

Where is the best place to live to win from Tarbes?

By Alan Baker

Today I was doing a search on Jim Biss; I've lost all my saved articles on him. I searched on Google via Elimar and it was ironic but it brought up a post I made on PIPA nearly 7 years ago to the day. The post was entitled 'was Jim Biss the greatest fancier ever?' and as the discussion evolved I did some research on the Pau winners and where the best place to live is to win from Pau in the NFC. I appreciate we now compete from Tarbes but the race points are as close as to be as relevant for Tarbes as Pau. I thought it may be of some interest and may be change some perceptions about the best place to live to win the NFC's premier race. Below is the transcript on one of my posts providing some statistical evidence of perhaps the best place to live. Obviously the opinions expressed are my own but the statistical information is factual (as of March 2005).

'Joe, I agree Jim Biss is the tops and so is Brian Denney. However in a past post I have included one other and that is Geoff and Catherine Cooper and I stand by that even though I know they live in a 'good spot' for Pau.

However Joe you feel that Somerset and Dorset are the best place to live and people actually up sticks to move to these places to try and win. You also report 'you never see anyone moving to Norfolk to win'.

Being the nerd that I am I set out below the evidence to substantiate the perception you have. The reason I do it is to correct or prove my perception, which is if I could choose to live anywhere in England to win at the highest level in long distance racing it would never be in the west of England. Now I know there are lots of NFC races besides Pau but Jim Biss is only interested in the long distance so I think the best way to look at this is to look at the PAU results since it was first regularly competed from in 1950.

Total Pau NFC races since 1950 are 47 (only those races actually liberated from Pau). I have tried to do some geographical analysis on the results, and by the way I have used the excellent program produced by Paul O Leary for the NFC. If you don't know about it the program costs £12.50 (less than 20 Euro plus postage) and gives you every detail you would want to know about past NFC races, fancier's performances and individual bird performances. Anyone who has developed databases will know that the creation of the database is the easy part; the number crunching is the nightmare and Paul has done it for the benefit of the NFC and not himself!

You will see from the attached table that I have split England in to areas. These are not definitive but a rough selection by my own personal ideas and may I add that this is not a scientific evaluation but rather an indicative one.

Firstly let's look at Somerset because in the NFC results, there is an area called Avon which is not strictly a County but an administrative area of Somerset; I believe Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset make up this area. In terms of the map, if you were to draw a horizontal line from Weston Super Mare to the eastern boundary of Somerset, the area to the north of this line in Somerset is the area classed as 'Avon'. As you will see from the first table below, there have been 7 winners of the

NFC in this district, a quite high percentage; and for the area I identify as the Mid South West of England it has produced 17% of winners, a very respectable percentage.

Let's look at the table marked south west and in this table you will see the two areas Joe thinks are the best areas in the Country to move to. Well, Somerset has only had 2 winners and so has Dorset; and Devon and Cornwall with perhaps the shortest flying members in the country have not recorded a single win! The explanation for this to me is all down to the prevailing winds i.e. the westerlies. My belief is the more east you are in the Country the better the chance you have of winning Pau BUT only up to a certain distance.

South West Area Analysis

County	Winners	Population	Area in sq. Km
Somerset	2	503,424	3451
Dorset	2	394,581	2653
Devon	0	710,966	6707
Cornwall	0	506,250	3563
Total	4	2115221	16,374

The South West has had 8.5% of Pau winners since 1950

SW has a winner for every 52,885 people

SW has a density of 129 people per sq. KM

The amount of winners per density is 33

Mid South West Analysis

County	Winners	Population	Area in sq. Km
Gloucestershire	1	566,977	3150
Avon	7	551,618	593
Wiltshire	0	436,349	3485
Total	8	1,554,944	7,228

NB (please note I have only included Bristol, Bath & North Somerset for this exercise)

The Mid South West has had 17% of Pau winners

Mid SW has a winner for every 194,368 people

Mid SW has a density of 215 / sq. km

The amount of winners per density is 27

Now let's look at the table below marked the Central South of the country. This area has had nearly a third of all Pau winners and if you just look at Hampshire and the Isle of Wight they have had a staggering 25%, a full quarter of all Pau winners. Without doubt if you are going to move to try and win Pau, this has to be the area to live. The figures actually seem to suggest however that because of the size of the population that this area does not do particularly well. However if you just take Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, the amount of winners to population ratio comes down to 114998.

Central South Area Analysis

County	Pau Winners	Population	Area in sq. Km
Oxfordshire	3	607457	2605
Bucks	0	478,110	1874
Berks	0	803,566	1262
Hampshire	9	1,245,108	3679
Isle of Wight (IOW)	3	134,876	355
Total	15	3,269,117	9775

Central South area has had 32% of Pau winners (Hampshire and the IOW has had 26% of Pau winners)

Central south has a winner for every 217,941

Central south has 334 people per sq. km

The amount of winners per density is 22

Look at the South East area. They have over a fifth of all Pau winners. This means in the centre south and south east of the country over 50% of the winners of the PAU NFC have come from there.

South East Area Analysis

County	Pau Winners	Population	Area in sq. Km
Sussex	4	1,250,113	3783
Surrey	2	1,059,900	1663
Greater London	3	7,172,036	1580
Kent	1	1,338,331	3736
Total	10	10,820,380	10762

South East area of the Country has produced 21% of the Pau winners

SE has produced a winner per 1,082,038 people

The density of the area is 1005 people per sq. km

The amount of winners per density is 100.5

Centre West Area Analysis

County	Pau Winners	Population	Area in sq. Km
Shropshire	2	285204	3487
Staffordshire	1	808952	2713
Herefordshire	0	176471	2180
Worcestershire	2	545897	1741
Warwickshire	0	512680	1975
Derbyshire	0	739253	2625
Cheshire	1	675803	2343
Total	6	3744260	17064

The centre west does very well considering they fly in to the westerlies with 13% of the winners.

They have a winner for every 624043 people.

The density of population is 219 per sq. km

The amount of winners per density is 36.5

Centre East Area Analysis

County	Pau Winners	Population	Area in sq. Km
Nottinghamshire	1	753155	2160
Lincolnshire	0	657843	5921
Bedfordshire	1	384652	1192
Northamptonshire	0	638238	2364
Cambridgeshire	0	558323	3389
Leicestershire	0	615491	2156
Essex	1	1318408	3670
Norfolk	1	802766	5371
Suffolk	0	671931	3801
Total	4	6400807	31062

The centre east has produced 8.5% of winners

The centre east has a winner for every 1,600,201 people

The density of people is 206 per sq. KM

The amount of winners per density is 51.5

I've spent all afternoon doing this; there is lots of analysis that can be done. My quick thoughts are that Hampshire/IOW is the place to fly if you can afford to up family and move, not that I believe there are many fanciers who could do this. Secondly if you live north of the Wash you have very little chance of winning from Pau because of distance and the same if you live in Devon, Cornwall and a lesser extent Somerset because of the amount of water the bird has to cross on a direct line. This suggests that most pigeons coming in to the south west come through IOW/Hampshire and dog leg back. If I were looking for the best Pau birds based on this I would look for high scoring open birds in the North or South West (Providing the race was not a tail wind in both instances or East in the SW instance).

If I've bored you apologies but I've enjoyed looking at this issue'.

Alan