

## *BICC EPSOM MOOT & AUCTION.*

*The weekend of 31st October/1st November saw the inaugural BICC moot organised, for the main part, by club treasurer Russell Bradford along with Russell's hard working wife Clare.*

*The journey up to Epsom was only marred by the log jam of traffic on the M4 /M25 section and after four hours we were safely tucked up at the bar with a pint in our hands ready for the festivities to begin.*

*At around 6.30 pm fanciers started to make their way to the venue just a short walk from our hotel and we were soon seated in spectacular surroundings, waiting for the moot to begin. On our table were Dave and Vince Padfield, Brian Leadbetter, John Wills, Ieuan Williams, Kevin Buddle and two of Kevin's friends from Dover whose names escape me.*

*As I wrote, in a short article that appeared in print a few weeks back, the panel consisted of the world renowned vet and long distance fancier Henk De Weerd, Hugo Batenburg of the Batenberg Van de Merwe partnership, Mark Gilbert and at very short notice Dave Padfield from Wales. Dave sat in on the panel in place of Geoff Cooper who had experienced "transport problems" - to save you embarrassment, I won't go into any further details than that Geoff!!*

*Before the interview with the panellists began Club President John Tyerman presented the Merit Award Diplomas to the fanciers who were present. These were Kevin Buddle on behalf of the L & K Buddle partnership who had three gallant pigeons qualify for an Award; Steve Pearmain of the R Pearmain & son partnership who had two Award winning pigeons and Dave and Vince Padfield who had one Award winner. Unfortunately Geoff and Clayton Preece with two Awards, and David Haleswith one Award winning pigeon, were unable to attend but will receive their Award Diplomas in due course.*

*John Clements initially carried out interviews with each panellist individually, and then the whole panel went on to answer the many questions submitted by the fanciers present, in a professional and concise manner. The short break between the individual panellists interviews and the start of the general question session was filled with a lovely meal which I think I'm correct in saying, was enjoyed by all. I certainly enjoyed the chicken and leek pie, in fact I had two helpings but don't tell Russell or he'll want me to pay double.*

*For my part, one of the most revealing answers was the one from Henk De Weerd when asked about vaccinating pigeons against Paratyphoid - Henk's answer was that he felt it a waste of money, because there are so many different varieties of paratyphus organisms, vaccinating against one would not give your birds immunity against all the other types they might encounter. However, he did advise treating for 10 days with an antibiotic such as Parastop, once each year, a month before breeding. Henk also felt that it was essential to vaccinate young birds twice each year - once at the time of or shortly after weaning, and again just prior to young bird racing.*

*All panellists advised the fanciers present that they increased the fat content of the feed in the final days prior to basketting for a long distance race.*

*The above are just a sample of the questions asked and as I mentioned earlier all were answered in a very professional manner by each panellist. What came out of the session was that Bernard Deweerdt rarely races young birds or yearlings and waits until his birds are two year olds before putting them to the test in a race basket. However, Bernard's family of all purpose racers, which have been winning up to International level for more than 40 years, tend to go on racing at the distance until they are 6,7 and 8 years old.*

*Following the moot it was a case of a short walk back to the hotel to resume discussions in the bar until the wee small hours.*

*Booted and breakfasted next morning we were soon in the show venue taking in all the various stalls and the spectacular view from the Epsom grandstand over the Derby race course to the south and the city of London to the north. The visibility was so good you could clearly see Wembley stadium in the distance plus the London Shard, St Paul's Cathedral and the "Gherkin".*

*It was good to meet up with many friends and one in particular, Barry Wigg who I have known for more than 40 years but never met in person until the Friday night at the moot.*

*Unfortunately I was unable to stay until the BICC auction as I had to get back to Salisbury by late afternoon. However, I would like to extend my thanks to all those fanciers who donated of their best to make the auction such a success.*

*I must also thank Russell and Clare Bradford for organising a very successful and enjoyable moot on the Friday night and for all your hard work over the two days - a true pair of troopers.*

*Thanks also to the organisers of the Epsom show and in particular Tom Firmager, on a job extremely well done. Also a big thank you to our secretary Carol, on her tireless efforts on the BICC stand throughout the Saturday despite being weakened by her recent illness.*

*.....And finally, a big thank you to Tony and Marie Cowan for all their work with the BICC auction which raised a little under £5,000 for the club.*

*Many fanciers asked if this would be an annual event for the BICC? Only time will tell, but one thing is for sure, the 2014 event was a "sell out" and a resounding success. Roll on 2015!*

*Gareth Watkins*



*Epsom Panel L to R Henk De Weerd, Bernard Deweerdt, Hugo Battenburg, Mark Gilbert & Dave Padfield*



*Dave & Vince Padfield receiving Merit Award from John Tyerman*



*Kevin Buddle receiving one of the partners' three Merit Award Diplomas from Bernard Dewerd*



*Steve-Pearmain receiving two Merit Award Diplomas*



*More moot attendees*



*some of the crowd at the moot enjoying their meal*