Barcelona International Provisional Race Result
3rd July 2026

1st Open BICC & 1st Open BBC

Mark Gilbert of Windsor

Barcelona is the capital and largest city of Catalonia, and one of the largest cities on the Mediterranean Sea. It lies on the coast between the mouths of the Llobregat and Besòs rivers. To many fanciers, however, Barcelona is best known as the starting point of what is widely regarded as the greatest pigeon race in the world. On Friday 3rd July, at 6.45am BST, 15,598 birds were liberated to begin their epic journey home.

As usual, there was tremendous amount of interest in the race and during the Barcelona race period, from Friday 3rd to Tuesday 7th July 2026, the BICC website recorded approximately 295,000-page requests from around 15,000 individual visitors. Interest peaked on Saturday, when the first pigeons were being clocked from 660 to 720 miles, with around 165,000 requests made that day alone. This clearly shows the strong engagement and close following of the race by fanciers across the country and abroad.

The Early Times page, which includes the downloadable PDF of live timing-in information, was one of the website's most visited areas. Based on total traffic, unique visitors and typical race-day behaviour, the Early Times PDF was viewed 14,500 times during the race period, showing how closely fanciers followed the returns from this prestigious and demanding event.

Most visitors accessed the website by mobile phone, with around 63% of requests coming from mobiles, 34% from desktop computers and the remainder from tablets. This shows that fanciers followed the race on the move, relying on quick-loading pages and PDFs for the latest arrivals.

Despite the testing conditions, with only forty-five verified pigeons' home from the 352 sent by Tuesday evening, the Barcelona race attracted attention far beyond Britain. Website analytics show more than 142,000 views from the United Kingdom, alongside notable interest from Ireland, Romania, Spain, France, Belgium, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong and the United States. Fanciers and enthusiasts worldwide followed the birds' progress and timing-in updates throughout the weekend.

This global reach highlights how the Barcelona event continues to capture the imagination of long-distance flyers everywhere. Even in a tough race, the dedication of those who sent and the fascination of those who watched combined to make it a memorable occasion for the sport.

Many thanks go to Sandy at Mysoft for all his work on the website, and to Andrew Hitchcock for sponsoring a photo of the winning pigeon. Once again, huge thanks also go to Benzing for the fantastic sponsorship of a Benzing Smart Loft System for the winner.

This report is based on members' verifications and the final result may differ.

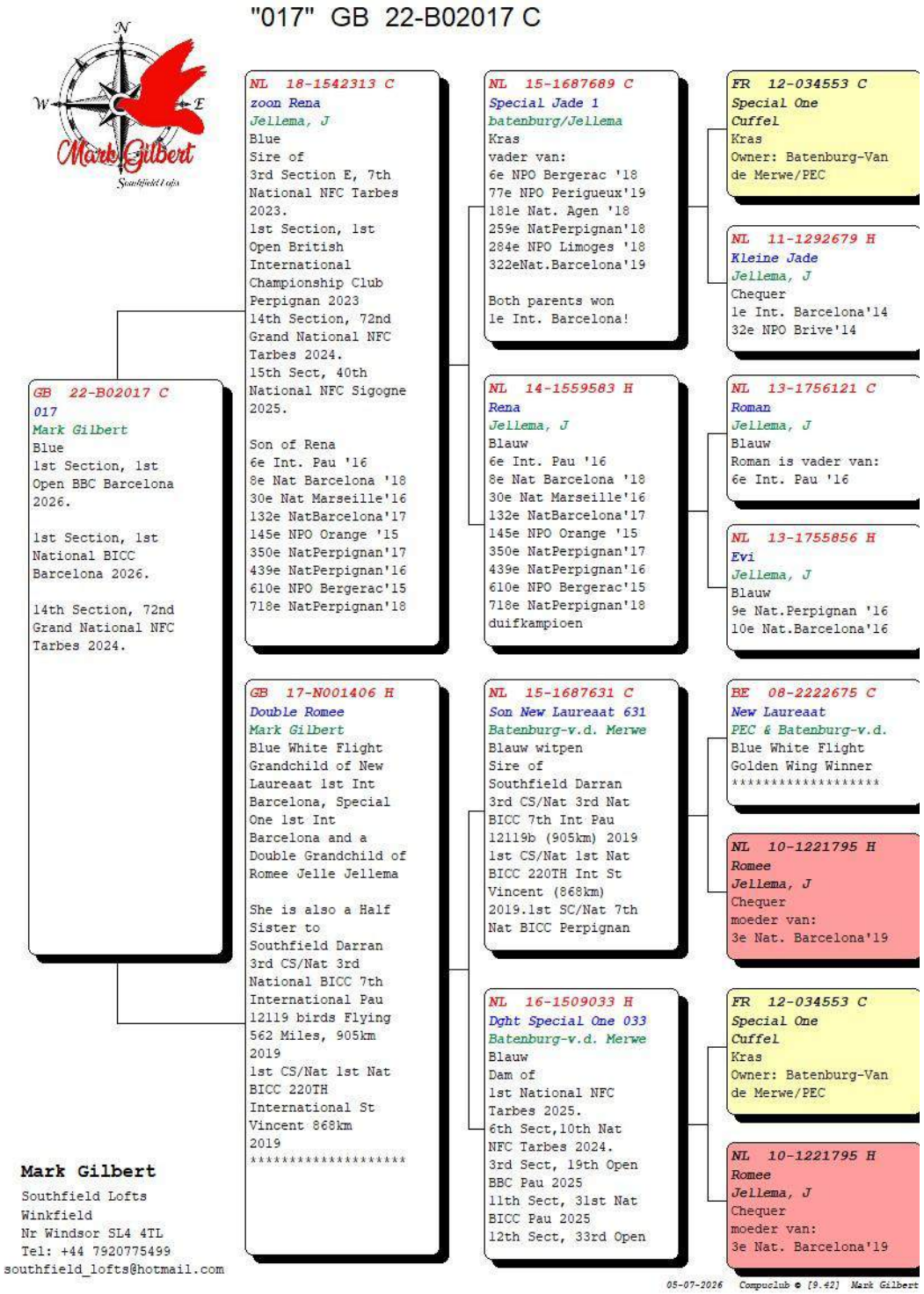
1st Open BICC & 1st Open BBC, Mark Gilbert of Windsor.



In the BICC, Mark also took 3rd on 768.937, 5th on 752.612, 22nd on 524.447, 23rd on 524.432, 26th on 483.534, 31st on 427.235, 33rd on 417.014, 35th on 350.465, 46th on 231.059 and 50th on 212.361. In the BBC, Mark took 1st, 3rd, 5th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th and 18th, and Section D positions 1st, 3rd, 4th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 12th, 13th and 14th.

We were proud to clock on Saturday after the birds battled the full 700-mile journey home. Barcelona is never easy, and this year's conditions made it a real endurance test. With the north wind on liberation and warm conditions across France, the birds had to dig deep all the way up through the country. The BICC provisional sheet shows early UK birds making it home with velocities in the 650–800 y/min range, depending on section and distance — a clear sign of how demanding the route was. We're delighted to report that we clocked three brave pigeons on Saturday, all of them scoring at the very top in both the BBC and BICC.

Our first arrival was 1st Section and 1st Open BBC, and 1st Section and 1st National BICC Barcelona. The first pigeon home, a blue roundabout cock, was a real surprise at the trap but fully justified by his outstanding pedigree. He is bred from proven international Barcelona and Perpignan bloodlines and is a half-brother to 'Southfield Titan', winner of 1st Section, 1st National BICC Perpignan 2023, and other top national prizes. His sire combines the lines of 'Rena', 'Special One' and 'Kleine Jade', while his dam is a half-sister to 'Southfield Darran' and 'Southfield Knight', both proven at the highest level. With 'New Laureaat', 'Special One' and 'Romee' also in the background, this is a pedigree packed with elite marathon quality, and his Barcelona performance proved those bloodlines continue to excel.



Our second arrival was 3rd Section and 3rd Open BBC, and 3rd Section and 3rd National BICC Barcelona. This seasoned cock again delivered when it mattered, sitting firm on eggs, a position that consistently brings out his best. His Barcelona result adds to an outstanding long-distance record, with major prizes from Barcelona, Perpignan, Dax, Pau and Tarbes. Highlights include 2nd Section, 2nd National BICC Perpignan 2025, top BBC and BICC Barcelona prizes, 1st Section, 5th National BICC Dax, strong Pau International results in 2024, and 7th Section, 26th National NFC Tarbes as a yearling. In 2025 he was also 2nd Ace Pigeon in the BICC International races.
His breeding is equally impressive. His sire is a son of 'Hellas', a proven distance performer, while his dam is a daughter of 'New Witbuik', winner of 6th International Barcelona against 25,320 birds and already the producer of several top pigeons, including 'Southfield Doug', winner of 2nd National BICC and 5th International Pau 2019 against 12,119 birds. With such depth of proven marathon blood behind him, this latest Barcelona performance further confirmed his class and consistency.

Our third arrival was 4th Section and 5th Open BBC, and 4th Section and 5th National BICC Barcelona. This was 'Southfield Crystal', raced on roundabout and paired to the winner, giving both pigeons strong motivation to return. She had already shown her class in 2025 by winning 1st National BICC Agen, the only bird clocked on the day of liberation into the UK. Her Barcelona result further confirmed her quality as a top international hen capable of excelling in the hardest races.
Southfield Crystal is bred from exceptional Barcelona bloodlines. Her sire is a son of 'Saar', 2nd National Barcelona 2017, while her dam is a daughter of 'Sumerian Fighter', winner of 1st International Barcelona 2017 against 17,094 birds. With proven international quality on both sides, this latest Barcelona performance again underlined the strength of the family.

Barcelona always separates the good from the great, our returns proved just how special these pigeons are. A massive well done to everyone who clocked, and commiserations to those still waiting — Barcelona rewards patience and persistence.

2nd Open BICC & 2nd Open BBC, Adrian Ghetes of Stanmore on 789.015. In the BICC, Adrian also took 14th on 641.481, 16th on 594.293, 27th on 478.244 and 41st on 297.026. In the BBC, Adrian took 2nd, 9th, 10th and 15th, and Section D positions 2nd, 6th, 7th and 11th.

I sent three experienced pigeons and seven newcomers. The first one I expected was "Golden Barca Warrior". He had already been to Barcelona last year and took a nice prize, 3rd CS Section and 11th Open in 2025. I nominated him on GDSBNFC, which he won as the first nominated pigeon. He did it again in 2026 by winning 2nd CS Section, 2nd Open BICC Barcelona, 707 miles, and 2nd Section D, 2nd Open BBC Barcelona. All my pigeons were sitting eggs on marking day. I do nothing special with my pigeons, just lots of love between me and them. I trust them and they trust me!

As preparation, they raced the three National channel races with the BICC, plus almost every weekend in the local club before and between the Nationals. Barcelona was my first International race of the season. At the time of writing this report, I have five pigeons back from Barcelona. Congratulations to Mark Gilbert on winning this very hard race, and well done to everyone who timed in.



Adrain's Barcelona birds

4th Open BICC & 4th Open BBC, Ethan R Nightingale of Dover on 762.262. In the BBC, Ethan also took 1st Section G. The three-year-old cock he clocked, provisionally 4th Open and 1st Section in both the BBC and BICC, was bred by L & K Buddle. He is a direct son of their super pigeon 'Ronald', winner of 1st National Marseille and 5th National Barcelona, as well as being clocked from eight other internationals. 'Ronald' was paired to a daughter of L & K Buddle's 'Triple 2', winner of 1st BBC Barcelona in 2019. The cock was raced on the Chaos Widowhood system and had three channel races in preparation with the BICC and BBC. Ethan uses Versele-Laga Superstar Plus for his distance birds, with added fats a few days before basketing. He described this as genuinely the best moment of his racing career, sending one bird and clocking from the most prestigious race of all. Ethan also congratulated Mark Gilbert, once again showing why he is undoubtedly one of the best in the sport, and gave a massive thanks to his grandad and uncle, L & K Buddle, saying he would not be where he is today without all the help they have given him.



Ethan

6th Open BICC & 2nd South East Section BICC, G M Preece & Son of Dover on 747.521. G M Preece & Son also took, 7th on 734.010, 8th on 720.734, 9th on 691.234, 11th on 683.740, 15th on 621.703, 19th on 547.003, 20th on 534.095, 21st on 527.764, 24th on 523.918, 28th on 478.171, 32nd on 426.824, 34th on 396.969, 38th on 322.034, 45th on 248.815, 53rd on 184.003, 54th on 182.733 and 55th on 182.568.

We are incredibly proud to look in the loft and have 20 pigeons that completed the extraordinary challenge of racing Barcelona International 2026. Released in Barcelona underneath the mediterranean sun, conquering the towering Pyrenees, navigating the length of France before facing the final obstacle – the English Channel. 665 Miles or 1070 kilometres to our loft in England. The weather conditions for Barcelona 2026 were high temperatures combined with North Easterly winds on day one through France and then the strong west side wind over the English Channel on day two. Blowing south westerly on day two from the north of France through to the top of the Netherlands. We are in a completely different race, it must not be forgotten.

Our pigeons potentially travelling through Andorra as many of the pigeons equipped with GPS trackers showed, before they returned to their lofts in the Netherland and France. Disproving the theory that the convoy go around the Pyrenees before racing through France.

Our first two pigeons are developing into really great international marathon racers, both repeating last year's performances from Barcelona and both placing exactly the same as last year, 6th and 7th National. It was no surprise when they arrived first for us. Here is a brief overview of the breeding of our six pigeons that arrived on day two. Full pedigrees of all eighteen pigeons in the UK prizes can be viewed on our website www.internationalseapigeons.com. The first was our 2022 hen '116'; she is a granddaughter of "Jack Jones" through his 2017 SUPER COUPLE son, and on the mother's side she is one of our best direct Bernd Morsnowski breeding hens. Our second was our 2021 cock '122'; his father is a direct Detlef Devers cock and his mother is a direct Raymund Hermes hen. The 2018 SUPER COUPLE son of 'JACK JONES' is also the sire to our two-year-old hen, 8th National. A double grandson of 'JACK JONES', also being a son of 'BLUEMOON', is the sire to our two-year-old cock, 9th National. 'THE 792' is the sire to our three-year-old hen, 11th National, and 'JACK JONES' is the grandfather to our four-year-old hen '124', who arrived to take 15th National at 20:15 on day two.

We managed to clock 18 of our pigeons in the UK prizes. The team is raced on widowhood but were allowed to sit a minimum of six-day eggs for Barcelona. Our first two-year-old cock, 9th National, was not paired up and raced back to the yearling cocks section, where he doesn't have a box, putting plenty of his loft mates and UK pigeons behind him that, in the human mind, would have had far more motivation than him.



G & M Preece

10th Open BICC & 6th Open BBC, Doug Gatland of Hookwood on 690.332. In the BBC, Doug took 6th Open and 2nd Section G. Doug's timer in last weekend's Barcelona International race, flying 675 miles, arrived home at 17:34 on Saturday and has now been named 'Barca 371'. He is a small blue chequer cock, bred in 2022, and has been a very consistent pigeon in international racing over the past few seasons. As a young bird he flew a couple of races to 100 miles, as Doug is not really interested in young bird races, preferring instead to test the babies with challenging training tosses. As a yearling he flew four channel races to Pau, 543 miles, with the NFC, arriving home after nine days with a slight injury. In 2024 he was Doug's first pigeon in the clock from the Pau International, and again three weeks later at the Dax International, winning 35th and 17th National respectively. In 2025 he was sent to the Pau International again, where he was 50th National BICC.

In 2026 he was targeted at Barcelona and was prepared for the race with a few inland races before flying three channel races to Nort-sur-Erdre. He was then paired up and sent feeding a four-day-old baby on the day of marking. Doug does not train his old birds, other than one 30-mile toss the week before the first race, as he feels the risk of predation is too great. They simply fly at the loft for an hour morning and evening, and once repaired, the Barcelona pigeons had an open loft until dark. To be honest, though, 'Barca 371' mostly sat on the power lines for three weeks and watched the world go by!

His dam is an inbred granddaughter of 'Zwart Goud', the legendary breeder of Jelle Jellema, while his sire is a grandson of 'Sumerian Fighter' and 'New Laureaat', bred by Mark Gilbert. With that depth of proven international marathon blood behind him, 'Barca 371' once again showed his consistency and courage from one of the hardest races on the calendar.



Doug's bird 2 hours after arrival

12th Open BICC & 7th Open BBC, L & K Buddle of Dover on 683.723. In the BICC, Lee & Kevin also took 43rd Open on 270.963 and 49th Open on 215.494. In the BBC, they took 7th Open and 3rd Section G. At the time of writing, they had clocked three from their seven entries in the Barcelona International.

Their first bird in the clock was '18-192', an eight-year-old hen still racing strongly. She had previously won a Spanish Diploma of Merit with both the BICC and BBC, and her record from Barcelona is outstanding. In 2026 she provisionally took 7th Section ES and 12th National BICC Barcelona, with her BBC placing still to be confirmed. Her previous Barcelona performances underline her remarkable consistency. In 2025 she was 3rd Section G and 7th Open BBC Barcelona, as well as 11th Section ES and 18th National BICC Barcelona. In 2024 she was 2nd Section G and 6th Open BBC Barcelona, while also taking 2nd Section ES and 6th National BICC Barcelona. In 2023 she was again in the prizes, taking 4th Section G and 10th Open BBC Barcelona, along with 17th Section ES and 27th National BICC Barcelona. She first tackled Barcelona in 2022, giving her five consecutive seasons of experience from this demanding race.

She was raced on the Buddle's Chaos Widowhood system and was fed Versele-Laga Superstar Plus, with added fats used when needed in the build-up to the race.

Her sire is 'Mike', a top-class marathon pigeon and BICC Certificate of Merit winner. His performances include 3rd National BICC Marseille 2014, 4th National BICC Marseille 2011, 9th National BICC Marseille 2013, 13th National BICC Pau 2015, 13th National BICC Agen 2014, 24th National BICC Perpignan 2012, 37th and 60th National BICC Pau 2013, and 64th National BICC Pau 2012. He is also the sire of 'Triple Two', winner of 1st Open BBC Barcelona in 2019.

Her dam is a daughter of 'Pipi', another outstanding Barcelona performer and BICC Certificate of Merit winner. 'Pipi' won 5th National BICC Barcelona in 2011, 10th National BICC Barcelona in 2013 and 9th National BICC Barcelona in 2014, giving '18-192' a pedigree packed with proven Barcelona quality.

The partnerships other two timers from the Barcelona International were also strongly bred. The cock '22-230' is a grandson of 'Triple Two', winner of 1st Open BBC Barcelona 2019, with 'Spitfire' and 'Oasis' also appearing in his pedigree. Their third timer, '23-802', is a granddaughter of 'Daphne', winner of 1st National BICC Marseille 2020 and 3rd National BICC Perpignan 2019, with an inbred Golden Barcelona hen on the other side of her breeding.



Now 5 times Barcelona

13th Open BICC & 8th Open BBC, Team Magda-Cernitu of Hemel Hempstead on 650.608. In the BBC, Team Magda-Cernitu took 8th Open and 5th Section D. Their winning hen was the chequered pied hen GB24N18333, aptly named "Invincible Queen". She achieved an outstanding 8th Open BBC Barcelona and 5th Section D, flying a distance of 716 miles. What makes the performance even more remarkable is that "Invincible Queen" was their only entry to Barcelona. Raced on the natural system and sent sitting on chipped eggs, she rewarded the team's confidence with a tremendous performance in one of the world's toughest long-distance races. "Invincible Queen" first showed her class as a yearling in 2025, when she was the team's first pigeon home from the BICC Bordeaux National. Returning as a two-year-old in 2026, she established herself as their most consistent marathon hen, becoming their first arrival from the BICC Alençon and their first arrival from the NFC Nort-sur-Erdre, where she also won 7th Section E, before crowning her season with this outstanding Barcelona performance.
She is bred from generations of proven international marathon bloodlines. Her sire, the "Thurso Cock", is a direct Matt Rakes pigeon and a grandson of the legendary "Indy" family. A top racer in his own right, he won 1st club Thurso and 16th combine Thurso from 502 miles before proving equally valuable as a breeder.

Her dam is also a proven breeder for Team Magda-Cernitu and is a daughter of their foundation cock, "Invincible Marathon". During his five-year racing career, "Invincible Marathon" was clocked in 14 National marathon races and is bred from the legendary "Invincible Spirit" bloodline. "Invincible Spirit" is regarded as one of the greatest Barcelona pigeons of all time, having won 1st International Barcelona against 27,068 birds when paired to a half-sister of "Avanger", the famous pigeon of Kipp & Söhne, who achieved 1st National St. Vincent three years running in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Finally, Team Magda-Cernitu congratulated Mark Gilbert on winning the Open, along with everyone who timed in this exceptionally hard edition of the Barcelona International. Finishing such a demanding race is an achievement in itself, and they saluted all who took part.



Team Magna

17th Open BICC & 11th Open BBC, Clive and Jill Rogers & Neil Sale of Radstock on 564.695. In the BICC, the partnership also took 36th on 332.475 and 48th on 218.616. In the BBC, they took 11th and 19th Open, and Section C positions 1st and 2nd. Treetops Lofts timed GB22A33998 Treetops Golden Girl, a chequer hen timed on the morning of the third day at 7:50 am. She was bred from a cock bird that was one of the first four birds that Clive and Jill ever purchased from Mark Gilbert back in 2019. This began their collection of Mark's pigeons which, there is no doubt, have been the foundation for their success in distance pigeon racing.

The hen raced Barcelona for the first time in 2025 but returned home out of race time, nine days after liberation day. This year she has raced the four channel races, one every week, as have all our old birds: CSCFC Isigny, BICC Alencon, BBC Fougeres and BICC Nort-sur-Erdre. She was then paired up and sent sitting on six-day-old youngsters on marking day. She was fed the usual mix of Versele-Laga Champion Plus, VL Energy Plus and Beyers Jelle Jellema Power, with a grit and mineral mixture of De Patagon, VL All in One and Willem de Brujin Morning Mix. They are fed as much corn as they will eat, as they have food in front of them all the time in a trough. The Barcelona pigeons go out a minimum of twice a day to exercise. In the mornings the cocks will fly well and, later on, when the cocks are sitting, the hens are let out to fly. Additionally, when possible, the section is left for long periods on open hole, so both the cock and the hen, who are both destined to race Barcelona, can exercise and enjoy themselves while the other half is sitting the eggs or babies. They are regularly able to have a bath and sit outside in the sunshine if they want to. Clive feels that love of home and their lives at Treetops are the main motivator.

Congratulations to Mark Gilbert, who won Barcelona, to Adrian Ghetes and, in particular, to young Ethan Nightingale for his brilliant performance. It was a very hard race and everyone who timed birds should be proud of their achievement.



18th Open BICC, G G Cooper & C J Cooper of Peasedown St John on 560.495. In the BICC, Geoff and Catherine Cooper also took 30th Open on 430.056. Their first arrival was a hen from Barcelona, flying 710 miles, to take 2nd Section and 18th National. She was the first of their two entries. Her sire and dam are both inbred to Farmer George, with the sire also carrying the bloodlines of Grafter, a pigeon that won many top prizes before being retired. Farmer George and Wollongong also appear on the dam's side. She is paired to the cock that was 4th National Agen. She was sent to Barcelona while waiting for her mate to return from Agen after the holdover, but, not liking to wait too long for a cock, she began pairing to another one. On arrival from Barcelona, she went straight back to her original cock and best box. Their three-year-old cock was also clocked from Barcelona, taking 3rd Section and

30th Open, giving Geoff and Catherine 100% returns from their two entries. They were very pleased, as the strong north-west winds meant the birds must have had a real battle to get home. This cock had previously won 4th CSCFC Pau, flown with the International. He is bred from one of their retired racers, now in the stock loft, Grafter, when paired to a daughter of Special One and Sylvie.



Geoff & Catherine's 1st bird



Geoff & Catherine's 2nd bird

25th Open BICC, Cristian Dumitru of Harrow on 498.987.

29th Open BICC, N George & Son of Braintree on 433.532. Taking 14th South East Section were N George & Son, Emir. First of all, I would like to congratulate everyone who got pigeons home from the world's toughest race: Barcelona. I prepared my birds with six club races from 100 to 150 miles, including two channel races from Alençon and St Philbert. Isa is one of my most consistent hens. As a yearling, she flew three Channel races, including Agen, where she came out of race time. As a two-year-old, she flew the Pau International and took 34th Section and 101st Open. She was also 25th Open and 17th Section from Perpignan. This year I sent her sitting 12-day eggs. She comes from a family of Jelle Jellema pigeons from Ciobanu Bogdan. Her father, 991, is one of the best breeders in my loft. His mother is a full sister to Talent. The family has also produced 17th Open Perpignan, 45th Open St Vincent 2017, 34th Open Pau 2023 and 47th Open Perpignan.



N George & Son, Emir

37th Open BICC, Nick Stevens of North Perrott on 324.450. My Barcelona hen was bred by Norm Smith and Roy Jones from Cwmbran, from their Padfield/Muller birds. The breeding is a grandson of Wim Muller's Techno M. This is the first time I've clocked from Barcelona! When I restarted, I had a five-year plan to get to Barcelona, but Brexit and Covid came along, and after nine years I managed it. Barcelona does seem unique, and as much as there are winners, well done to Mark and the Southfields team, and G & M Preece, who seem to clock like they are racing from Blandford. Well done to young Pete Reilly from Barnstaple and to every bird getting home. What a bird that L & K Buddle timed, having flown Barcelona five times.



Nick Steven's hen back with her mate

39th Open BICC, SR & WH Knox of Tyler Hill on 307.955. Bill Knox's pigeon had already shown plenty of experience before this Barcelona performance, having flown Guernsey as a young bird, Guernsey and Nevers as a yearling, Fontenay, Messac and St Vincent as a two-year-old, St Philbert and Pau as a three-year-old, Roye and Barcelona as a four-year-old, and Arras and Barcelona as a five-year-old. She was sent sitting 10 days overdue, although preparation was difficult this year as her mate was late returning from Alencon and she paired to another cock, who had been the favoured choice for Barcelona after twice flying it. Unfortunately, he went down at St Philbert, so the hen was repaired to her original mate. All this meant her only race prior to Barcelona was Arras, 112 miles, on 25th March, so her preparation was far from ideal. Bill is moving house this month and changed to ETS this season, as the birds will still be at the present location. Unfortunately, the text arrival did not come through. She arrived on 5/7 at 20:15 but was not discovered until the next afternoon, so was given time verified. Her sire was bred by S Fear and comes down from Brendon King's Spanish Dip BBC winner, with performances including 3rd Open Palamos, 8th Open Barcelona and 2nd Open Barcelona. Her dam is from the Brendon King line, Brimstone, giving her a pedigree with proven long-distance quality behind it.

40th Open BICC, Martin Williams of Hereford on 301.654. I would like to start by congratulating Mark Gilbert and all the section winners. Having had a successful first International from Pau, with three out of four birds returning, I decided to send to the big one, Barcelona. I had originally planned to send just one of my best hens, but over the last few weeks I decided to enter three. Two of them were pure Jellema. My first bird was a five-year-old Jellema hen off my Tarbes winner of 2022. Of the two Jellema's, she was the least favoured. She was racing to a 12-day-old youngster and was clocked on the fifth day. There was never any doubt about my favoured Jellema hen, and she duly arrived at the

loft on the sixth day at 8 am. These two hens both have a strong Romee line running through their pedigrees. Initially, I was very pleased to get two out of three home on my first attempt. Jelle Jellema had an amazing result in this race, clocking so many Open positions and I would like to thank my clock setter, Terry, for putting himself out to read my clock; it was much appreciated. I said initially, because my final bird arrived home at 5.17 on Saturday, my last entry, giving me 100% returns from Barcelona.



Martin Williams

42nd Open BICC, Antoce Andrei of Harrow on 296.446.

44th Open BICC, J Nicholson & Son of Rochester on 254.168. Their pigeon is a two-year-old cock flown natural, and Barcelona was only the fourth race of his life. He was unraced as a young bird and was only trained as a yearling up to 30 miles. This season he had all three short BICC races in preparation before taking on Barcelona.



The 2-year-old natural flown cock bird

On the 6th and 7th days of the race, the following members also timed. Peter Reilly of Barnstaple, 47th Open BICC on 227.750; Bob Besant & Son of Worcester 51st Open BICC on 186.933; John Smale of Abergavenny, 52nd Open BICC on 186.495; Andrei Bargaoanu of Basingstoke, 56th Open BICC on 178.813; and Kevin Foster of Longfield Hill, 57th Open BICC on 177.576.

On the 8th day, the members in the North Centre and North East Sections, the longest flying members, timed.

58th Open, 1st North East Section, Dean Jones of Sibsey on 167.278 over 799 miles. Firstly, I'd like to congratulate Mark Gilbert on winning the race and all the other section winners on what turned out to be a very tough race for the UK fanciers. My section winner is a four-year-old Jellema hen who was previously 2nd Section Nort-sur-Erdre earlier in the season. She also flew St Philbert and four inland races down to Exeter with the Peterborough Central Fed in preparation for Barcelona. She was sent sitting 12-day eggs and returned in fantastic condition.



Dean Jones' hen

59th Open, 1st North Centre Section, Mircea Liviu Dehelean of Wellingborough on 162.787 over 735 miles. Mircea's 1st Section winner was "Tarzan", who was raced on the nest with seven-day-old young birds. His sire is from Harold Zwiers, while his dam is from Dan Nitoiu and carries the bloodline of Jan Polder, giving him a strong long-distance pedigree for this demanding Barcelona performance.



Mircea's hen

60th Open, 2nd North East Section, Alex **L Mariea of Creeting on 160.773 over 735 miles.** What can I say? This is my second year since switching from the North to the South, and what a change it has been. The races are very hard, and you are always trying to be there, but this result is majestic. Last year I had a yearling return from Agen International, 572 miles, to take 2nd Section, which made me very happy and gave me new goals to aim for.

This year, I set Barcelona as my new target: to clock a pigeon from this great race. After eight days testing my patience, and after a sore neck from constantly looking to the sky, Andra came home. She is a tough hen, named after my little sister, and she is a fighter just like her, never giving up. As a yearling in 2025, Andra flew Agen International, 572 miles, and returned home after the race had closed. This year she managed to get home in race time from the most famous race of all, International Barcelona. It is a dream I have had since I was a little boy, and even then it felt like a dream within a dream. Andra is bred from my Houten cock crossed with a Nico Volkens hen. I would also like to say thank you to my mates, George Dura and Daniel Polojan, for their support.
And remember, patience is a virtue.



Alex Mariea & sons, Knoxy and Sonny

The 900 milers

Just out of race time this year was Dave Bunker Brierley of Redcar over 914 miles. In 2025, he timed Barcelona Dream Girl, after returning home on the 5th day of liberation into Redcar in the north east of England. This year, a sister to this hen, Kelly, came home and was just 10 yards out of race time.

Jim Emerton Trophies: The prestigious Jim Emerton trophies, presented by the great Barcelona aficionado Jim Emerton, will all be claimed after this epic race. The Barcelona Dream Trophy, awarded for the highest velocity over 750 miles, will go to Martin Williams. The Mensa Trophy, for the best two-bird average, will be won by Mark Gilbert, while the Jim Emerton Trophy for the longest flying bird in race time will be awarded to Dean Jones. The two-bird coefficient will be confirmed at the end of the season.

In conclusion, the 2026 Barcelona International once again proved why this race stands at the very summit of long-distance pigeon racing. From the outstanding winning performance of Mark Gilbert to the determined arrivals over seven and eight days, every pigeon that made it home showed courage, stamina and an extraordinary will to return. It was a race that tested both birds and fanciers to the limit, and every name on this provisional result deserves real recognition. Congratulations to all the members who timed in from this legendary race. Barcelona remains the ultimate challenge, and this year's race will long be remembered for its difficulty, its drama and the remarkable pigeons that conquered it.

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