

## **British International Championship Club Autumn Report**

As soon as you start reading this report you will no doubt notice it is from a different writer. Gareth Watkins has been a lynchpin during the last few years, which has coincided with the club making leaps forward, both in its finances and its racing which it offers to the fancy. I know that many club members believe Gareth has been one of the most instrumental figures in moving the club forward over the last 5 years or so. With that in mind, following Gareth's decision to step back from the Press Officers which he has been so monumental in, it was left to the BICC Committee to select their next Press Officer, or in this case, Press Team. I am humbled and honoured, as I know Chris Sutton is also, that Chris and I now have somewhat daunting, although very exciting, task of stepping into Gareth's shoes! I likened it to following Sir Alex Ferguson into Manchester United, and for those of you that follow football, I am confident that Chris and I will have a more successful reign than David Moyes did at Old Trafford! I will be undertaking reports of meetings and speaking with the Section winners, as well as compiling full reports of each race. Chris will continue to photograph the winners birds and will now be compiling in depth loft reports on the winners for publication in the fancy press and also online.

Now that's sorted, we move onto the main Autumn Report from the British International Championship Club. The meeting held at Ash on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017 was quite lengthy due to a very hefty agenda. The committee try to get things cleared up as early as possible into the off season, to give you, the members, time to digest what is happening and implement your plans with plenty of time, not leaving things until the very last minute. The meeting got underway around 11am under the stewardship of Albi Deacon and the highlights are reported below.

First up was the Treasurers Report, undertaken by Russell Bradford. The club is in a healthy position despite some unforeseen costs due to transport. There are currently 1,584 members in the BICC, birdage was up from 2016 by around 8% and in the region of £50,000 was paid out in pools and prize money for the 2017 season, not too shabby at all!

Carol Francis then gave an up to date analysis of the Presentation Evening and confirmed there are 187 attendees, which is pretty much the capacity for the current building. It was discussed to explore any other opportunities in Hotels in and around Bournemouth, several members of the committee, including Carol, said they would look at various options for 2019 and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

Due to some changes in how results are compiled in the International races, Russell and Carol have worked very hard to get the necessary information over to the results compilers and the committee thanked them both for the hard work that they have put in to get the information over to the appointed company. Communication via the Internet was then discussed and the BICC are going to explore Facebook and Twitter as a way of championing successes within the BICC and also communicating with its members and the fancy at large. This is something that several clubs and organisations already undertake with great success and the committee believes that this is going to be a way forward for pigeon racing in the future. Keep your eyes peeled for more information on this in the coming weeks.

The current transport situation was discussed and Albi Deacon had done a great deal of research into the needs of the club, it appears that the club would need to raise in excess of £100,000 to get the vehicle that would suit the club's needs, the birds needs and also offer the highest level of comfort to the convoy team, who are a most vital cog in the BICC machine! Whilst the need for new transportation is not urgent, the committee wants to make sure the future is thought about, and again, ways and means of raising additional funding is going to be explored over the Winter months.

It has been agreed by the committee that moving forward ALL CRATES WILL HAVE A MINIMUM OF 16 BIRDS. Where there are part filled crates the crate is to be labelled with the sex of birds and a number confirming the amount of birds. The reason this is so important as it can make the difference whether one lorry or two lorries need to be sent over the Channel. This can cut costs for the club and ultimately for you the member.

Now onto the National race programme for 2018. The races are provisionally being pencilled in for the same weekends as 2017, as highlighted below. The committee just needs to wait for the International Race Programme to be confirmed before rubber-stamping this race programme.

#### OLD BIRD NATIONALS

April 28<sup>th</sup> – Falaise

May 12<sup>th</sup> – Alencon

May 26<sup>th</sup> – Cholet

June 9<sup>th</sup> – Poitiers

July 14<sup>th</sup> – Le Mans

#### YOUNG BIRDS/ANY AGE NATIONALS

August 18<sup>th</sup> – Guernsey

September 8<sup>th</sup> – Fougeres

Next on the agenda were the marking stations. The BICC continues to want to support as many areas of the country as possible and are happy to look at marking stations around the country, a proposition from an area would need to be made to the committee. Two such stations were opened for 2017, Spalding and Hull. Unfortunately, due to the numbers of pigeons which were sent from Hull in 2017, it has been decided to close this marking station until further notice. There were 181 birds marked at Hull in 2017 and 119 of those were at the first two races, as you will see it is just not feasible to continue. It has also been confirmed that all section will remain the same for 2018.

The “Jim Emerton Mensa Trophy” which was to be awarded to the first Barcelona bird into Cornwall has now been designated to the Barcelona 2-Bird Average, and the first winners of the trophy will be the Padfield Family, not a bad start to the trophy’s life!

That concluded the meeting at around 2:30pm. The next update will be the Winter update during the course of December.

John Ghent  
Press Officer  
British International Championship Club