

BICC Winter Update

The committee gathered in the Festive Season down at Ash to really close the 2017 season and look forward to 2018 with great relish and optimism. The last General Meeting of 2017 was primarily around logistics and looking at what had gone well and what had not. Transport costs were a slight cause for concern for some committee members but once we had considered a new vehicle which was purchased and a new engine into the existing vehicle, it was soon made clear that there were no un-avoidable costs at all and the club was now moving into 2018 with quality transport, as well as being on the lookout for a new vehicle if one comes available which suits the needs of the club and its members.

It was decided with regret that the Hull marking station would have to be closed after just one season due to lack of support. Opening new marking stations, especially ones where the transporter must go and collect the birds, is a chicken and egg scenario. The committee voted positively to accept the Hull station prior to the 2017 season but unfortunately, despite massive efforts from Reg Wright and some brilliant performances from members up in that area of the country, the birds and members were just not forthcoming. Therefore, the station has had to be closed. However, it appears on social media that there are still people interested in flying with the BICC so maybe that is worth the fanciers from the Hull area exploring. Are you able to get together and help with the transport of fellow fancier's birds down to Northampton on a Thursday morning?

Carol Francis was then given a massive vote of thanks for once again organising the presentation down in Bournemouth, close to 200 people will be in attendance, a super turn-out for a National Club.

The AGM followed, and we had a few more members join us from the bar area to have their voice heard at the AGM. All officers of the club remained the same, with the addition that my predecessor Gareth Watkins was awarded a Life Vice Presidency, in recognition of the hard work he has put in over the years to support the club and give it the publicity that it deserves, a massive thank you again Gareth for all that you have done and continue to do to support the club.

Finally, the General Meeting following the AGM was now to really focus on the business at hand for 2018. The race programme for the Nationals was discussed again having been put in place at a previous meeting. The feeling is that the BICC can continue to offer more opportunities for quality racing to members across the country and the committee have recognised this with the addition of another National race. Another race from Le Mans will now be in place around the end of June/start of July. The committee expect this to be on the same weekend as the Barcelona International, but clarification will be made once the International race programme has been finalised. We hear quite often that people believe the BICC to be "Southern focused" with its race programme and the committee has taken this on board by putting this additional race in place at a better time in the season for members in the Midlands and beyond. The race programme must start early due to the International race programme beginning in the middle of June, so rather than attempt to tinker round with the race programme before the Internationals, it was decided the additional race would be a better alternative. Le Mans is around 330-350 miles into the East Midlands as a guide, a great middle distance or long distance race for the Northern Sections depending on your exact location.

Moving on from that, Narbonne has also been re-adopted back into the programme, so the BICC now offers the full International programme of Pau, Agen, Barcelona, St Vincent, Marseilles, Narbonne and Perpignan! Add to that you now have Falaise, Alencon, Cholet, Poitiers, Le Mans and

Le Mans as National races, plus the two young bird/any age races from Guernsey and Fougères! 15 races from April to September. More good news is that National racing birdage will remain at £3.50 per bird with no marking fee, simply turn up and pay on the day, the way it should be. Due to increased costs coming from race organisers for the Internationals, as well as currency fluctuations, the International race birdage has had to be raised to £8.50 for all races. There is no difference between the Internationals as the club has had in the past. The only anomaly is Guernsey which is just £3.00 as oppose to £3.50 per bird.

The last item of real note ties in nicely with the additional race to be offered from Le Mans. Up in North Wales a group of fanciers have clubbed together to get a marking station off the ground. The marking station at Chirk will be open from the start of the 2018 season and will be bringing the birds down to Evesham to be collected by the BICC transporter. More information on the station will be released in due course when the final details are all in place, the BICC committee are delighted to be able to offer this opportunity, and with the later races being offered this is a great chance to see what can be done by the fanciers up and around the North West. Le Mans is 370 miles into Chirk itself, and Poitiers which will be flown in June is 465 miles. It will be interesting to see how those races compare with the other opportunities on offer to fanciers from that area around those times, certainly something for flyers to think about.

That wraps up the 2017 business for the BICC, some exciting offerings for 2018 await and no doubt more information will be downloaded to you all over the coming weeks and months. I write these notes 1 week before Christmas, have a great holiday season and for all you early rearers, don't get too drunk on New Years Eve, you've got babies to wean on January 1st!

John Ghent

Press Officer

British International Championship Club