

BRITISH BARCELONA CLUB – PALAMOS (BLUE RIBAND) NATIONAL

Friday 24th June saw 114 members of the British Barcelona club eagerly awaiting the news that their 420 pigeons had been liberated from Palamos in the Blue Riband National race at 0800 hrs in a light North wind and the race was on. As to be expected no birds were timed on the day of liberation and it was a longer than expected wait on the second day before the first bird was verified this was to the eventual winner who with Nigel Rigiani the convoyer I had the pleasure to visit on the Sunday morning. The winner once again was non other than **John Halstead** who clocked at **13:21:31** on the Saturday afternoon to record a velocity of **895** to win **1st Section B and 1st Open BBC Palamos 2011**.

This is John's second Blue Riband Long Distance National win in three seasons the 52 year old fancier from Kington Magna in Dorset was born and raised in Todmorden on the Lancashire and Yorkshire borders. John had his first pigeons at the age of 8 and has kept them almost without break from that time with great success. The winning pigeon "Maurice" is a 3 year old blue cock, raced on widowhood of the Jim Biss / Southwell bloodlines. It is only in the last three weeks that this bird has outshone his illustrious nestmate "Giles" who is the "loft star" having won 1st Section NFC Tarbes (548 miles), 4th Section BBC Bordeaux. 2nd Section BICC Falaise and 4th Section BBC Poitiers in his last 4 Nationals and is primed for another wack at NFC tarbes next weekend. There is quite a story to how the palamos winner got his name Maurice – and John made the point that in the horse racing grand National there is always a story behind the winner – so this bird had all the credentials to obtain the TOP SPOT.



John Halstead
1st Open BBC Palamos 2011



"Maurice" – 1st Open BBC Palamos

In 2010 having lost in training "Untouchable" the 2009barcelona winner – this blue cock was chosen to defend john's crown and was sent to Barcelona as a 2 year old. He came across difficult conditions and ended up in Southhampton on the Monday (3rd day) completely shattered and flown out. A non pigeon fancier rescued him from a cat which was chasing him in the street and the bird was picked up from under a parked car. Contact was eventually made with the local club secretary Maurice Brick who collected and cared for the bird which was absolutely flown out and was just skin, bones and feathers. A few days later showing signs of recovery the bird was reported and John drove to Southampton to collect him and after his carer was given the name "Maurice". Back at Kington magna the bird spent another 10 days in his nestbox recovering from his ordeal. However this season he has been in superb condition from the outset – flying 1 Inland and 4 previous channel races before Palamos. He actually scored in all 4 races although only 2nd or 3rd bird back to John's loft. He was 215th Open BBC Carentan, 500th Open BBC Messac, 5th Club Fougères and in his final prep race put in his best

performance to take 8th Sect, 139th Open (8,745 birds) from the very hard NFC Cholet Race (8 hours on the wing). This was his final race before Palamos and his only other exercise was flying around the loft for 50 mins to 1 hour each morning and evening. Fed on versele Laga depurative, Gerry Plus and Super Widowhood along with maize, peanuts, Hormoform and Old hand's Golden Boost he was bouncing with energy. Shown his hen for 45 minutes before basketing he was pooled in everything possible and sent off to the race with maximum confidence. The winning bird is a grandson of Nyland Ashley who in 2008 was 2nd open BICC Barcelona and had a string of other top long distance performances. His daughter was 1st section BBC Sennen Cove in 2006 (30th Open) and a brother to this hen is the Sire to "Maurice". This 2007 cock contains Jim Biss Turban and Vend bloodlines and the Ernie deacon Southwells. Dam of Maurice was a hen purchased direct from Jim Biss and she is a Grand Daughter of Matrix.

Thanks to John and Merrill for the hospitality shown to myself and Nigel on our visit on the Sunday.



The Wing of "Maurice" 1st Open BBC Palamos

The fourth bird clocked at **17:59:58** on the winning day was to the **Weston-super-Mare** loft of that lively character **Bill Stribling** who clocked his four year old cock "Bills Boy" to record a velocity of **777** sufficiently fast to take **1st Section C and 2nd Open**.

Racing to a small loft with not many birds does not prevent Bill from competing and doing well from Palamos or Barcelona each year as last year he **was 1st Section C and 10th Open** and the previous year once again he was close to the top with **2nd Section C and 4th Open** he's a real specialist at the distance with a good family of birds competing at all distances as this particular cock had already **been 1st Section C and 8th Open BBC Messac in 2010** the sire is bred by Ken Hine of Hayes Middlesex and the dam is a Staff Van Reet cross bred by club mate Phil Newton who flies that famous strain Phil van Newtons.



**Bill Stribling of Weston-super-Mare
1st Section C 2nd Open BBC Palamos**

On the way to visit the race winner on the Sunday I picked up the convoyer Nigel Rigiani from the inform lofts of the top distance fancier in **Salisbury Andy Parsons** who was having a marvelous weekend - to explain on Saturday morning he had clocked in six good pigeons in the CSCFC Tarbes race to take 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Section then later in the day he clocks two birds from Palamos at **16:41:36** and **19:11:35** to record velocities of **774** and **705** to **take 2nd and 3rd Section B and 3rd and 5th Open**. Tremendous flying especially when you consider that these pigeons were only his second team as he had the first team of 25 pigeons still at home being prepared for the NFC Tarbes race. On the day I was fortunate to handle what he considers to be the leading candidates for this race who felt wet to handle and I'm certain that once again with this team being sent in strength for his main target of the season he will not be far away once again.



**Andy Parsons – 3rd and 5th Open BBC Palamos
Winning the two bird average**



Secret weapon Janice Parsons with the flag (of sorts)



Andy's NFC Tarbes team flying around the loft motivated to fly by the use of a dumpy flag

His first bird clocked has quite a history to it, this bird unusually for him has a name "**Tiny Dancer**", his sire is another very small bird and was a gift from Len Painter, the dam is a daughter of George Burgess's 8th open Pau. As a young bird and yearling he had 3 or 4 inland races only. As a 2 year old he was entered in a short BICC channel race in early May, he returned late on the day with a hole in the top of his head piercing his skull, no tail and a big hole in his back, these horrific injuries were probably caused by a Falcon, as they didn't think he would survive they left him in a nest box to see what would happen.

As the season went on he began flying out with the Tarbes candidates and became so fit he was dancing about on top of the loft and wherever you looked he would be there. On his last training toss for Tarbes of that year he decided to take him to see how he was, this being his first toss since being injured. Andy doubled his birds up at 40 miles and then took him a further 10 miles and liberated him on his own. Andy beat him home but only by 10 minutes, he was then entered for Tarbes NFC he was his 13th bird from 20 sent, he since had 2 other Tarbes which he scored in both, he is obviously not Andy's best bird but is the one he would keep above all others, because of the Falcon attack he tends not to fly with the others but likes to fly in and out of the bunch and always comes on his own in training. His prep for Palamos was Seaton 60 miles, Carentan 126 miles and Newton Abbot 83 miles. His final prep was two Portsmouth tosses with his friend Mark Gower, when put in the basket for Palamos he was told that this was his last ever race, he just needed to come home.

His 2nd birds breeding is mainly George Burgess being a grandson of Lucy and Culmergold, as a 2 year old he was his 1st bird in the Classic at Tarbes, the following year he was put in the stock loft to breed, in 2010 he was returned to the racing loft and sent to Tarbes in the International where he was one of Andy's 12 arrivals in the result this year his prep for Palamos was one inland race and Messac Classic

When I arrived at Andy's he was on the phone to George Burgess and at this time I discovered his secret weapon as there outside the front of the loft was Andy's wife Janice frantically flagging his Tarbes team keeping them flying for the compulsory one hour. Earlier in the season Andy flies his birds celibate with reasonable results and then repairs the team to send them sitting 10 to 14 days for his main target race of the season which has always been the Tarbes National with the NFC. It is then that the flag has to be used as all the birds want to do is get back in the loft and sit those eggs. Feeding in this loft is quite simple Garvo Marathon mix with beans added.

Andy would like to thank his good friend of 50 years Nigel Rigiani for the top job he has done in conveying this year where some difficult decisions have to be made and also to congratulate John on winning the race for second time and all those who clocked birds.



“Deorwine” – 1st Section D 4th Open Palamos

At **Romford** we have **TEAM RML** clocking a dark chequer cock at **17:44:36** to record a velocity of **751** and take **1st Section D and 4th Open**. Who you may say - TEAM RML, well the concept is simple, one loft and one team of pigeons. In this case all the pigeons come from one loft and in this particular instance it is only anticipated that they will race for a couple of years or so. They could of course be drawn from several and in a long term plan they could be bred and acquired progressively by the Team. They will be prepared and trained by one individual. The group however will participate in all discussions and decisions as things progress. Public information will be maintained in a detailed way with training and race reports carried on a [web site](#) while additional information and discussion between group members taking place through Newsletters.

The TEAM consists of several people who through varying circumstances are not able to compete in quite the way they would like and it is hoped that through the TEAM their interest can be maintained in a sport they all love. Several members are local Bernie Bennett, Bill Morris, John Lumb and Garry Gattenby-Taylor while others are more spread apart Andy Kyle in Scotland and “T” Berokoff in California.

The pigeons come from and are maintained by Nigel Lane and are the stock he acquired when he decided to race South. Initially he tried with British pigeons but they did not work for him. Then when he started to look, first of all to France, he found that nearly all the successful International flyers there raced Dutch pigeons so it was to Holland he went and acquired a breeding stock. The pigeons he obtained all came from very successful Dutch flyers who’s names would probably not be recognised in the UK but in essence and simple terms he obtained stock from two very successful lines both originating from van Wanroy but which had been developed separately and they are now bred together.

Methods are very simple, only cocks are raced. No young bird racing at all and all they will get is a few training tosses from one location only some 40 miles North. As yearlings they get a couple of these tosses and then straight to two of the BBC National races. Losses at this stage are expected but the object is to find the pigeons that can find their way home. As two year old they go to a 500+ mile race, preferably an International, but if no one will let the TEAM race an International then the next best thing. Prior to this ideally they will go to three National races, purely as trainers. At three years old they will go to Barcelona, sorry Palamos again ideally having been to three National races as trainers. They are fed on a home mix of equal parts wheat, barley, beans and maize and running up to a long race the mixture changes to a higher ratio of wheat and barley together with the addition of sunflower seed. They have automatic drinkers and the water always contains chlorine.

This is the first year that a team from these new pigeons has been sent to a Barcelona / Palamos race. Last year, for the first time, a team of 10 were sent to the N.F.C. Tarbes race and 7 returned these formed this year’s Palamos team plus one of the old pigeons that flew Barcelona in 2010.

The first bird clocked was GB08R45948 “DEORWINE” who was 2nd TEAM RML, 104th Open and 37th Section N.F.C. Tarbes 2010. In training this year he was first to the loft from Carentan and Alencon and 13th from Messac before going to Palamos.

The team also clocked a second pigeon GB05N07222 “BALDRIC” at **13:32:24** on the Sunday to record a velocity of **505** which was quick enough to win **2nd Section D and 10th Open** - the second TEAM RML pigeon from Palamos was the one of the last of the old pigeons being a George Colthorpe Wescott crossed with a Clerebaut and he flew Barcelona last year when he was the first pigeon to the loft.

The last bird clocked on the winning day making six tremendous birds in total was down in Bournemouth where M White and Son were thrilled to clock at **19:31:23** to record a velocity of **679** and win **4th Section B and 6th Open.**

This is the 3rd time their pigeon called ‘Becky’s Boy’ has been timed from the club’s Blue Riband race. Previously he has been: - 2009 3rd section B, 26th open, Barcelona and in 2010 2nd section B, 14th open, Barcelona.

This now means that he has won one of the coveted Spanish Diploma’s this will bring their total won to five.

‘Becky’s Boy’ is a five year old late bred and this was only his 19th race of his life. He is from their own family of pigeons that originated about 100 years ago with Mike’s Uncle who passed them on to him 60 years ago and since he’s had them he has developed them in to the distance family of birds that now are and they are the same family except for a handful of pigeons to cross with them when felt necessary.



Mike and Steve White of Bournemouth

4th Section B and 6th Open BBC Palamos 2011

“Becky’s Boy” was sent sitting 12 days. He was prepared for Palamos with The Dorset South Road Federation from Carentan (100 miles), Fougères (170 miles) & Messac (200 miles), then rested and flown around home for three weeks before Palamos. All their distance birds are paired up at the beginning of March & then trained when the young are weaned only a few times from Picket Post (10 miles) because of the BOP problem in The New Forest. The birds are fed Willsbridge No. 2 HP Special Mix, with extra maize added as the race distances increase. Paddy rice is given once a week, as is peanuts and groats with cod liver oil. They don’t treat with any medicines or supplements, just good quality corn and clean water.

The dam of ‘Becky’s Boy’ is one of their Spanish Diploma Winners ‘Becky’, she won the following positions: - 1st Section B, 5th Open, Palamos, 1998 - 2nd Section B, 13th Open, Palamos, 2000 and 3rd Section B, 32nd Open, Palamos, 2001.

‘Becky’ is also a granddaughter of their 1991 Palamos Winner ‘Phyl’s Pride’. ‘Becky’s Boy’ grandsire on his sire’s side is another of their Spanish Diploma Winners ‘Stevie Wonder’, he won: - 4th Section B, 18th Open, Palamos, 1998 - 2nd Section B, 7th Open, Palamos, 1999 and 1st Section B, 12th Open, Palamos, 2000. Also on his sire’s side is ‘Door Hopper’ who was: - 1st Section B, 11th open, Barcelona, 1997 and 8th Section B, 32nd open, Palamos, 1998.

Finally Mike and Steve would like to congratulate John Halstead on his pigeon’s wonderful achievement and to the other three fanciers who clocked a pigeon on the winning day.

Another fancier who’s name often surfaces in our long distance National is that of **Richard Pugh of Hanley Swan, Worcestershire** last year he timed **GB05E17888** to take **2nd Section C and 16th Open** and once again this year he clocks the same pigeon at **10:38:02** to take **2nd Section C and 7th Open** moving up the open result several places – well done Richard. We go further up country to **Walsall** for the winner of **3rd Section C and 12th Open** where **Steve and Mary Marshall** clock their four year old Grizzle cock at **19:27:34** to record a velocity of **502**. History in this cock as he was originally raced by them but when they packed up he was raced successfully by John Garvey. When Steve and Mary restarted in the sport 15 months ago he returned to them and then after a tough training schedule was sent to the BBC Poitiers race a fortnight ago returning late on the day after which he was sent to Palamos to return late on the 3rd day almost flying 800 miles.



Keith Bush with Grandson Jack holding “Red Ned”

1st Section E 8th Open BBC Palamos 2011

An amazing race for **Keith Bush** of Cossall, Nottingham who timed his 4 year old red cock –“ **RED NED**” named after his late father who everyone called Ned, at **13:16:55** on the Sunday to record a velocity of 593 and take **1st Section E and 8th Open**.

What a good feeling for him that’s his third section win from Palamos having not sent for a number of years but he rejoined the club with the advent of the Penkridge Marking Station - his thanks to them.

His bird is from a red hen of his own family crossed with an exchanged cock - a son of Dan from his good friend Ken Hine. He was timed in 2009 at Tarbes but missed out last year - he arrived just after they had read off the clocks.

All his birds are natural and he was sent sitting about two weeks on eggs and was in really good condition - thanks to Nigel. He timed another bird at 9.01 on the Monday morning to take **2nd Section E and 18th Open**.

Another cock – he only sent one hen as he lost two training in the weeks before marking. He passes on his congratulations to John Halstead whom he has known for many years - we trained him in the north and his friend Andy Parsons and everyone else who timed birds.

We go much further South to **Guernsey** for the next pigeon in the result where **Michael De Carteret** clocks at **06:37:03** on the Sunday to record a velocity of **533** to take **1st Section H and 9th Open**.

This blue chequer hen GB 09 S 38651 is bred from a g/son of Grace the 1999 Open winner, from Brian Kett. Michael is very fortunate to have 5 youngsters off of her 2 cocks and 3 hens which were gifted to him from Brian. There are quite a few flyers over in Guernsey that has had birds to fly the distance from her - thanks to Brian for the birds off Grace.

The dam of his hen is an Eric Cannon bird from Peter Amor of Reading whom Michael would like to thank as well. This pair has bred many gold ring winners as well.

Thanks to the British Barcelona Club for the condition of the birds and making my heart pump a little faster for the second time there is nothing like getting a bird from that distance everybody should try it it’s out of this world.



Michael De Carteret – 1st Section H and 9th Open



Paul Mauger – 2nd Section H and 13th Open

The winner of Section A once again is that well liked and extremely successful distance fancier **Bert Shepherd** of Woodmancote, West Sussex who flies the old Ko Nipius family built up since 1978 when he obtained the original Kippax stock. Bert timed his seven year old dark cheq cock "**Jubilant**" at **14:21:24** to record a velocity of **472** and take

1st Section A and 15th Open.

JUBILANT had previously won 17th Sec 204 Open NFC Pau (3463 birds), 1st Club Guernsey, 5th Club 79th Fed (5655 birds), 73rd Sec Cholet NFC, 84th Sec Fougères NFC, 3rd Sec 9th Open BBC Palamos in 2008, then 2nd Sec 7th open BBC Barcelona just behind SEVEN UP each time.

In 2010 February he was hit by the hawk but Bert thought he had got over this so he sent him to Barcelona but he arrived just out of race time. This year he was much fitter and so it was decided to give him another go and he proved Bert right with this 1st Sec 15th open Palamos .

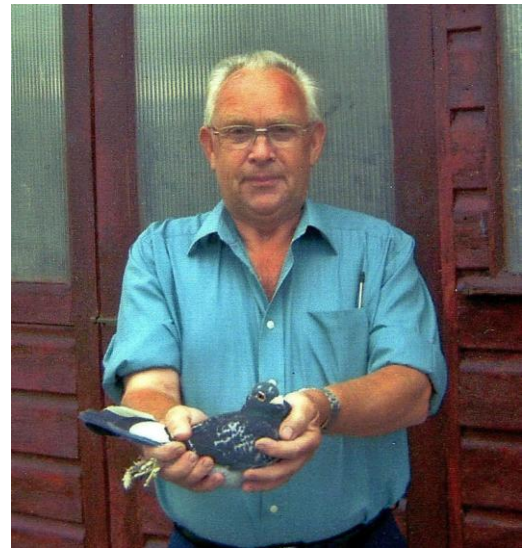
Bert would like to congratulate John Halstead on winning the race and a big thank you to all our club officials and markers for making it possible for us all to be able to race in such a brilliant club.

We stay in Guernsey for the second bird in Section H where **Paul Mauger** clocks his chequer pied Van Geel hen at **08:44:15** to record a velocity of **500** to take

2nd Section H and 13th Open.

Both the parents were bred by Jeff Woodfield of Wittekop Lofts, she was flown on the roundabout system and fed on Gem corns mixed with Versele Laga.

A lovely pigeon she was 5th Open Messac in 2010 and been consistent in most club races this year she has flown Messac and Poitiers with the BBC this year before going to Palamos.



Bert Shepherd – 1st Section A 15th Open



"Oliver" – 1st Section G 17th Open

At **Rochester John & Spencer Nicholson** clocked in a 6 year old blue chequer cock, called **"Oliver"** at **17:39:43** to record a velocity of **448** and take **1st Section G and 17th Open**.

In 2008 he was 27th Barcelona National and 4 weeks later he was 7th Perpignan National. In 2009 he was 22nd Barcelona National and in total has flown Barcelona 4 times, Palamos once and Perpignan.

He's flown natural, he was sitting eggs about 3 days, he has had 2 channel races this year in preparation for Palamos. The second of which was a very hard fly from NFC Cholet.

He arrived from Palamos in superb condition with virtually no weight loss. He may go to Marseille or Perpignan International.

They also clocked another at 07:13 on the Monday which will win their **8th Spanish Diploma** – another record broken by the Nicholsons.

With a deadline to meet I have endeavoured to mention most of the leading birds however time only allows me to mention that by the close of the third day only 22 birds had been verified. The one's not mentioned previously in this article were one to the lofts of **M Richards of Weymouth** which took **11th Open**, one to **Dean Jones of Bodenham** which takes **14th Open**, two to the lofts of **Mr and Mrs Morris of Great Missenden** which take **16th and 19th Open**, one to the loft of **A J Turner of Dover** which takes **18th Open**, one to **RS Harbour on the Isle of Wight** to take **20th Open**, one to the **Lyden Brothers of Sandwich** for **21st Open** and finally the other by **Mr and Mrs Joy of Chichester** who took **22nd Open**. Congratulations to you all.