me by my friend Roger Phillips of Guernsey.

3rd section a yearling hen on her first crossing. A grand daughter Legacy x daughter of Daves Diva gifted to me from Duncan Goodchild and David Hales.



Vic Emberson's cock bird



Mark Bulled

1st Section B Andy Parsons of Salisbury. This hen was 2nd section as a yb 2 years ago behind my great friend Mark Gower, so happy she put things right so I can now stop the therapy sessions. The sire is bred from another good friend Mel King. The dam being a daughter of my 5th NFC 2018 and my 2nd NFC 2014 both from Tarbes, she is also half sister to my 4th and 24th Open Tarbes hens of 2025 so very pleased with her. Next stop Tarbes.

2nd Section B Mark & Julie Gower of Fordingbridge. The pigeon that came for me from Fougères is a yearling widowhood cock. Raced from the West last year and then trained from the East this year although that was limited because of raptor attacks. This year he had a trainer from Littlehampton & Guernsey and then his first race this year with the BBC to Fougères. He is bred from new stock brought in from Syndicate lofts and is from their Willem De Bruijn & Propere Rik lines. Congratulations to Roger Lowe for his latest win and of course to my club buddy Andrew Parsons for the section winner.



Andy Parsons



Mark Gower

3rd Section B Tony Stephens of Poole. First I would like to say well done to the winners. My first bird is a vandenabeele blue cock. I had 8 from the 10 I sent back on the day. Thanks to Clare and the team for all their hard work.

Micky Sontag & Son of Harlow were the next to time in Section J behind Mark. Congratulations to all the winners on a testing race.

First time over the channel this pigeon is a Bruce McAllister x M Bulled.



Tony Stephens



Micky Sontag

1st Section C Dave Fare of Bristol. First of all congratulations to Roger Lowe on another excellent result and the same to all section winners.

Our section winner is a 2yr old Gaby Vandenabeele bred by friend Kevin Frail of Belsen lofts vandenabeele up in Yorkshire.

One of a consignment I had in 2024, this is the second time this hen has scored, previously winning Sodbury vale H/S as a young bird, I have had three first prizes out of the birds Kevin bred me.

I called Kevin on Saturday evening to tell him our good news and he was over the moon for us and grateful that we told him as he doesnt always get the feedback of what his birds have achieved.

My dad Thomas, father in law Brian Harvey who has bred me a lot of good birds since I started back up were watching with lucky charm ex pigeon fancier Mike Williams present for two section wins plus 1st and 2nd Fougères BBC Y/B last year.

PS he has been invited back for some more good luck.

Good luck to everyone.



Dave & Thomas Fare



Geoff & Catherine Cooper's Cock bird

2nd Section G Geoff & Catherine Cooper of Peasedown St John. Our first bird was a son of “John 2” when paired to a sister to Farm Grafter, being inbred to Farmer George. “John 2” was a gift bird from John Haynes and is a double grandson of Golden Barcelona.

We had a very good race with the birds, arriving in very quick succession, we had 46/46 (including late bred) by mid afternoon and they arrived in very good condition.

Thanks to the convoyer and all involved who looked after them so well.

1st Section E Richard Chambers of Rugeley. The Blue cock that was timed in to come 1st Section E is bred down from stock pigeons from the late Alwyn Hills’ pigeons. I do not have pedigrees for them as they were gifted birds, and I was simply told they were bred from good pigeons.

This cock has been very consistent for me. Now a 3-year-old, he previously achieved 7th Section, 149th Open in the BBC Fougères Old Bird race last season, and so far he has crossed the channel 8 times in his life.

Last season he was prepared on the shorter races before being sent to the NFC Tarbes race, which proved to be a very tough event. However, he still returned just outside race time and is back racing again this season. It just goes to show that you should never condemn a pigeon for being late — they all make mistakes sometimes.

This season he is being prepared for the Barcelona International, where I am hoping to repeat last year’s achievement of timing one in race time.

It was also lovely to experience the Blue cock returning home with my 1-year-old son Toby by my side. This was his first real race where he was able to point at the pigeon once it landed, and he has always loved looking at the pigeons, so to see him actively notice the pigeon as he arrived was just class.

If Toby takes up the sport, he would become the 7th generation pigeon fancier in our family. Like me, he will have had exposure to the birds throughout his life, giving him every opportunity to follow the sport if he chooses to.

For this race the Blue Cock was sent chasing his hen, as my loft is only small and operates as a communal loft, with cocks, hens, and young birds all living in the same space. It can be a bit chaotic, but the pigeons love it. They are always stimulated, which keeps them alert and happy, and it means I do not need to constantly be in the loft with them, which I think is important.

Prior to the Fougères race he was sent to the club’s first couple of races while feeding babies, sharing the racing duties with his hen. One would go to the midweek races from Bath at 94 miles, while the other raced on Saturday.

He will now be set up for the NFC Nort-sur-Erdre race, as once the pigeons hit the channel they all go onto a two-week cycle of racing and rest.

I would like to congratulate all of the section winners, especially Roger Low and Luke. I know Roger was not too well over the winter, but it looks like he is back to business as normal.

Another thank you goes to the BBC for continuing to support the northern fanciers by keeping the Ironbridge marking station open, allowing us to compete, and also to Aurel and his team for running it. It is all very much appreciated.

2nd Section E Tex Talbot of Newport. This cock is a Van den Bulk x Jan Aarden bred by myself. He has flown well since a yb being consistent, also having NFC Nort Sur Erdre 61st Open 3rd Section.



Richard Chambers & Toby



Tex Talbot

Convoyers Report

THURSDAY 14 MAY

Finished loading at Sarisbury Green at 6pm. Drove 15 mins to Portsmouth Docks and fed and watered the birds at 6.30pm. Because it was a Bank Holiday in France today, no paperwork was ready, so we shipped out to France on Friday morning at 8am.

FRIDAY 15 MAY

Sailed for Caen, France at 8am. Water was topped up before loading onto ship. Drove off the ship at 2pm and then drove the 5 mins to the Vets' Inspection Shed. They took off 5 crates of birds for life ring inspection against their paperwork. They took 2 birds from each crate, all ok. Left Vets at 4pm and drove straight to Fougères. Fed birds straight away and then gave them fresh water. Pat spoke with Mark Gilbert, Race Adviser, at 7.30pm about Saturday's lib. Mark said the lib would have to be as early as possible to beat the weather.

SATURDAY 16 MAY

Pat and I got up at 5am and prepared the transporter for a lib. Pat spoke with Mark, who said when we were ready to liberate. When the sun was over the distant trees we liberated them at 6am. By the time we had checked the low crates for birds the convoy was out of sight heading North.

(All times are UK times)

Pat and Steve