

BICC AUTUMN NEWS REPORT.

The weekend of the 18th October saw the BICC autumn Committee meeting held at the club's H.Q. the Lion Brewery at Ash.

Ray Strawbridge and I travelled up to Sunbury of Thames on the Saturday and spent an enjoyable day and evening as guests of John and Jackie Wills. Many thanks for your kind hospitality as we really enjoyed the banter and viewing the new Wills set up at Dale road.



A view of John Wills' new racing loft



John and Ray in the new racing section

The BICC meeting took place on Sunday 19th and there was a good turn out of committee personnel ready to deal with a fairly hefty agenda. Chairman Albi Deacon got the meeting underway and conducted it in his usual impeccable and efficient manner allowing the various committee members to put their points across succinctly.

First up on the agenda was the approval of the minutes of the last meeting and the question was raised regarding drug testing. Albi informed the meeting that all drug tests carried out throughout the season proved to be negative.

Russell Bradford then gave a brief report on the forthcoming Moot and BICC auction to take place at the Epsom Show on Friday 31st October and Saturday 1st November respectively. There are still a few tickets available at £10 each for the Friday night Moot and this price includes a meal of Chicken and leek pie or two other alternatives. The auction sale of pigeons donated by BICC members will start at 2.30 pm on Saturday and if you are unable to get to the show then Russell Bradford has offered to take commission bids. Russell can be contacted on 01933/410322.

Russell then went on to give a report on the club's finances and I can report to members that we are in a VERY healthy condition with yet another trading surplus on the season looking likely.

The subject of upgrading/replacing the transporter crates was then discussed and Mike Mitchell had brought a wooden crate for the committee to inspect. This was manufactured by R V Woodcraft of Dover. After a fairly comprehensive discussion on the pros and cons of wooden- V- aluminium crates it was decided to obtain quotes for 200 replacement aluminium crates. The subject of purchasing a new trailer to carry 1,400 - 1,500 pigeons was also discussed and we are to get quotes for same.

The review of marking stations was next up and the committee was informed that John Chipperfield the I/C at Chestfield would no longer be able to transport the Chestfield pigeons to the pick up point to meet the main transporter. It was suggested that the officials at Chestfield look for alternative transport in view of the fact that the main transporter would not be able to divert to Chestfield to collect due to the extremely tight schedule.

Carol then outlined the membership figures and told the meeting that there had been just 38 resignations leaving the membership at a very healthy 1,388. Carol also pointed out that Russell had received more than 40 prospective applications from Cornish fanciers with the proviso that a new Cornish section be set up. This matter was raised later.

The 2015 race programme then came up for discussion and after a long debate it was decided to have the same old bird programme as in 2014 with the exception of Marseille and Narbonne which would be dropped due to lack of support for the Marseille race over a number of seasons. It was also decided to have two Guernsey YB/AA races to replace the Guernsey and Falaise races that were on the programme in 2014. The subject of the annual dinner and prize presentation then came up and Carol informed us that more than 100 of the allocated 150 tickets had already been booked. So if you intend to come along this year you would be advised to get your applications for tickets in to Carol pdq. Our convoyer Trevor Cracknell and his good lady, along with Steve and Lesley Wright of the House of Aarden have been invited to join us as our guests for the evening.

Albi then pointed out to the committee that due to personal circumstances he would have to hand over the duties of collecting and cleaning the club's trophies as from 2016. So if there is a member out there who feels that he/she can carry out this time consuming task please feel free to contact Carol or any one of the committee.

Mike Armitage then brought up the matter of the House of Commons Presentation to the winners of the World War I Commemoration race from Poitiers. As I have reported earlier in the season, Gloria Hunniford's husband Stephen Way had generously offered to present the winners of this race with a cheque for E1000 along with a replica trophy. The race was won by the Welsh partnership of Gareth and Stuart Treharne. Unfortunately the partners will be in the USA at the time of the presentation and so ex England football captain Gerry Francis has kindly offered to step in and accept the cheque and trophy of their behalf. More on this presentation at the time.

Whilst on the subject of the presentation of cheques it was decided to present the Charity Pool Cheque of in excess of £500 at the same time to the Karen Keating Cancer Foundation. This will be presented to the late Karen Keating's mum Gloria Hunniford.

Next up on the agenda was the subject of forming a separate section exclusively for Cornish fanciers. This proved to be a fairly vigorously debated subject. Despite the fact that we had received more than 40 new applications for membership from Cornish fanciers plus the offer of a £1000 donation from the House of Aarden the committee voted by a narrow margin, against the formation of a Cornish section at the present time. Whether this proves to be a narrow minded retrograde step as far as the future expansion of the BICC is concerned remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, the committee did allow the Plymouth members their own marking station with the proviso that they transport the race marked pigeons to Bath for collection by the main transporter.

The final item on the agenda was the replacement and upgrading of the club's computer software and Russell and Carol were given permission to obtain quotes for this.

Meeting closed at 13.10 pm and then it was a quick pint in the bar before making the 130 mile return journey to Wales.

I'll finish this report by giving a breakdown of the number of birds sent from each marking station during the 2014 season as provided by Russell.

Birds

777 Norwich

668 Stowmarket

627 Evesham
410 Diss
2711 Horndean
3981 Ash
4072 Ockenden
365 Ipswich
347 Lowestoft
1853 Northampton
1376 Bromley
1210 Gwent
2000 Bath
1260 Brighton
2477 Chestfield
24134

The above numbers show an increase of more than 2,000 BIRDS on 2013. Onward and upward we go!

Gareth Watkins



*The BICC Race team of Steve Appleby [weatherman]
John Tyerman [race advisor] and Trevor Cracknell[Convoyer]*