

Falconry in Britain between 1750 and 1927:  
the survival, organisation and, development of the  
sport

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## Abstract

Falconry, the sport of using trained birds of prey to hunt wild quarry in its natural habitat, had been practiced in the British Isles for more than 1300 years. During the sports 'golden age' in the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was held in high esteem, was imbued with social imagery, and was regarded as a signifier of status. It began to lose popularity in the period leading up to the Civil War and fell largely into disuse in the years following the Commonwealth. By the early 1700s it was a rare and curious pastime undertaken by very few.

During the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a period of great change in British Society, when it might have been expected that an activity with such strong links to pre-modern culture would have withered away. Falconry however experienced something of a revival. Whilst limited in scale and always peripheral to the canons of the times, it maintained a small but significant following.

This research is an investigation into how falconry was adapted and organised to ensure its survival. The context in which the activity took place is considered in detail, as is the literature and private writing left by those who were practitioners. The relationship with other hunting sports is examined together with a wider sphere of interest; that of the developing science of natural history, and in particular ornithology.

This investigation calls into question some of the oft repeated explanations for falconry's decline; that 'shooting flying' superseded it and that the enclosure and cultivation of the countryside rendered it unsustainable. Both indeed effected falconry but neither was found to have been the cause of the sports demise.

How the sport adapted through the formation of subscription clubs and how fashion and taste in falconry determined the success and continuation or failure and extinction, was considered. Falconry despite a strong inclination towards a conservative and traditional orientation was found to be both dynamic and adaptive in certain respects, whilst remaining blinkered and stubbornly resolute in others. These qualities determined how the sport survived through out the period investigated: 1750-1927.

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Dedication

In memory of  
Major Alan Mellor RE  
1919-2001



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# Introduction

## Introduction

Scholars who have researched the history and development of the pastimes and sports of the British, cannot fail to be aware of falconry. At one time considered as an intrinsic part of courtly life and a clear indicator of social status, the field sport occupied a significant position in the art and literature of the mid, late-medieval, and early modern period. It is self evident that the activity no longer holds the lofty position that it once did. If one traces the social and cultural history of Britain over the last millennia, it can be seen that there was a marked decline and almost a complete cessation in the sport in a comparatively short period during the later years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### The problem

Writers from amongst the 19<sup>th</sup> century fraternity of falconers together with some historians have recorded the demise of the activity along well rehearsed lines. "It was the invention of the shot-guns that struck the first and most deadly blow at the popularity of hawking" (Michell 1900 pp3). Lascelles writing in 1892, records that "The almost universal enclosure of the land, ... the introduction of the art of shooting flying, ... all these things contributed to make falconry less possible and therefore less popular than it had been up to the time of the Commonwealth" (pp217). Trevelyan says that "During the Stuart epoch shooting gradually superseded hawking, ..." (1942 pp279). Whilst Birley (1993 pp131) when discussing the second half of the 1700s, states "Shooting was the new vogue, gradually replacing hawking, ..."

Again a falconer and this time it is the 20<sup>th</sup> century doyen Gilbert Blaine, who articulates "Towards the middle of the seventeenth century falconry began to decline. It can hardly be imagined that Cromwell would have promoted its popularity, and the invention of

gunpowder added a still more shattering blow to an already lowered prestige.” (pp12). Blaine’s assumption was incorrect in respect to Oliver Cromwell, who it seems was quite an advocate of the sport, but the tenor of the statement is true; the Commonwealth was characterised by a dominant puritan philosophy, one that largely disapproved of activities such as falconry and republican England saw it decline markedly. Grassby (1997) records that ‘propertied society’ maintained an interest in the sport until the closing years of the seventeenth century, which accords with some of the above.

Whilst there is some equivocation in the literature as to quite when falconry fell from grace; the middle of the seventeenth century or the early seventeenth century, one of the culprits leading to the decline is certainly considered to be shooting. However, closer inspection of the quoted sections above shows that other factors were at work as well; Lascelles talks of the enclosure of the land, whilst Blaine considers falconry’s prestige already reduced.

During the mid to late 1600s new literature on falconry written in English ceased but there was considerable re-printing of older texts that continued into the next century. Authors long dead, such as Turberville, Blome and Cox, were treated to this process. Thus the literature became static, stale and archaic, written in the style of the early years of the previous century. However, with the sport on the wane this is probably nothing more than a sign of a diminishing demand for writing on the subject. In English, new writing on falconry was absent until the Campbell text in 1773. It is tempting to consider this as an indication of a revival in interest however this can only be judged in the context and evidence of the practise itself.

Prior to the decline, falconry was recorded so frequently in literature and in such terms that it has lead many to suggest that it was both widely practice and commonplace. This is an assumption made by writers on falconry (Belany 1841, Freeman 1903) and historians

alike (Foreman 1975, Malcolmson 1973). The sport, and the term is used here in a traditional sense that encompasses without difficulty or contention the hunting activities, was undeniably one that had social currency. It was well and widely understood; had a language that was both recognised and indeed used in common speech and a utility that went unchallenged. However it is far from certain that this necessarily translated into wide practise. This earlier manifestation of falconry, and one that occupies a period before that being investigated herein, was strictly tied to a demonstrable display of rank and privilege. It was one of the sports of Kings, an amusement of the socially advanced, and a metaphor; with resonances in warfare, romance, and status. There is little evidence to suggest that it was ever the province of the common man even in its more modest guises, and this despite understandable efforts to democratise the history of our sports and pastimes. It is the high status expression of the sport that was the one that both informed and to an extent defined how falconry developed.

Falconry ultimately lost its popularity amongst the elite, and with that its public profile, this was evident to all those who wrote on the sport after 1800. Sir John Sebright writing the first significant falconry text of the 19<sup>th</sup> century states “Hawking, the favourite diversion of our ancestors, is now so fallen into disuse that the Art of Falconry is in danger of being entirely lost” (1826 pp B – the first page of the text). Whilst somewhat later Salvin and Brodrick (1855) were to assert “So little at the present day is practically known on the subject of Falconry, ...” (pp 1). Freeman in a text co-authored with Salvin was to claim that “Towards the middle of the seventeenth century the sport seems to have languished, probably abroad, but certainly in England.” (Freeman & Salvin 1859 pp30). With regards to the Scots, H. Grey Graham records in the context of the mid 1700s, that “Country sports and occupations had somewhat changed. Hawking had grown out of fashion; and gentlemen prided themselves less on the merits of their falcons.” (1937 pp59). Clearly

those who had practised the sport were either experiencing considerably altered circumstances or they were abandoning the activity completely.

It is recorded that the Dukes of Gordon sustained Scottish falconry and retained professional falconers throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and further south the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Orford was an active falconer from the 1740s. However Grassby's assertion that "... the sport had to be virtually re-created in England when Orford and Colonel Thornton founded the Falconers Club in 1771. Falconry stagnated and then faded away slowly, largely without notice or comment." (1997 pp52), is open to question. What Grassby calls '*the Falconers Club*', and was actually the name used for the club after Thornton ceased to be involved with it, more accurately titled *the Confederate Hawks of Great Britain* was in reality an expression of the resilience and the adaptive qualities of those who would fly hawks and falcons. Far from stagnating, the sport was experiencing an organisational shift that would help to ensure its survival. If taken together with Campbell's 1773 publication and the knowledge that a small club had been in operation in Renfrewshire for a number of years, Grassby's sentiments can be refuted.

Where Grassby can be supported however, is in his assessment of the philosophical environment that faced the falconers of the period. The link with nature had indeed been ruptured by the development of a scientific rationality, capitalism and the associated demands of property. The seat of power had shifted irrevocably away from the land to the city and the burgeoning urban dynamic was becoming more influential with demands of utility and productivity. Whilst Britain was still predominantly a rural society: its heart, its driving force and defining culture was becoming that of the industrial city. The section of society that had traditionally accompanied the falcons and supported the sport, the elite, spent more time in the towns and cities. The countryside and all that it contained became



unfashionable and falconry lost the cachet that had hitherto been gained through the participation of those of the highest status.

The question stemming from this is; how did falconry survive these changed circumstances?

### The period under investigation

This research focuses upon the period from 1750 to 1927. The starting date is a few years before the *Renfrewshire Subscription Hawks* was set up, twenty one years before the *Confederate Hawks of Great Britain* began and twenty three years before Campbell's text was published. There is no significant collection of records that would support a detailed study of the sport in the hundred years prior to 1750. Extensive searches of likely sources both in public and private hands provided little of substance. This confirmed the assertions of leading falconry historians such as Kent Carnie, from the Archive of Falconry in Boise, that in the British context falconry was so fragmented and reduced in popularity that little evidence remains<sup>i</sup>. The failure to discover any substantive material to support research in the period up to 1750 determined the starting point of the research. What is known of the one hundred year period prior to 1750 is provided as context in Chapter 2.

The finishing date for the research is the year after the *Old Hawking Club* ceased operation and the year that the *British Falconers' Club* took up the mantle of the sport's organisation. With the closure of the O.H.C. the tradition of a British club that employed professional falconers to procure, train and manage club hawks in the manner of the subscription organisations of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was ended. The adaptation of an earlier tradition through the vehicle of the clubs had run its course and the sport moved into the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in a new guise. An Epilogue provides an overview of developments from 1927 to the present.

The research stems from the realisation that falconry, so nearly a sport consigned to history, at least in its British context, continued into the modern age. Furthermore the sport was adapted considerably in the manner in which it was organised in order so to do.

The early part of the period under investigation was one of great change in British society. Whilst definitive claims with regards to population shifts from country to town and city, or the process of industrialisation are beyond the scope of this work, it is clear that the rate of change had accelerated beyond that experienced hitherto. It is in this context that the continuation or perhaps revival of falconry is seen. An activity that had seemed to be unsustainable at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century had experienced within one hundred years, a re-structuring that both enabled it to proceed, and indeed promoted a limited yet sustained growth in popularity. This is evidenced by the publication of the very texts cited herein, such as Sebright, Salvin & Brodrick, Freeman & Salvin, Lascelles and Michell, those that attribute causes to the decline and articulate concern for the future of the sport.

As stated previously, by the mid-1700's there was a small club operating in Renfrewshire in Scotland, and a little later a rather more ambitious one, *The Confederate Hawks of Great Britain* that was based for hawking at Barton Mills in the eastern counties. Both of these clubs were run on a subscription basis. Beyond these, and with the exception of a very few individuals who ran their own hawking establishments in Scotland, falconry was not practised in the British Isles.

### Falconry

The form that the sport took was significant: It was a mounted

activity that entailed riding after a high flying falcon in pursuit of a fleeing quarry across open country, as such it was an expensive enterprise. There were other branches of the sport but these were also predominantly carried out from horseback, which of course itself was a signifier of status, and made distinct demands on the practice.

The social structure in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was reflected in a traditional hierarchy that demanded a demarcation between the menial and more refined tasks appropriate for those of status. Those who followed the flight on horseback were little more than spectators, in much the same manner of the mounted field that rode to hounds after the fox. The actual business of falconry was undertaken by retained expertise. Thus falconry establishments needed to employ professional falconers and in addition, under-falconers, grooms, dog handlers if seeking game or duck, and cadge men to carry the falcons to and from the hunting field.

Falcons were frequently lost through disease, poor husbandry or when being flown at quarry. This fact of life for the falconers of the day demanded the regular procurement of replacement hawks or falcons suitable for the chosen flight. The favourite quarry of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the kite and if this was not available, the heron. Both demanded powerful falcons to pursue and capture them. Whilst the peregrine bred around the coasts of the British Isles, and was readily available from the Low Countries and Ireland, the gyrfalcon and saker were considered by aficionados of the period, more suitable for the 'great flight' at this quarry. Both of these exotic falcon species were difficult to obtain and demanded a high price; Colonel Thornton paid £22.00 for a gyrfalcon at the port of Kings Lynn in 1786 (Pichot letters). Given that gyrs were particularly difficult to keep alive, never mind in good health, this was a considerable sum. That these falcons, and particularly the gyrfalcon, became fashionable and were believed to be necessary

for the sport was a twist that rendered English falconry far more expensive than it otherwise would have been.

The days of Royal patronage and exchequer funding were long past, save a brief revival between the 1839 and 1855 at Het Loo in the Low Countries, and the financial commitment to the upkeep of a falconry establishment was considerable. Clubs were the answer to this problem; they enabled the cost to be spread amongst the members and freed all but the proprietor from the need to house and maintain the hawking stud throughout the part of the year when the hawks were idle.

Clubs served a particular purpose and continued to provide an important focus for those interested in falconry throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were indeed a change in the way the activity was both organised and funded. This enabled the sport to continue, to adapt from Royal or high aristocratic patronage to a collective, yet select and still largely privileged, practice. The clubs were to mirror the earlier tradition of falconry on a grand scale and copied but to a more modest extent, the royal establishments of an earlier period. The adaptive utility that the clubs brought to the sport provided a consolidation of the activity into the modern period and established a model for its continuation, albeit one that was temporally bound. The future of the sport was ultimately to lie in privately owned and organised falconry and more limited scale operation rather than the grand endeavours that effectively characterise an earlier manifestation.

### The sources

Those practitioner- writers who published texts on falconry or memoirs that described their hawking in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were in little doubt that they were perpetuating a sport that was close to extinction in the United Kingdom. Whilst they articulate a belief in

something of a revival of the sport during the century, brought about in no little measure by their own writing, they shared a pessimism about the future for falconry as a viable form of hunting. Those authors, such as Sir John Sebright, Captain Salvin and William Brodrick, the Reverend Earl Gage Freeman, Major Fisher and the Hon. Gerald Lascelles, amongst others, provide an insight into the falconer's world and his, (for they were exclusively male) belief in his place in the tradition of the sport. It is their legacy; the literature, diaries, notes, and letters that they wrote, that provides the centre piece of this research. It is their history that is contained herein.

*What really matters in the long run is not so much what we write about history now, or what others have written, as the original sources themselves ... The power of unlimited inspiration to successive generations lies in the original sources.* (V.H.Galbraith, cited in Tosh 1999 pp92)

In the context of this work it is the words both published and private, written by the falconers of the period under review, that have been considered the 'original sources'. It is acknowledged that some of these may not strictly fulfil the specific criteria identified by Galbraith, being themselves published and thus essentially secondary sources. Nonetheless, this author would claim the latitude of pragmatism for there is no other resource that would enable research into this neglected period in the history of the sport.

The falconer-authors whose work is considered in this research, wrote of their sport, the abiding passion that they shared. They wrote for those who might aspire to join the company of falconers; they wrote for fellow field sportsmen who also hunted quarry albeit with gun, dog, rod, or from horseback after hounds; they also wrote to place their sport in the historical record. They were pessimistic about the likelihood of falconry continuing in modern Britain, and being the custodians of what they considered an ancient and time-

honoured activity, this weighed heavily on them. Their narratives; their practical texts; their letters arguing about their sport; their diaries; are all ripe with pathos, whilst their actions of maintaining and practicing falconry are curiously optimistic. This literature is a rich resource and an invaluable social record of the times.

That falconry has received so little academic attention despite the popular romance and attraction that it so evidently exhibits is remarkable in itself.

Grassby in discussing the falconry of the early modern period, observes;

*Falconry generated from an early period a substantial literature which recorded both the mechanics and the symbolism of the sport. The numerous manuals have usually served as the principal source for general descriptions of how hawks were trained and flown, and as dictionaries of terms interpreting literary references. But they have rarely been tested for factual accuracy or subjected to social analysis. (1977 pp 38)*

It is the contention herein that this assertion can be applied equally well to the literature produced between 1750 and 1927. As a proportion of the sporting literature produced it is doubtless more limited in scale, but for what was by then a minority hunting sport, falconry maintained a comparatively buoyant publication, especially in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The sport has left little in the way of artefact or archaeology. The hardware of falconry; hoods, leashes, and gloves were leather and only rarely preserved. Bells, varvels and later, swivels, were metal but functional and lightweight and again little remains that is of use or is very informative. Buildings with a specific falconry purpose

such as mews for the housing of hawks and falcons have either been demolished or so much changed that they reveal little of their original purpose. Hunting towers from which the privileged were able to watch the flights from positions of elevation, were really an aspect of the European sport and were rare in the British context. Furthermore they were also characteristic of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Of the hawks or falcons themselves there is little physical evidence save the occasional specimen that received the attentions of a taxidermist. The sport is evidenced through painting, engraving and literature of various types.

### The process

A lengthy examination of the *Caledonian Mercury* between 1725 and 1815 was undertaken to assess the veracity of the footnote in H. Grey Graham's 1937 text, that "About 1750 in the *Caledonian Mercury* advertisements are still frequent of the finding or the loss of hawks 'with bells and silver varvels'" (pp59). It was unfortunately largely fruitless, with very few mentions of falcons or falconry at all. It did however through that very omission, confirm that the sport was very rarely practised during this period.

This research endeavours to provide both a sporting and social context for the published and indeed privately written word, and to question some of the assumptions articulated by those who wrote on or about falconry. It attempts to draw links with other areas that might be considered within the realm of man's engagement with nature or within a broad church of natural history. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the hunting sports were not removed from this realm by contests over legitimacy as they were in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This is a work based primarily upon literature. The public and in some cases private, written recollections, instructions, histories and aspirations of those who were either captivated or in some way

touched by the sport.

### The study

Initially proceeding from a consideration of the peregrine, and what constitutes the activity of falconry and providing some insight into the technical language of the sport. The limited availability or difficulty in obtaining required hawks or falcons is discussed together with options of procurement. The Scottish and Dutch traditions and their specific requirements together with their strengths and weaknesses culminates with an assessment of the differing temperament seen in birds of prey when taken into captivity at varying points in their lives.

It continues with a wide ranging contextual consideration of the genesis of the activity as a hunting form; the spread of the practise from Europe and into the British Isles is described as is how British falconry came to be expressed; and its association with social status in the medieval period. Particular attention is paid to the one hundred years prior to the central focus of the research: 1750 – 1927.

The relationship between falconry as a mounted sport and the landscape is investigated and comparisons with hunting to hounds are made. The falconry clubs are further considered as are the effects that the enclosure of the countryside had on the sport. The altering status of raptors is outlined. That fox hunting flourished during the period whilst what is superficially a close ally, mounted falconry, struggled to maintain itself is both demonstrated and considered. An assessment of falconry from the perspective of a hunting man is provided.

As the aforementioned traditional mounted manifestation of the sport became more difficult to sustain so falconers became



increasingly linked to their shooting colleagues. Hawking for game, whilst in no way a new branch of the sport, became an increasingly popular diversion for those who would fly falcons. Thus shooters and falconers shared the same quarry. Whilst both field sports that appeared to have some commonalities, the activities were poles apart in many respects, none less than their respective popularity. Shooting was to put it crassly, a big business, whilst falconry remained peripheral; shooting could be undertaken and assessed quantitatively whilst falconry was essentially aesthetic. The Game Acts are discussed as is the development of shooting technology, together with the *Battue* and the protection and production of game. The relationship and interaction between the sports is investigated and the manner in which shooting configured the context in which falconry was practised is discussed. A view of falconry from a shooters point of view gives a perspective from outside the sport.

Returning to the clubs as the mechanism for the continuation of the sport; their operation is examined together with what is known of their ambitions and aspirations. The most significant, or at least the best recorded, of these organisations is the Old Hawking Club. Largely through the letters and writings of Lascelles the Club's manager, falconry in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is assessed. Struggles for control are described and the dynamic of managing such an organisation is outlined.

A wealthy patron of the Old Hawking Club, Lord Lilford is considered at length. As an ornithologist and naturalist he brought a cultured scientific approach to all of his interests. How the period was developing is assessed in relation to his work. He commissioned many works of art from significant and highly thought of artists such as Wolf, Thorburn and Lodge. Many of these works were to be used in ornithological texts of the day. His attitude to shooting, whilst being an avid sportsman in his younger years, changed and his attempts to define 'sport' are discussed. His live

aviary and specimen collections are considered as illustrative. The correspondence with Lascelles defines the relationship that this man who was essentially a non-practitioner, had with falconry. He is thought a significant figure for the ornithological and scientific links he brought to falconry and the legitimacy that the sport gained as a result.

In considering the literature of the period, not only were there designated books orientated towards the practitioner and manuals for the tyro, but falconry as a topic was deemed worthy of space in many of the ornithological texts of the period; something inconceivable a century later. The sporting encyclopaedia that were published in legion, also described the activity. However many of this type of publication did little more than plagiarise previously produced writing, or rewrite extracts from the classic falconry texts. It is evident from the later falconry literature published in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and indeed sections of the 19<sup>th</sup> century literature that addressed the contemporary situation and (then) recent history of falconry in Britain, that the sport had been given a narrative and simple description. Whilst this is both wholly understandable and it might be claimed, important from the standpoint of the survival of the activity, this treatment has left the occurrence, maintenance, and indeed development of falconry throughout this period as somewhat unproblematic. In academic terms there are questions that still wait to be asked, never mind answered.

In addition to established or formal published literature, popular magazines and the sporting press also regularly provided falconry content; *The Field* for example, had an occasional falconry correspondent, provided information through a letters section, and reported occasionally on the Old Hawking Club in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *The London Times* also featured falconry related material sporadically but not unusually.

The mode of representation beyond literature is also considered. The artwork that graced the pages of the popular media often displayed: falconry as a sport, the hawks and falcons themselves, and the context in which the activity took place, in a fanciful manner. Like some of the non-specialist literature of the day, the pictorial representation was often informed by notions of a medieval and romantic pastime long dead, rather than any reference to the sport as it was actually practised during the period. Often imbued with the exotic connotations that frequently accompanied falconry in the popular perception, they were permeated with the Imperialism and ethnocentrism of the time.

The influence of the exotic upon the falconry of the period is assessed. The importation of hoods and other equipment provides evidence of important international links. The imagery and literature of hawking in distant lands in far flung parts of the Empire is described. Out of this writing comes evidence of convergent practice that bound falconers from both the east and west in a shared endeavour. The Maharaja of Lahore is discussed as a very particular type of exotic influence.

It is widely reported in the falconry literature considered in this research that the enclosures that divided up and brought under cultivation a greater proportion of the British countryside, the development of the shotgun that enabled the shooting of flying gamebirds, the loss of royal patronage, and the continued urbanisation of Britain both in terms of physical location and orientation, all contributed to the decline in the practice of falconry from what had been considered its 'golden age' in the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Whilst these are undoubtedly significant occurrences in the context of the activity, they are far from a sufficient explanation to satisfy what some contemporaries (Howitt 1732) and indeed many of those who have written about it since (Belamy 1841, Delme Radcliffe 1879) saw as a dramatic fall from favour. A sport that had

metaphorical resonance in British societal hierarchy; that had contributed much in terms of descriptive language; possessed a perceived tradition that stretched unbroken from the 8<sup>th</sup> Century and provided clear form in the development of sporting ethos that would ultimately be taken on by non-hunting activities, ceased to have a social significance in something under the span of a lifetime.

Tranter (1998) pointedly and perhaps somewhat partially uses an assertion by Perkin (*ibid* pp145); “the history of societies is more widely reflected in the way they spend their leisure time than in their work or politics”. Whilst contextualised in an appeal to more established historical consideration, Tranter does give this statement some weight in terms of the comparatively recent concern or interest given to leisure activities. However Perkin can be read as implying leisure time and how it is spent, reflects a particular philosophy or philosophies often bound temporally, that can in a very tangible sense be seen as history. This in no way detracts from the importance of work or politics, or indeed other dimensions of human lives. In the context of this work, falconry is understood as providing a specific philosophy of nature and an example of a philosophy of sport.

The treatment of falconry as an adjunct to or a footnote in more general histories of sport (Birley 1993), and the populist rendering in falconry literature (ap Evans 1960, Upton 1980), falls short of explaining in an adequate manner how, and why, a limited number of individuals across Britain continued to practice the sport in circumstances that were evidently far from ideal. Most of those who would have been practitioners had they lived one hundred years previously, had little awareness about, or need for, this form of sporting husbandry by the 1750s, yet some - very few - persisted in the practice.

This research is an attempt to provide some context to that that was

written by those falconers, about themselves, their colleagues and their sport. To make overt some of the links and interests that falconers shared with other sportsmen, ornithologists and natural historians during the period. Finally, to illustrate how the practice of falconry both informed and indeed reflected the changing philosophies of the time both in sport and a wider framework.

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<sup>1</sup> This author has in his possession a communication from Kent Carnie, the archivist at the Archives of Falconry, confirming this contention.

## Chapter 1

This chapter provides an introduction to the sport of falconry that will underpin the following research. It is intended to provide the reader with enough information on the nature of the activity to enable an appreciation of the historical assessment that comes later. It is hoped that when used in conjunction with the glossary of falconry terms (appendix II) an insight into the esoteric sport of falconry will be possible.

### The peregrine

Throughout this consideration of falconry as a social manifestation in Britain, it is evident that the peregrine, derived from 'peregrinus' Latin for 'the wanderer', was the falcon against which all other species were measured. Widely distributed throughout the British Isles and mainland Europe, and therefore available to British falconers as no other large falcon, the peregrine was the essential natural tool that facilitated the sport. Furthermore and self evidently, the peregrine was fundamentally well suited to the available quarry, to the weather conditions and much of the habitat found in the United Kingdom.

Macdonald (2006) describes the species thus:

*Except for Antarctica and (puzzlingly) Iceland, the species is found on every continent and in a huge variety of forms. These range in size and colour from the pallid grey Chilean 'Kleinschmidts falcon' F.p. kreyenborgii to the tiny Madagascar peregrine F.p. radama and the black-hooded and orange-breasted Black Shaheen F.p. peregrinator from India and Sri Lanka. Peregrines from humid, tropical latitudes are darker and more richly coloured than those from arid or northerly regions. Desert peregrine species include the*

*tiny blue and orange broad-shouldered Barbary Falcon from North Africa, and in the mountains of Iran and Afghanistan, the Red-naped Shaheen F.p. babylonicus.*

Unsurprisingly the nominate species, that to which all of the other 22 (Dementiev 1951), 20 (Brown & Amadon 1968) or, 19 (Weick & Brown 1980, Cade, Enderson, Thelander, & White 1988) sub-species of peregrine are compared, is the western European *Falco peregrinus peregrinus*. Recorded thus due to an encompassing Euro-centrism in the construction of scientific natural history of the period.

The idea of 'race' and indeed 'species' with regards to birds has changed a great deal since middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Raptor ornithologists considered *Falco communis*, now known as *F.p. peregrinus*, a distinct species to the northern Indian *F. atriceps* and the Australian *F. macropus*. At the height of the amassing of scientific collections in the latter years of the century and the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup>, some similar or 'look alike' races or sub-species were considered conspecific, whilst 'local variations' were separated and designated distinct races. By 1910 there were 4 or 5 races of peregrine recorded in northern Europe alone, often split along regional or national boundaries: *F.p. germanicus*; *F.p. scandinavica*; *F.p. britannicus*. These were less astute scientific distinctions than rather predictable nationalistic claims on 'ownership' of a regional type or tendency, perhaps by colouration or size. This assessment by description of racial type was highly problematic. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the fashion to label sub-species was declining and ornithological science had well established protocols through which to assess distinction between and within species. Analysis proceeds through a series of multivariate clines or trends in characteristics.

To return to falconers, despite the draw of exotics and the



impressive status ridden connotations of the gyr falcon, the 'Falcon gentle' or 'Slight falcon' as the peregrine was known by medieval falconers, was the traditional mainstay of the sport. Audubon's 'Great-footed hawk' and the more widely recognised 'Duck hawk' were the names predominant in North America but Ratcliffe (1980), believes these were both used in northern England; in England 'Hunting hawk', 'Game hawk' & 'Blue-backed hawk' were common descriptors; whilst more specifically in Yorkshire 'Grey falcon' & 'Perry hawk' were the common names; in Scotland 'Blue hawk', 'Blue sleeves' and 'Stone falcon' were used; and seemingly in general use 'Pigeon hawk'. Whatever the epithet, the importance of the peregrine to the British falconer cannot be overestimated.

#### The constituents of falconry

The basic constituents of falconry have remained the same no matter where or indeed when this form of hunting has been undertaken. Leaving aside the falconer, these are made up of the trained raptor, the quarry or quarries to be hunted, and the landscape in which the quarry is to be found. In addition to these can be added: the prevailing weather conditions, time of year, overt purpose of the hunting, and local social significance.

The nature of the raptor can be considered to be invariant. By this it is meant that the biological or genetic capacity to function is fixed; mankind has not been involved in this form of interaction for long enough to have witnessed any adaptation through the mechanisms of evolution in the birds of prey utilised. Even given the revisions to the Darwinian cannon for adaptation through natural selection (Keynes 2003) and the more recent acceptance of the possibility of accelerated changes in species as proposed by theorists advocating punctuated equilibrium (Jones 1999), it is unlikely that falconers have witnessed any changes in the nature or indeed form of their hawks or falcons. This is articulated in relation to the time-

scale of this research. Developments in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as selective captive breeding and hybridisation through artificial insemination techniques enabled the 'alteration' of species for falconry and indeed, as some have argued (Fox 1995) the creation of what are effectively 'new species' through the combination of specifically selected raptor species for hybridisation. The concern for the maintenance of the natural fundamentals of falconry as a hunting activity as expressed by falconers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is returned to elsewhere in this research.

Given the suggested invariance in nature of the subjects of falconry training, it is however the case that within the limited capacity to function, the behaviour of any given bird of prey, is affected by the manner of its training, the age at which it was taken into captivity and the type of hunting that the hawk or falcon undertakes (in its trained state). Raptors become imprinted upon their surroundings, siblings and parents in the early days and weeks after hatching. Thus those removed from the natural environment at an early stage will imprint on the person who feeds them. In such cases this manifests itself in involuntary and compulsive behaviours on the part of the bird similar to those that it would exhibit towards its own parent. In falconry terms this fundamentally changes the methods of husbandry, training and in some respects the manner in which the raptor hunts. This deviation from the norm of a wild taken fully fledged and parent reared bird of prey has long been recognised (Sebright 1826), although in the British manifestation of the sport there has been a conservatism that articulated reservation about the benefits of such (Lascelles 1892).

The captive breeding of raptors for falconry was not widely available until the late 1970s. There are reports of some successes with Goshawks in Germany prior to the 1939-45 War and documented production in 1942-3 of young peregrines by Renz Waller. There is no support for claims of earlier successes even dating back to

Fredrick II in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. In a letter to Lord Lilford, Salvin reports a goshawk that laid eggs each year although he does not suggest any attempt to provide her with a mate (Salvin letters). Most of those efforts to captive breed birds of prey prior to the work of the likes of The Peregrine Fund at Cornell University in the 1970s (Cade, Enderson, Thelander & White 1988) resulted in failure and where successes were claimed these have been disputed. An early 16<sup>th</sup> century falconry manuscript details a method and enclosure in which to breed falcons and the author unfortunately unknown, claimed to breed lanner falcons (Anonymous: *The Skoole for a Young Ostringer or Faulkener*). There is no corroboration of this claim in other literature of the time and during the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries all efforts were directed towards procuring rather than producing birds of prey for falconry.

To further complicate consideration, there is marked variation even between birds of prey that have been taken into captivity after the imprinting process is complete, that is, taken after they have grown their flight feathers. In the larger species that are generally more slow growing and the process of imprinting is somewhat prolonged, thus later 'taking' was vital if this process of imprinting upon the falconer was to be avoided. However in the raptor species utilised in British falconry the imprinting process is completed by the time the birds are past the 'downy' stage and flight feathers are well grown. There is some evidence that the method of management and training might also have some impact upon the likelihood of later imprinting (Fox 1995).

Perhaps unsurprisingly raptors exhibit what appears to be an age related receptivity to training. The younger subjects appear to be more readily conditioned for falconry. This is not to assert that a mature bird of prey cannot be trained, indeed many were. There is little to distinguish a hawk or falcon in mature plumage at two or three years of age from one twice that or more, therefore falconers

would not know the actual age of their haggards. Eye colour has been considered an indicator of age in the short winged hawks (Accipiters), in that young hawks have pale yellow eyes that deepen through to an orange-red colour with age. It is clear however that there is considerable individual variation. It has also been claimed (Mitchell 1900) that in long-wings (falcons) the yellow colour of the cere, legs and feet deepens with age whilst generally the case, this has been shown to be diet dependent.

Much of the training a hawk or falcon receives in its preparation for use in falconry is what a falconer would call 'manning'. This is conditioning the raptor to accept the presence of humans and to tolerate a certain amount of handling. This is the most difficult phase given that the species of raptor being considered here are largely solitary. They are not social and have little instinct for any interaction save during breeding with their own species, and in pursuing and capturing prey for food. The establishing of a relationship with a creature such as man constitutes the most demanding aspect of the activity. Once manning is achieved the next step is to have the raptor return to the falconer after an unsuccessful flight or hunt. Trained falconry birds do not 'retrieve' the quarry that they take, they catch and kill it leaving the falconer to approach the raptor and take it off its catch. Occasionally the falconer had to dispatch the quarry if the bird of prey has been unable so to do.

Hand reared hawks or falcons have little or no fear of humans and thus the training phase of manning is much shorter than for older or parent reared hawks, indeed in many cases it is unnecessary. Parent reared raptors taken at the fledging stage or beyond do require manning, although this in turn is rather less arduous than is needed for passage hawks, which as might be expected is less than that required for haggards (Blaine 1936). Falconers have long been aware of these differing demands and it is clear that many

notable individuals expressed clear preferences not merely in species of raptor and type of flight, but also in disposition of hawk or falcon. This disposition or temperament is determined by the age that the subject was taken into captivity (Pichot letters, Frederick II 1943).

### The language of falconry

Known by different names in the language of traditional falconry, the distinctions are well drawn; eyasses - youngsters taken from the nest or eyrie prior to or at the point of fledging; branchers - applied to the true hawks or Accipiters, that are taken after they have moved from the confines of the nest yet are still not competent in flight; red hawks - a term given to both falcons and hawks in the British tradition for young but fully fledged and free flying birds trapped in the period following fledging. The term is derived from the russet colouration seen in the young of many species; passage hawks or passagers - hawks and falcons trapped whilst on passage in their first year. After becoming independent from their parents first year birds of prey either wander or are driven out of the breeding territories occupied by their parents. Some species undertake migrations others move in search of un-occupied areas where they are free from the attentions of territorial breeding or adult raptors of their own species; haggard - refers to a hawk or falcon that is trapped in its adult plumage. In the smaller species this can be after the first moult in the summer of the year following hatching, whereas in the medium and larger species mature or adult plumage is not gained for two or three years. To the falconer these labels signify distinct behavioural characteristics and once applied these names accompany that individual hawk or falcon throughout its life as a trained bird. Even if the raptor is kept for many years and moulted into adult plumage, it is always known as 'an eyass', 'a red hawk', or 'a passager', the category that described it at the point of its capture.

### Availability & procurement

The limited availability of the larger and often more desirable birds of prey such as goshawks and peregrines was an issue for British falconers for many years (Michell 1900). Once the sport of falconry fell from popularity the statutes that protected raptors ceased to be effective. Indeed the likes of Grassby (1997) maintains that the sheer popularity of falconry contributed to the scarcity of suitable hawks and falcons and ultimately to the sports decline. Whilst it is perhaps tempting to undertake some crude statistical estimation of the demands on wild populations as Grassby does, there is no other corroboration for this notion. It is contended herein that falconry was never so common as to endanger wild raptor populations. Whilst local population declines may have been experienced due to young birds being taken for falconry (Cummings in Blome 1929), there is no evidence to suggest that the scale of the harvest was ever such that might have had such long term and definitive consequences. Such a situation would have been reflected in the statutes of the day that would doubtless have protected raptors for the nobility. It is far more plausible that the extent of falconry has been repeatedly overestimated due to the implications of status and privilege, this is discussed elsewhere. Raptor populations are sensitive to environmental change; human disturbance due to the growing population and increasing levels of, and changes in, cultivation effecting prey species, being rather more likely to have been responsible for any decline.

Whatever the cause, the larger hawks and falcons native to Britain had for many years been scarce and falconers found them in short supply. The Scots had into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a supply both of goshawks and peregrines, the former found in the northern forests and the latter around the coast and in the highlands. Thornton (1804) reports that the Duke of Gordon sent him a young goshawk

that was procured on the Dukes' estate, whilst ap Evans (1960) published a photograph of a taxidermy specimen reputed to be one of the last wild living goshawks to dwell in Scotland. It was apparently shot in 1830. Unfortunately he provides no further details through which to authenticate such a claim. The Welsh coast and the cliffs of South West England also held numbers of peregrines. With the advent of the shooting of game birds in flight; 'shooting-flying', and the preservation of game, came the persecution of all birds of prey from the beetle and mouse eating kestrel, too small to do any real damage to either a pheasant, grouse or partridge, to the eagles both white-tailed and golden, and including those species of hawks and falcons hitherto utilised in the sport of falconry.

Formerly much prized allies in the hunting field became vermin which only had value as a carcass on a gamekeepers' gibbet, evidence that he was undertaking his duty to destroy all of the enemies of 'game' (Streatfield 1911). In such a climate British falconers found procuring at home suitable birds of prey, was increasingly difficult (Salvin & Brodrick 1855). In this context the development of two quite distinct traditions of obtaining, training and flying falcons (the longwings) became evident; the Scottish tradition that made use of eyass peregrine taken from the eyrie predominantly in the western highlands and coast prior to flight in mid-summer and; in a continuation of an established tradition of importation of passage peregrines that were captured on migration through the Low Countries in the autumn (Sebright 1826). These were sold to British falconers often to order and part trained (Lascelles 1892). As has been articulated previously these traditions made use of the same species i.e. the peregrine, but with distinct demands; the Scottish used parent reared eyasses whilst the importing or English tradition used passage falcons.

#### Scottish & Dutch traditions

If one makes use of Hobsbawm's understanding of the term 'tradition', what is being proposed herein is in fact a convention or routine that illustrates the distinction between the use of eyass and passage falcons. Obtaining and training falcons is a functional necessity of falconry and Hobsbawm (1983) would understand the differences in approach as technical rather than ideological. Those who made use of eyass falcons that were taken from eyries prior to being able to fly had to prepare these youngsters in ways that were quite different to those falconers who made use of passage hawks that were already competent fliers and hunters.

Sebright (1826) said that those professional falconers who originated in the Low Countries from the heaths around Valkenswaard and whose practice was to use trapped passage falcons, had no experience of using eyasses. Sebright who speaks highly of those Dutch professionals although he was obviously conversant with both the use of eyass and passage falcons, was the first to lay claim to using eyasses for flights at rook, a difficult and demanding quarry conventionally thought to be beyond the capabilities of the less experienced eyass. Fisher (1901) reports that it was Lord Orford and Colonel Thornton who introduced the 'Dutch School' into England and goes on to say that the Dutch system of hawking had extended into Scotland, which has always had its own native falconers, the Scotch using eyasses, or nestling falcons, and the Dutch necessarily using passage hawks or wild caught birds, since no falcon breeds in the lowlands of Holland, though nearly all varieties pass over it yearly when migrating (ibid).

The technical differences that faced falconers in the preparation of eyasses when compared to that of passage falcons taken on migration were distinct. Firstly the time of year<sup>1</sup>; young peregrines fledge around June 20<sup>th</sup> in the south of England whilst further north some young are still in the eyrie in early July. Salvin and Brodrick



(1855) claim knowledge of an eyrie from which the young falcons flew on the 26<sup>th</sup> May but report that they are most usually ready for taking between 10<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> June. The falconer was faced with an interesting tension, that of having to judge the latest possible date to remove the young. If taken too early the young falcons would be likely to fall victims to the “cramp,” either within a day or two after leaving the nest, or at some period before they were fully fledged<sup>ii</sup> (ibid). There was also the danger of imprinting the young falcons resulting in them screaming at the falconer in the manner that young hawks do when their parents are in the vicinity. Lascelles (1892 pp237) refers to this as “... the vile habit of incessant screaming, and to be hot, bad tempered birds.”

### Eyasses

If left too long at the eyrie, the young falcons would be inclined to attempt to fly at the approach of he who would capture them. Salvin & Brodrick (1855 pp20) maintain that the eyasses are ready for taking when “...the white down with which they are at first covered has in a great measure been replaced by feathers, those of the tail being no less than 3 inches in length”. Given the inaccessibility of many peregrine eyries, there was little opportunity to recover young falcons that left the nest ledge prior to or during capture. Therefore there was a tendency especially when the individual undertaking the capturing was acting on commission, to take the young too early in order to be assured of obtaining them and ensure payment (ibid).

Thus in the British context the young peregrine was usually taken into captivity in mid-June. Providing two or more youngsters were obtained they were then prepared for ‘hack’<sup>iii</sup>. Whilst there were several methods to achieve the desired outcome of strong, independent young falcons as described by Freeman & Salvin (1859), they are variations on a theme, the following is typical: Turned loose into a shed or outhouse that was suitably out of the

way of disturbance and in a district that was predominantly open; free from large wooded areas, open expanses of water, or buildings. The eyasses were fed sometimes by hand but more often with the food placed upon a shelf by a barred window until such time as the young falcons were ready to fly<sup>iv</sup>. Prior to this point the bars would be removed from a large window with a suitable perch where the youngsters could sit and survey the landscape. The eyasses fledged from here and whilst they rarely used the hack-house to roost in once they could fly with any proficiency, preferring nearby crags or tall trees, they returned in order to feed. The food was tied securely to a feeding board at six in the morning and again at six o'clock in the evening. The amount of human disturbance at the hack house was kept to an absolute minimum.

This period of hack mirrored the development through which the eyasses would pass if they had remained in their wild state; flying at will, chasing passing birds, yet still reliant upon their parents for food. Hack was important and some falconers such as Lascelles (1892) maintained it indispensable, despite the dangers of destruction or interference either wilful or through ignorance. Salvin & Brodrick (1855) recommend public notices<sup>v</sup>, large size hawk bells and vigilance<sup>vi</sup>, but it was a hazardous process in the days of game preservation. The period at liberty was as extended as was commensurate with the safe re-capture of the eyasses. As soon as a meal or two was missed it was likely that the young falcons had started to kill for themselves, thus their dependency upon the provision of food was much reduced. Once this point was arrived at the youngsters were caught up either by use of a bow net or by nooses placed over the food on the feeding board. This was a critical process in that catching up had to be achieved without scaring the other youngsters away as would surely happen were they to witness one of their siblings being trapped. Indeed many a promising eyass was lost whilst out at hack<sup>vii</sup>. Lascelles recounts in a footnote, illustrating that not all calamities were due to the hand of

man:

*In the summer of 1881, an old wild tiercel came daily to play with the young hawks which we were flying at hack, and so lost his natural fear of mankind, through associating with them, that he would at times stoop within a few yards of the windows of the house, and even took to roosting on the ad-joining church-steeple with the young hawks. When some of the nestlings were caught up, he disappeared, but, unhappily, carried off with him his favourite playmate, an exceedingly promising young falcon, which he kept so well provided with food that she ceased to feed at the hack-board and so never could be taken up. (1892 pp240)*

Once taken up from hack, the training commenced. The young hawks were manned, that is conditioned to accept the presence of humans and tolerate a degree of handling. Once this was achieved the falcons were introduced to the lure<sup>viii</sup>. The process of early training with a hacked eyass was comparatively straight forward, the youngsters being less suspicious than those falcons taken on passage.

#### Condition, hack & training

Falconry is in large part, simple animal husbandry with the central tenet being dietary regulation. A bird of prey is motivated to hunt by hunger, unless it is providing for a mate or young. Therefore in the wild hawks and falcons are comparatively inactive for much of the time. The falconer seeks to mimic this with hawks in captivity, with much of the day being passed with the hawks 'weathering', that is tethered to a perch in a secluded or quiet part of a lawn with a shallow bath within leash length. Here the hawks sit and spend the hours bathing, preening or merely gazing about. In hot or inclement weather or in strong winds the hawks are moved into shelter. When the allotted hour for training or hunting arrives, the hawks are taken

up, hooded and conveyed to the location where they are to be worked<sup>ix</sup>. The hawk must be hungry and ready for it's meal, as Blaine (1936 pp139) writes "The whole secret of success in flying hawks lies in the knowledge of how to feed them." He proceeds "This is the most difficult branch of the falconer's art, and he who has acquired it will always have his hawks flying at the top of their form."

This search for 'condition' has long been the holy grail of falconry: too low, that is a hawk that has not been given sufficient food of the correct type and freshness<sup>x</sup>, it will not be capable of performing well in the field and ultimately will become sick and probably die; too high, where the hawk does not need to feed at that time and will be essentially un-cooperative and if flown will in all likelihood be lost. Sebright (1826 pp53) says that "Hawks are not susceptible of attachment to their keeper; nor do they, like the dog, pursue game for the pleasure of the sport. Hunger to them is the only inducement to action; and in a wild, as in a domestic state, they remain almost motionless when their hunger is satisfied." Bodily condition in hawks and falcons was assessed by feeling the breast muscle and flesh at the top of the thighs. Salvin & Brodrick (1855 pp43) assert that "The condition of the birds may be judged by feeling the muscles of the breast and thighs: these ought to be round and firm", whilst Michell advises:

*That a hawks condition may be tested to a certain limited extent by passing a finger down her breast-bone, and by feeling the broad pectoral muscles on each side of the breast between the forefinger and thumb. Some indications may also be got by gently pinching the muscles of the leg, to ascertain whether they are full and hard. But they are very rough tokens to judge from. One hawk will fly her best when almost as fat as a wild one, and when the sternum is hardly more prominent than it is in a partridge; whereas others, when fed up to this condition, will do no serious work, but go off*

*soaring on their own account, or take perch in a tree or rick, and stare unconcernedly at the lure as if they had no conception that it had any attraction to them. The experienced falconer will form a better judgement as to the condition of his hawk from the manner in which she flies.* (1900 pp184)

Blaine who learned his craft under Major Fisher and who was by repute, one of the finest falconers of the closing years of the 19<sup>th</sup> & early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when writing somewhat later says “A useful guide to condition is to weigh a hawk on a scales. You will find that she flies best at a certain weight, which may vary slightly in individuals.” (1936 pp139). This signalled a considerable advance in the judgement of ‘condition’, leaving behind the feeling or pinching of a hawk’s breast or thigh muscle for a far more consistent and less subjective assessment. During this research it has not been possible to ascertain whose innovation this was or quite when weighing hawks began in a routine manner. None of the literature prior to Blaine’s work published in 1936 refers to using scales and it is reasonable to assume that such an advance in this area would have been worthy a reference. Therefore one must suspect that this method was unknown to British falconers until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The constant appeal made in the literature throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century that with regards to condition, is that the falconer must err<sup>xi</sup> on the side of a ‘high’ or fat hawk rather than a ‘low’ or thin one (Lascelles 1892, Salvin & Brodrick 1855, Sebright 1826). For the falconer the loss through flying in too high a condition or the loss of a few days sport was always preferable than the permanent loss through sickness and death of a hawk in too low a condition. Such was the tight-rope that falconers walked.

To return to the preparation of the hacked eyass in the Scottish tradition, once manned and made to the lure, the young hawks were called to the lure a very short distance initially. They were secured by a line or creance<sup>xii</sup> until reliable and then flown loose. In

the case of the eyass when manned sufficiently and taught to recognise the lure for the guaranteed meal that it signalled, the risk of loss when flying loose at this stage was quite minimal. The young hawks had no real independence about them and were generally wholly focussed upon the falconer as the provider of security and food (Belany 1841). The situation was very different for the trainer of passage or haggard hawks as will be returned to later.

Prior to flying loose the young hawk was generally given a live pigeon to kill and feed off, this was done whilst on the block<sup>xiii</sup> when weathering<sup>xiv</sup>. This practice again mirrored the situation in the wild where adult hawks and falcons often present to their fledged offspring, prey that is still alive. In the peregrine this action has been observed on numerous occasions and takes place as one of the final acts of parenting before the young either wander away or are driven off by the adults (Lydekker 1895). The 19<sup>th</sup> century falconers made use of many live lures. Pigeon were the mainstay of this practice being used during training, often on a line to provide a certain kill or 'success' for the young hawk. Here they were thrown out as the falcons circled expectantly around the falconer, served in this way the youngsters were taught the value of gaining height in order to effect a kill. With the eyasses being ready somewhat before the grouse season opened, pigeons were also used to provide regular flights for them prior to the move to the moors. Salvin & Brodrick (1855) remind falconers to have a partridge in the 'bag' in case the pigeon proved too difficult for the young falcon<sup>xv</sup>. The use of pigeons was more pronounced when using passage hawks as discussed later, however when in the field it was standard practice to carry a pigeon or two for use as emergency lures or just to provide a 'flight' if wild quarry was in short supply (Freeman & Salvin 1859). Indeed, the falconer's bag as manufactured with much other equipment by the Mollen family, followed a traditional pattern that had a pouch specifically to hold the live pigeon. Lascelles however makes the case that;

*The less work done at pigeons the better – it is but a paltry amusement not fit to be called sport – and if the hawks are kept very long at bagged quarry, they will soon fly at none other, and become useless, half-hearted brutes (1892 pp245)<sup>xvi</sup>.*

Once manned, flying loose and 'waiting on'<sup>xvii</sup> over the falconer and returning to the lure reliably, the eyass could be considered to be fully trained. However the youngster was not thought of as 'made' until it was killing wild quarry regularly. The most usual application of the hacked eyass was game hawking at grouse, partridge or pheasant, where its attributes were used to great effect. Being a creature who had known no life independent of humans since it was taken from the eyrie as a part grown youngster, even though during hack it had experienced some liberty, the eyass was always inclined to be orientated towards the falconer. Thus when waiting on, despite being able to survey from a good pitch, a vast area of countryside with its inherent distractions such as passing birds or the like, the eyass was likely to be reliably patient awaiting the falconer to flush the quarry for it. This patience could not be considered to be a usual attribute of the passage falcon.

#### Passage hawks, condition & training

*What the professional is to the amateur, or rather, perhaps, what the thoroughbred horse is to all other varieties of the equine race, the passage hawk is, according to species, to every other hawk which is trained, inasmuch as she is swifter, more active, more hardy, and more powerful than the nestling. (ibid pp259)*

Such were the objects of the Dutch school or tradition, The passage falcon, the provider of the sport for the mounted falconer and field, the stylish pursuer of the heron, the kite and more latterly the rook. These were predominantly pursuit falcons flown out of the hood

directly at quarry<sup>xviii</sup>; that is the hawks would be 'hooded off' at quarry that was clearly in sight, unlike game that would have to be flushed from cover to serve the hawk. Once quarry was spotted, for example a group of rooks feeding on grassland far from the rookery, the falconer would attempt to place himself in a down wind position<sup>xix</sup> often riding in a circuitous route to avoid alarming the rooks. Once in position the braces on the hood would be loosened and he would approach the quarry, as they took to the air the hood would be removed from the falcons' head and it would be cast off after the fleeing rooks. The flight would then proceed with the falcon, in this case a passage hawk and experienced hunter attempting to gain the advantage of height over the rooks whilst they attempted to reach the safety of cover.

The passage falcons used in Britain in the late 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> century, were mostly procured from the hawk trappers in the Low Countries, although Lascelles (ibid) says that trapping huts did exist in Northamptonshire and on the downs in Wiltshire. The trapping of a wild falcon was no easy matter due to their suspicious nature and an elaborate system had been developed to attract the attention of the passing falcon, draw it into the close proximity of the trapper and ultimately trap the bird<sup>xx</sup>. The southern migration meant that the passage hawks were trapped during October and early November<sup>xxi</sup>. These hawks had jesses and bells attached and were manned in the intervening period between trapping and shipping to the United Kingdom once the order was complete or the trapping season was over.

With regards to the nature of the passage hawk and for all their prowess in the field once trained, Lascelles warns that:

*Naturally, the hawk which has spent so long a period in a wild state, during which she has imbibed a holy horror of man and all his works, regarding him as her natural foe, is very much more difficult*



*to train at first than the nestlings, which require little or no taming, and whose idea of man is that he is a being created in order to bring food to hawks. (ibid pp262)*

For these wild taken hawks the shock of capture was considerable. Whilst in this state the initial phases of training took place, gentle handling, stroking with a feather all whilst the falcon remained hooded were the beginnings of the process. Lascelles says that the hawks “differ marvellously at this stage of their education” (ibid pp268) with some exhibiting a passionate temper and fighting, biting or screaming in protest whilst others sit like statues, indifferent and immovable. The latter creatures he considered to be far harder to tame than the former, but either would be brought to hand ultimately by gentle and educated handling.

The manning of a passage hawk was mostly done during the hours of darkness; hawks and falcons being far more subdued in artificial light. The traditional method much described by the earlier authors such as Latham in *Falconry or the falcon's lure and cure* (1633) and, Blome in *The Gentleman's Recreation* (1686), of ‘waking’ hawks, that is depriving them of sleep for several nights was by the 19<sup>th</sup> century reserved for the most intractable of the hawks.

Although both Lascelles (1892) and Freeman (Freeman & Salvin 1855) maintain that this method hastened the manning process, neither thought it entirely necessary. Interestingly Lascelles writing towards the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century clearly assumes a more gentle role with regards to training the wild taken passage or haggard falcons than do Freeman & Salvin writing almost fifty years earlier. Lascelles (1915 pp137) says that the haggard is five times as difficult to train than the passager or eyass:

*Many a haggard is not really worth the trouble it takes to reclaim and train. Moreover, if you lose her, and leave her out for but twenty-four hours, the old "call of the wild" comes to her, and you*

*have a wild hawk to catch again, instead of merely a lost friend to find and recover.*

Whereas the earlier practitioners advocate training a haggard by the application of a brail<sup>xxii</sup>, and “wet the bird thoroughly by squeezing a sponge full of water over him, it being held some height above him, so as to add a shock to the wetting” (Freeman & Salvin 1859 pp103). Such treatment was designed to provide a contrast between the situation that the falcon was in; unable to fly and suddenly soaked, a situation that it could not attribute to its human captor, and the seemingly innocent provider of food and light that the falconer appeared to be. In such a manner were the most resistant hawks taken in hand. For all the possible style and expertise that the haggard could bring to the hawking field, they were really just too difficult a prospect in preparation and only ever made up a small contingent of those wild taken hawks trained. The passager taken in its immature plumage on its first migration was a more realistic prospect for those who would follow the Dutch school.

Once tolerant of handling and conditioned to appreciate the approach of the falconer, through the provision of ‘tidbits’ of food whilst weathering; the passage falcon was introduced to the lure. Not the dead bird or leather pad used for the eyasses, but initially the lure for the passager consisted of a live pigeon. Again Lascelles (1892 pp270) shows a more modern sentiment stating that “The moment the hawk seizes it the falconer should twist its neck (the pigeon), so as to kill it instantaneously and painlessly, and the hawk should be allowed to break into it and eat it whilst still warm.” He proceeds to observe that these falcons that have pursued, caught and killed prey countless times prior to their capture, often become difficult to enter to the live lure. He contrasts the experienced hunter that through its being brought into captivity, having seemingly forgotten its predatory instincts with the eyass which invariably killed the first pigeon presented to it, despite never having killed

previously. This state of affairs for the passage falcon was a temporary but perplexing one.

Once the passage hawk would kill a pigeon out of doors and feed off it calmly, it was ready for free flight. This was a critical point in the training of the wild taken passager, any error in judgement and the falcon would be lost. The early flights were again at live pigeons, however Lascelles articulates "As soon as the hawk behaves well and flies keenly, the use of live pigeons should be abandoned, and the hawk trained to the dead lure" (ibid pp271). It was certainly the case that previous generations of falconers believed that passage hawks would not return to the dead lure, however towards the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a number of long held beliefs were being challenged in the hawking field. However enlightened Lascelles was as a field sportsman, he qualifies his beliefs by saying that "The early education cannot in either case (the passager or the eyass) be carried on without the sacrifice of two or three pigeons. These should be killed instantaneously the moment the hawk touches them, and all unnecessary cruelty avoided" (ibid pp272).

Thus the two traditions of falconry, specifically in this instance concerning the flying of the peregrine, that were in existence in Britain were the Scottish and Dutch school. These traditions developed from the need to make use of falcons taken into captivity at quite different points in their lives. Eyasses from the nest were the falconer's 'tabula rasa' it would be for the falconer to guide his charge towards its' genetic potential, whereas the passager was an experienced and proficient hunter needing only to be persuaded to tolerate the presence of man. Whilst falconers in both traditions were equipped to take in and train any falcons that came into their hands, they maintained clear preferences both in the falcons they trained and indeed the form of the flight they sought: the Scottish with eyasses waiting on at game and the Dutch with passage

hawks out of the hood initially at kite and heron and subsequently at rooks and crows.

This chapter has been an introduction to the raw materials, the techniques, the technical language and the traditions of falconry in Britain. The foregoing has described the peregrine as central to falconry in these islands; outlined the nature of the activity in terms of the demands and complexities inherent in it; its language; the availability and procurement of falcons; and explained the development of the distinct Scottish and Dutch traditions so central to the falconry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that is considered later in this work.

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<sup>i</sup> Ratcliffe (1980) reports that in Britain the female peregrine generally begins to lay her eggs in early April with those in the south being slightly in advance of those further north. The clutch size is between 3 and 5 eggs laid with an interval of up to 62 hours between them. Incubation takes between 28 and 32 days and successfully raised young fledge in an additional 42 days, with males taking to the wing slightly in advance of the larger females.

<sup>ii</sup> Cramp was caused by feeding an insufficient diet. Young hawks and falcons require a whole animal diet that includes feather, bone and viscera. Many 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> century falconers were fond of feeding beef or beef heart, which would maintain an adult raptor but is inadequate for a young or growing hawk or falcon.

<sup>iii</sup> This is a period of several weeks when the young falcons live at liberty honing their flying skills and developing muscle.

<sup>iv</sup> Lascelles (op cit) attributes this method to Peter Ballantyne one of the most celebrated Scottish professionals.

<sup>v</sup> Notice from Salvin & Brodrick (1855 pp16):

*Notice.*

*The Public are respectfully requested by \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ not to shoot or injure his TRAINED HAWKS which are flown in this neighbourhood.*

*N.B. A Trained Hawk may be known by having bells and straps to its legs.*

<sup>vi</sup> Salvin & Brodrick (1855 pp25) recommend 'leaden weights, covered with soft-wash leather' to hinder the young falcons from catching prey for themselves.

<sup>vii</sup> Fisher (1901)

<sup>viii</sup> The lure was either a dead pigeon or partridge tied on a line, or a leather pad, often weighted, that had two pairs of dried wings attached (these were generally of the intended quarry species). It was garnished with a small piece of beef that was tied securely to the pad. The lure is a recall device and signalled a guarantee of a reward to the falcon. It is swung in a perpendicular plane and clockwise to the falconer, being visually dominant creatures raptors discern movement quickly and at long distances and once trained to the lure they will return to it quite reliably. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the lure was used to improve fitness in trained hawks (Blaine 1936).

<sup>ix</sup> The true hawks; the goshawk & sparrow hawk, were often carried for an hour or so prior to flying this had the effect of making these highly nervous birds rather more tractable.

<sup>x</sup> In the days before refrigeration the freshness of food was frequently an issue for falconers (Salvin & Brodrick 1855, Harting 1891).

<sup>xi</sup> There is a recognition that err a falconer would, illustrating the difficulty of the task in hand.

<sup>xii</sup> Salvin & Brodrick (1855) state the need for the creance to be strong and preferably made of kip leather with a cord attached to the end.

<sup>xiii</sup> The block was the perch that falcons were placed upon when weathered.

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<sup>xiv</sup> This type of provision is now considered illegal in the United Kingdom, where no vertebrate species can be legally fed live to another animal or bird. Up until the 1950's it was common practice however (Glasier pers con).

<sup>xv</sup> Captive partridges do not fly strongly and can usually be caught even by an inexperienced or novice eyass falcon.

<sup>xvi</sup> The issue of using pigeons caused much comment at the time of the Barnet Committee's Alexandra Park Prize Essay Competition, discussed elsewhere.

<sup>xvii</sup> 'Waiting on' was where the falcon mounted to a pitch above the falconer. Peregrines tended to do this by flying in wide circles whilst gaining height. Once at its' pitch the falcon would generally 'set' its wings and maintain a position high above the falconer in expectation of being 'served' quarry.

<sup>xviii</sup> The passage falcon was rarely used as a game hawk early on in its trained career. It was not generally reliable enough to be expected to wait on for any length of time, given the numerous distractions that it was likely to encounter in doing so.

<sup>xix</sup> In this type of pursuit the falcon was always flown up-wind. This provided an advantage for the falcons' powers of flight, encouraged it to gain height quickly and whilst invariably the flight would turn down-wind once the rooks were closely pressed, an up-wind start allowed the style and quality of the passager to be seen (Salvin letters).

<sup>xx</sup> The system used by the Dutch hawk catchers was as follows (after Salvin & Brodrick 1855 pp68-70): *After constructing a small hut the size of which was largely determined by the size of the wagon wheel used to provide the structure of the roof. All the construction was covered with turf. A short distance from the hut and in plain view of it was set a bow net and a small box also disguised with turf, with a swing door to house a tethered pigeon. Rather closer to the hut a tall pole was erected and another pigeon (of light colour) in a harness and on a line attached to the top of it. Close to this pole a sod was dug to enable this pigeon to take shelter. At the hut and often on the roof, a butcher bird (in all likelihood a great grey shrike) was either tethered or placed in a small cane cage. A passing falcon would be spotted by the butcher bird which would give alarm calls alerting the trapper in the hut. At this signal he would pull on the line to which the harnessed pigeon was attached, drawing it from its shelter and up the pole where it would fly in a circular motion attracting the falcon. As the falcon flew towards the pigeon, it was allowed by releasing the line, to seek refuge in its sod shelter. The falcon would circle looking for its quarry and the tethered pigeon in the small box was drawn out into the centre of the bow net by the trapper pulling on another line. Seeing the pigeon on the ground the passage hawk would seize it and the trapper would spring the bow net and the falcon was caught. Taken out of the net, the falcon had a 'ruffier hood' put on its head and it was then placed in a 'sock' with the toe cut out, to keep it quiet and still until the days trapping was complete.*

<sup>xxi</sup> It was not usual to trap birds of prey on the northern leg of the migration in the early spring although there is a letter dated 1898 from Karl Mollen the last of the famous hawk trapping family from Valkenswaard, to Gilbert Blaine stating that he would attempt to procure a few falcons for the OHC in the spring (O'Carol Scott papers).

<sup>xxii</sup> The brail was a strip of leather that was used to pinion a single wing of the falcon, albeit temporarily. This had the effect of encouraging the hawk to sit still when on the fist being carried, had it bated or leapt off the fist the falcon would have needed assistance in order to regain its perch.

## Chapter 2

The following chapter provides the context for the ensuing research. Initially the genesis of falconry is proposed in a descriptive consideration of the origins of falconry as a hunting activity. The geographical spread of the practice into western Europe and ultimately Britain is discussed together with a brief history of falconry as a sport central in demonstration of status within British medieval society. This has been undertaken in order to establish the position of what is known as falconry's 'golden age', which came to an abrupt end during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is around the time of this abandonment and the sports rapid decline in popular perception particularly in England, where it appears to have almost ceased to be practised and was recalled generally only as a relic in the historical record. Whilst in popular perception it occupied little more than a romantic artefact of former days, it was a nostalgia. During this period the rate of social and cultural change accelerated and the birth of modern Britain is evident. It appeared likely that falconry would not make the transition from the medieval or early modern, into the modern period.

A consideration of early English language literature is undertaken followed by an assessment of the state of the sport in Britain between 1650 and 1750.

### The genesis of falconry

The methods and techniques that enabled humankind to make use of the raptorial instincts of birds of prey and hunt in co-operation with them have evolved over several thousands of years. It seems likely that these developed out of a following and robbing strategy used by some early peoples in order to obtain otherwise difficult to catch food items (Stange 1975). Birds of prey are highly

opportunistic hunters frequently utilising the activities of humans and the subsequent disturbance to other wild creatures to facilitate hunting (Brown & Amadon 1968). Mankind is certainly no less resourceful and has in some cultures made use of the effects that particular species of raptors have upon potential prey. Aristotle, in *Historia Animalium* (1910) gives a description of an activity whereby birds were caught on the ground because they would not take flight when a predator, in this case a falcon, was in the air above them.

*In Thrace, in the district sometimes called that of Cedriopolis, men hunt for little birds in the marshes with the aid of hawks. The men, with sticks in their hands, go beating at the reeds and the brushwood to frighten the birds out, and the hawks show themselves and frighten them down. The men then strike them with their sticks and capture them. They give a portion of their booty to the hawks; that is, they throw some of the birds up in the air and the hawks catch them.*

(Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* IX, 36, 620b. 1910).

Whilst this passage has been thought to indicate that the ancient Greeks knew of, and practised, falconry, it is doubtful that Aristotle would have failed to record that the hawks were captive or domestic, if indeed they were so. It is rather more likely that the hunting activity described was that of an habitual and reciprocal opportunistic relationship between humans and birds of prey.

In the *Historia Animalium* (ibid) Aristotle also records that certain species of hawks and falcons have different effects upon various types of quarry; some birds will attempt to out-fly an accipiter, whilst they will remain motionless if a falcon is flying in the vicinity<sup>1</sup>. This knowledge became far more vital once raptors were taken into captivity. That particular species hunted specific quarry or were effective in distinct habitats, enabled not only the successful catching of quarry, but also the manipulation of the hunt to provide



entertainment for those people involved. This in turn would lead to the designation or codification of certain types of hunting with raptors that took falconry far from the merely functional activity of obtaining food.

Early literature seems to suggest that in some circumstances a reciprocal relationship between raptors and humans developed (Macpherson 1897, Aristotle cited in Freeman & Salvin 1859); wildlife was driven out of the cover of long grass, bushes or trees, by people beating the undergrowth with sticks or by the starting of fires. Once in the open the sought after birds or mammals became possible quarry for the hawks or falcons that had gathered having recognised the advantageous hunting situation. That certain species of raptor kill prey that is too large for them to carry away, ensured that some of the catch was recoverable by those who flushed it. The birds of prey were driven off and the meal appropriated, although in order to sustain the relationship a balance had to be created and frequently the raptors was allowed to feed unmolested or if the quarry was picked up or netted a proportion of it was thrown out to them<sup>ii</sup>. The mutually beneficial nature of this type of informal co- operation must be considered to fall short of the type of domestication that characterises falconry proper, but the genesis can be recognised.

It appears likely that the taking of birds of prey into captivity developed independently in several locations between 2000BC and 750BC (Cade 1982). The activity is recorded in some early Chinese literature and somewhat later in a bas-relief at the site of Khorsabad in what was Assyria (Anthony Jack unpublished manuscript circa 1960). The bas-relief from the reign of the Assyrian King Sargon, is the earliest unequivocal record; the earlier references in Chinese accounts of hunting having been disputed (Newton 1990). Somewhat later, the Emperor Teng, of the Ban dynasty (206 – 220BC) is known to have been fond of falconry. Together with

China, both Japan and Korea have surviving literature that confirms the use of captive raptors for sport hunting, that is; not solely as a means of obtaining food (Jack manuscript circa 1960).

The earliest documentary evidence to confirm the use of captive, trained raptors comes from Japan, where in the 47th year of the reign of Empress Jingu, goshawks were imported from China with which to hunt (ibid).

The pastoral nomads that roamed the steppes of central Asia and the periphery of the deserts of the Middle East were certainly culturally advanced enough to maintain such a mode of hunting. Although these tribal societies have left little in the way of artefacts or recorded histories, in many instances they claim through their oral tradition, that falconry continues unbroken from the earliest of times. It can be considered that it is descended directly from the first attempts at raptor domestication (Brander 1964). It is believed that falconry was introduced into Europe by the tribes of Scythian and Sarmatians who mounted successive horse-born invasions from the steppes of Russia (Cade 1982). It is known that Attila the Hun was a keen falconer and brought his falcons, hawks and eagles with him in the retinue of his conquering army (Frederick II 1943).

### Introduction into Britain

By the year 500, falconry was firmly established as an institution in the early feudal societies of mainland Europe (Knox 1875).

Societies both Christian and Islamic, were constituted in such a way that the practising of the activity soon became codified. For over a thousand years; from the 6th until the 17th century, it is difficult to over estimate the social and cultural significance of birds of prey in relation to status. One of the major expressions of this was the sport of falconry both in practice and metaphor.

Decrees and laws concerning ownership of trained hawks and falcons were commonplace. Royal protection was also given to nesting falcons forbidding disturbance or the taking of eyasses, this to ensure a regular available supply of raptors (Schlegel & Wulverhorst 1853). In England, under King Henry III, laws concerning the hunting forests were issued whereby certain freemen were required to have woods in which hawks and falcons nested, and to maintain heronries (ibid). That such demands were ever actually enacted is doubtful, the habitat preferences of certain species dictate regional variations in their populations and breeding areas. A currency existed; birds were used to pay tithes and rents, given as gifts and tokens of esteem, even ransoms were demanded and discharged with their exchange (Cummins 1988). Schlegel and Wulverhorst (1853) record that Magnus Lagabatter, the King of Norway, sent in the year 1276 three grey falcons to Edward I of England. The latter is understood to have authorised several expeditions to Norway to obtain gerfalcons both for his own use and to pass on as gifts to other rulers.

A letter to the King of Castile from King Edward I of England proclaims;

*We are sending you four grey gerfalcons, of which two are trained for flights at the crane and the heron; as for the two others you can use them as you see fit. Since we have already lost nine white falcons we have none left to give you. Meanwhile, we have sent a few of our men to Norway to search for some.* (Schlegel & Wulverhorst ibid pp85).

The year 806 is given by both Delme' Radcliffe (1879) and Salvin & Brodrick (1855) as the date that falconry was introduced into the British Isles. Although this has been questioned by Mellor (1948) who shows that Cummings is equally mistaken in his preface to the

1929 edition of Blome's *Hawking or Falconry* (first published as 'The Gentleman's Recreation' 1686), in which he claims that the date of introduction was between the years 866-871. Harting (1891) had previously recorded a letter from King Ethelbert (Reign 748-760) to the Archbishop of Mayence, Boniface (d.755), in which he requests to be sent a cast of falcons with which to fly cranes. However, Boniface is recorded as sending gifts of raptors even prior to this; Aethelbald, King of Mercia, received two falcons and a hawk from the Archbishop between the years 733-751 (Cook 1912). Boniface to Aethelbald of Mercia: "Meanwhile, for a mark of true love and devoted friendship, I send you one hawk and two falcons, two bucklers (leather covered wooden shields) and two lances (of a type with leather thongs)." Translated from the Latin by Mellor (1948 pp21).

There is a carved falconer on the Bewcastle cross in Cumberland thought to date from the years 670-700 (Cook 1912) and Baring Gould (1914) records that St. Illtyd (approx 520) was fond of flying hawks in Wales. Curiously no mention of the activity exists in the chronicles of Roman Britain, even though St Illtyd lived within 100 years of the Roman abandonment of the British Isles. This may be attributed to either, that falconry was introduced at about the time or shortly after the Romans ceded their control over the Britain, or that culturally the use of trained captive raptors was foreign to them and was not regarded as worthy of recording. Given the comprehensive nature of some of the Roman documentary evidence that survives, this seems somewhat unlikely. Certainly at that time falconry does appear to have had stronger roots in the northern European kingdoms than it did further south in the continent. Whilst hunting of different types is depicted on Roman frescoes and Greek vase-paintings, there is no record of the use of captive trained raptors. Indeed, no evidence can be found to suggest that the Palestinian Jews had any knowledge of the activity, despite their geographical proximity to the Arab and Persian practitioners of falconry. Burnham

(Newton 1990) cites an un-referenced source to support the assertion that falconry was established in the Mediterranean vicinity by approximately the year 400. However, by the first millennium, Europe had few kingdoms where the activity is not well recorded (Cummins 1988).

### Medieval falconry, social rank & status

Whatever the exact date of the introduction into Britain it is reasonable to suppose that it would have been well established prior to the exchange of written requests for raptors between eminent people or the activity was recorded in socio-religious carvings. Despite considerable evidence to suggest that hunting with trained hawks and falcons was undertaken by a wide cross-section of society (Harting 1891, Blome 1686, Cummings in Blome 1929, Latham 1633), it quickly became a social indicator of status. Certain species of raptor became associated with degrees of privilege. In 'The Boke of St. Albans', there exists the much quoted systematic assignment of birds of prey according to social rank:

*First an Egle, a Bawtere, a Melowne. The symplest of theis, will flee  
an Hynde calfe, a Fawn, a Roo, a Kydde, an Elke, a Crane, a  
Bustard, a Storke, a Swan, a Fox in the playn grownde. And theis  
be not enlured ne reclaymed, because that they be so ponderowse  
to the perch portatiff. And theis, by ther nature belong to an  
Emprowre.*

*Ther is a Gerfawken. A Tercell of a gerfawken. And theys  
belong to a Kyng.*

*Ther is a Fawken gentill, and a Tercell gentill, and theys  
be for a prynce.*

*Ther is a Fawken of the rock. And that is for a duke.*

*Ther is a Fawken peregryne. And that is for an Erle.*

*Also ther is a Bastarde and that hauke is for a Baron.*

*Ther is a Sacre and a Sacret. And theys belong to a Squyer. Ther is*

*a Merlyon. And that hawke is for a lady.  
Ther is an Hoby. And that hauke is for a yong man.  
And theys be hawkes of the tower: and ben both llurid to be calde  
and reclaymed.  
And yit ther be moo kyndis of hawkes. Ther is a Goshawke, and  
that hawke is for a yeman. Ther is a Tercell. And that is for a  
powere man. Ther is a Spare Hawke, and he is an hawke for a  
presto There is a Muskyte. And he is for an holiwater clerke. And  
this be of an order of maner kynde.*

(cited in Hands 1975 pp54-55)

The anthropomorphic ranking of birds of prey is, of course, a social imagery far removed from the actual practice of falconry. The largest and most powerful, the Egle (eagle) together with the Bawtere and Melowne (considered to be species of vulture) are assigned to an Emprowre (emperor). These birds are, for all practical purposes, useless for hunting in the western European context (although eagles have been, and are still trained by some central Asian tribes and in the eastern Germanic states). In attribution however they represent the strongest and thus, in a martial patriarchy, the most noble. The metaphor works by association; in the construction and re-construction of the social framework it becomes evident that those men of the highest status should aspire and equate to the raptors also of noble rank (Dalby 1965)<sup>iii</sup>.

So essential was falconry to the construction of rank and power in medieval Europe that the birds of prey and their trainers accompanied armies on campaigns as a matter of course. The Bayeux tapestry depicts the Saxon King Harold with a hawk and certain Norman noblemen with hawks and falcons departing for the invasion of Britain under William the Conqueror. Harold carries a sparrowhawk (Cummins 1988) whilst the Norman noblemen is

identified as Guy, Count of Ponthieu (Schlegel & Wulverhorst 1853).

In the 12th century, during the reign of King Henry I, a nobleman named Outi from the vicinity of Lincoln was charged by the crown. The offence was considered serious enough for a fine to be imposed of an hundred "Norway falcons" and an hundred gyrfalcons, of which ten had to be pure white (Schlegel & Wulverhorst *ibid*)<sup>iv</sup>. Even given the disposition to exaggerate in the medieval chronicles and our contemporary habituation to a raptor depleted environment, the undertaking to obtain any large number of non-indigenous falcons does seem a punitive punishment indeed.

Numerous authors suggest the Euro-Christian crusades to wrest control of the Holy lands from the Saracens saw two distinct cultures and traditions of falconry meet (Allen 1980). It is said that King Richard I, 'the Lionheart', halted one of his campaigns to fly his falcons near Jaffa (Latham 1614). A strange incident is recorded by Harting (1891) where Richard sent an emissary to Melik el Aadile to request food for his hawks. That Richard and Melik had been involved in several long and bloody battles seems to have been unimportant in this respect. It is the accepted yet unsupported orthodoxy that many falcons were exchanged between the Europeans and the Islamic Saracens during the crusades and thus species from geographically remote parts of the east were introduced to western Europe.

The chivalric or better termed, medieval practice of holding the nobility for ransom meant that many falconers became captive for prolonged periods. Some of these prisoners were treated well and given the opportunity to indulge in hunting with falcons, no doubt under suitable guard (Cummins 1988). Privileges were rarely denied captive aristocrats. To debase those of noble birth was to

step outside the code of chivalry that structured power in medieval societies, and so to do debased the captor who perpetrated such<sup>v</sup>.

It is claimed that from some of these prolonged imprisonments new techniques of training were learned and types of equipment were introduced. It is believed by some that the 'hood'<sup>vi</sup> was one such item (Harting 1891). Although in *De arte venandi cum avibus* of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1943) it is claimed that the hood was actually introduced into Europe by Eastern falconers gathered at the court of Frederick (discussed later).

When King Edward III of England embarked on his military campaign of 1359 in France, he was accompanied by some thirty mounted falconers with hawks (Delme' Radcliffe 1879). The King hunted with his hawks and dogs every morning during this marshal excursion. The same English monarch introduced laws that compelled any of his citizens who found a lost hawk or falcon to take it to the sheriff of that county or be liable to pay a fine to the value of that particular bird and suffer two years imprisonment (Mellor 1948).

Further legislation, under King Henry VII of England, forbade the taking of eggs from the nests of hawks and falcons, or any bird that may be used for hunting (Freeman & Salvin 1859). This was followed in 1536 by King Henry VIII prohibiting the taking of any species of bird that may be the quarry of hawks or falcons from the land that was set aside for royal hunting. Schlegel and Wulverhorst (1853) record that the penalties for conviction of such offences, were terms of imprisonment.

A commonly retold anecdote is that Henry VIII was saved from an untimely death when a fellow falconer pulled the King from some deep mud into which he had fallen head first. The King had been out hawking 'at the brook', that is hunting ducks and waterfowl at



the river-side, when his vaulting pole had broken pitching him into the mire. Whilst this tale has the makings of a joke at the expense of a bumptious and portly monarch, and no conclusive references can be found, Henry VIII was a keen falconer particularly in his later years and the legend is much repeated (Cummins 1988, Harting 1891).

Restrictions were promulgated in the reign of James I of England (James IV of Scotland) on the use of longbows, crossbows and firearms to kill game, this in order to preserve stocks for trained hawks and falcons. Falconers were given dispensation however to shoot small birds to obtain hawk food (Harting 1871).

By the 1600's falconry was so codified and embedded in the construction of status that royal patronage was assured. Centuries of decree and legislation had effectively appropriated the activity of flying falcons (longwings) as a preserve of the socially powerful. Hawking with accipiters (shortwings) was an activity undertaken by a slightly wider spectrum of society but there is no evidence that it was very widespread. This idea is introduced in the literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to a constructed nostalgia, and a literal reading of the likes of the 'The Boke of St Albans'. However, the conformation of society was altering and the towns and cities growing. The transition from medieval feudal into the late-feudal, or early modern Britain was to see falconry marginalised in a comparatively short time.

### Early modern Britain

After the Commonwealth (1649-1660) during which falconry had been markedly curtailed by the puritan rejection of earthly and frivolous pleasures, Charles II is reputed to have restored some of the activity's popularity (Harting 1880) however there is scant support for such a claim. But the changes that had swept across

Europe introduced a different ideology, a new way of seeing, that in a British context left falconry peripheral if not irrelevant. The central philosophies by which much of Europe had lived for centuries were replaced in England by those spawned by the Reformation.

Catholicism was confronted by Protestantism, a formulation that demanded distinctive and contrasting attitudes to life (Weber 1930). Not only did this signal the end for many social practices such as the frequent feast or holy-days and certain types of entertainment but it altered those that survived and it changed their relationship with and within the structure of society. Indeed social practice was not alone in undergoing change, institutions were also effected. Many European monarchies were to fall and hierarchies overthrown in the ensuing two centuries. The protestant predilection with the act of work as glorifying God on earth pressured such time consuming and hedonistic pleasures as hunting with hawks and falcons.

Falconry had been central to the formulation of European societies for an unbroken period lasting over 1,000 years. Culturally it had provided an hunting activity that was available in one form or another, to significant numbers of the medieval population albeit predominantly those with status and power. In that availability there was the structured hierarchy that delimited and defined the feudal social manifestation. By legislative control of the right to hunt certain species of quarry, stewardship of the land, the cultural currency expressed through hawks and falcons together with the imagery that projected certain raptors as more noble than others, the practice of falconry was a functional metaphor. It was an hegemony that confirmed and reinforced the structure of society in which it was a preoccupation. As an activity that grew out of the necessity to obtain food, and in some cases this remained an important element, hunting with birds of prey had become an expressive recreation.

With the changes in society that the Reformation and the

subsequent clash of philosophies instigated, falconry as a powerful social practice was undermined and then discarded. As Europe, and in particular Britain, moved out of feudalism and into the early modern period different demands were made of recreations. The Protestant establishment tightened its' grip on power and the coming of the Commonwealth demanded a rejection of all that was symbolically linked to the Stuart crown. By the industrial and social revolutions of the 18th century, the symbolism and currency of falconry became an irrelevance to all but a very few.

### Early English falconry literature

In respect to falconry literature written in English; starting with Turberville who it is now believed copied rather than actually wrote, *The Booke of Faulconrie or Hawking* published by Barker in 1575. It was reprinted by Purfoot in 1611 and again in 1641 with the woodcut of a regally mounted Elizabeth I removed, and replaced by a portrait of James I. This was long considered a masterpiece by falconers. The much earlier Juliana Barnes<sup>vii</sup> text *The Book Containing the Treatises of Hawking; Hunting; Coat-Armour; Fishing; and Blasing of Arms*, was reproduced in a different version in 1586 and 1596 under the title *Hawking, Hunting & Fishing* and printed by Edward Alde (Harting 1891). Sir Thomas Elyot had written *The Boke Named the Governor*, a falconry history published in the early years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century that was reprinted many times and finally in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in 1580. A book on fishing and trapping, at that time no little interest to the falconer was Mascall's *A Booke of Fishing with Hook and Line, and of all other instruments thereunto belonging* was produced firstly in 1590 and again in 1596, 1600 and 1606. Gryndall wrote the superficial *Hawking, Hunting, Fowling and Fishing; with the true measures of blowing* printed in London by Adam Islip in 1596.

A 'Practitioner in Physicke' (Harting ibid) Richard Surflet, translated

the French text *Maison Rustique* in approximately 1588 and published it through John Norton & John Bill, in 1600 and 1606 under the title *The Countrey Farme*. Markham produced a folio of this work in 1616. Harting informs that the original was so popular that more than 100 editions were produced in French, German, Italian and ultimately English. Two anonymous texts *A Jewel for the Gentry* text was printed by Richard Olive in 1614 and a reprint of the oldest known text in English *The Institution of a Gentleman* appeared around this time, the original was first printed in 1555. Harting (ibid) maintains that a second edition was not issued until 1839, but there is a version dating from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century in the British library.

Gervase Markham an impressive compiler, produced after his *The Gentleman's Academie in 1595*, an extensive section on falconry in *Countrie Contentments* that was published in 1611 and again in 1615, 1623, 1631, 1633, 1649, 1654, 1656, 1660, 1668, 1675 and finally in 1683. The same author or editor produced *Cheape and Good Husbandry* in 1614 that contained a section on 'The Cure and Ordering of Hawks' and the text *The Young Sportsman's Delight and Instructor* printed in 1652, which was some time after his death. A version of the latter book entitled *The Young Sportsman's Instructor* also printed in 1652, is diminutive measuring 2 ½ by 1 ¾ inches (6.25 by 4.5cm) containing 136 pages. This novelty was reprinted in 1707 and 1712. Markham also produced *Hunger Prevention* that was published by Anne Helm and Thomas Langley in 1621 and 1655.

One of the most influential falconry writers on his day, Latham wrote *Faulconry; or the Faulcon's Lure & Cure* published in two books by Jackson in 1615 and *The New and Second Booke of Faulconry* also published by Jackson, in 1618, and reprinted in 1633, 1653, and 1658. Both titles were together bound and produced under the former title in 1633. Latham also is credited

with the 1662 *The Gentleman's Exercise, or Supplement to the Bookes of Faulconry*.

*An Approved Treatise of Hawkes and Hawking* by Bert was published by Richard Moore in 1619. This text was to become highly thought of in later years. Drayton's 1622 *Polyolbion: A Chorographical Description of all the Tracts, Rivers, Mountains, Forests, and other parts of this renowned Isle of Great Britain* is a lengthy poetical work refers to a familiar haunt of falconers the locality of the Little Ouse, sometimes known as the Brandon River, where it meets with the Thet<sup>viii</sup>. Brathwait's *The English Gentleman* printed in London in 1630 was re-issued in 1633 and 1641. It was reprinted with a new title *Time's Treasury or the Academy for Gentry*, in 1652<sup>ix</sup>.

An interesting book *Quaternio, the foure-fold Way to a happie Life* by Thomas Nash published in 1633 contains much criticism of falconry, an activity that was not to the author's taste. Some consideration is justified given this comparatively unusual sentiment of the time. In the form of a dialogue between four individuals of different station and calling and in the manner of some classical texts, the 'Countryman' reports:

*For Hawking, I commend it in some, condemne it in others; but in men of meane ranke and religious men I condemne it with Pet. Blesensis as an idle and foolish vanity; for ever I have thought it a kinde of madnesse for such men to bestow ten pounds in feathers which at one blast might be blown away. (pp34)*

It is unknown if Nash is referring to the 'blast' from a firelock, a gust of wind, or indeed a profanity. In an expression of what was to become more common as the Puritan ideology took hold in many parts of Britain, falconry is deemed both frivolous and unnecessary. The author finds it an unnatural pastime and in an anthropomorphic

dissatisfaction with the discrepancy in size and strength between the male and female birds used in falconry, Nash makes this comment "*But to see one of those faeminine) birds who like some wives of our time keep under the masculine ...*" (pp36) Speaking of the flight of goshawk or gyrfalcon at August partridge, he continues "... *there to surprise and kill her suddenly, I must confess it hath often gone against my stomacke ... yet I must likewise confesse I have beene sometimes for societie's sake, a spectator of such a tragedie.*" (pp37)

Izaak Walton's *Complete Angler: or the Contemplative Man's Recreation*, contains a section on hawks and hawking contributed by an unattributed falconer, in the second and subsequent editions in 1655, 1661, 1668, and 1676. Anthony Hammond produced *The Gentleman's Exercise* in 1662. Barlow's *Several Wayes of Hunting, Hawking, and Fishing, according to the English Manner*, with etchings by Hollar was printed in 1671. The much published Cox, collected the work of many others for *The Gentleman's Recreation* that was printed by Maurice Atkins in 1674, and again in 1677 and 1686. It was republished by N. Rolls in 1697, 1706 and 1721. Cox did the same for *The Falconer; or the Art of Hawking and Falconry* that is undated but published by Smeeton, whilst the texts carry his name it is generally accepted that he was not the author of the work. Those whose work it was go un-credited. The 1678 publication by John Ray *A Summary of Falconry* was a collection of previously published work by both Turberville and Latham. Blome wrote *The Gentleman's Recreation* that was privately printed in two sections in 1686 and once again in 1710. The second section is a close translation of the 1660 French text *Les Ruses Innocentes*, to which is added sections of Turberville.

In 1684 Sir Thomas Browne devoted a section of his *Certain Miscellany Tracts*, to falconry. This work concerns itself with remedies and cures for common diseases in hawks and falcons.

1691 saw Aubrey produce *The Natural History of Wiltshire* that devoted Chapter XIV to falconry and in the 1696, *Miscellanies Collected* the writer recounts some hawking tales of Charles I and Charles II. The latter work was reprinted in 1714, 1721, 1723, 1731, and 1784. It does not contain enough falconry material to suggest a continued interest throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century however, rather it signals a continued and developing interest in the British Monarchy, despite the Stuarts fall from grace.

The otherwise anonymous R.H. produced *The School of Recreation* that was published in London in 1732 and another anonymous text appeared in 1735 and again in 1744 entitled *The Sportsman's Dictionary; or the Country Gentleman's Companion in all rural recreations*. An extended poem by Somerville was printed by J. Stagg in 1742, *Field Sports: a Poem Humbly Address'd to His Royal Highness the Prince* contains lengthy descriptions of various flights at quarry. Another anonymous production that used some of Markham's work from *Country Contentments*, was *The Country Gentleman's Companion through the Rural Pursuits of Pleasure and Profit* printed in 1756<sup>x</sup>.

#### The state of falconry 1650 - 1750

As has been stated previously and supported by Grassby (ibid) and the Archivist Kent Carnie, there is no collection or body of evidence that is comprehensive enough to provide a clear picture of British falconry during this period. However, given its' importance to the ensuing research an attempt has been made to provide an informed context. Through an assembly of often fragmented and diverse sources including estate records and accounts, memoirs, supplemented by the literature of the period reviewed previously, the following assessment is given.

A change occurs in the treatment of falconry in the literature around

the middle of the seventeenth century. Hitherto, and with the exception of the instructional works, technical aspects of the husbandry, training and hunting with hawks and falcons is absent from literature. Frequent mention and description both metaphorical and literal, are found commonly (Harting 1871, 1883). From this it can be surmised that detailed technicalities were not necessary for the reading audience, they knew about the sport through practice and familiarity. The literate were largely also the section of British society that it is contended herein, were those for whom falconry was both relevant and accessible. As the century progressed however, falconry was to feature less prominently than it had done previously. New literature used metaphors from hunting and, increasingly, from shooting. Falconry as a signifier of so much in the medieval context had certainly lost its hold on the popular imagination.

Egerton (1978) notes a similar tendency in pictorial representation. The frequency with which men of status were portrayed with hawks or falcons, or were accompanied by a retained falconer, or were pictured in the hawking field, fell away sharply. At a time when the popularity of sporting pictures was steadily increasing, falconry was becoming a less common feature (Adams 1868). Where it was reproduced it was most often done so in terms of pastiche, frequently poor quality copies of earlier work.

To return to the written word: falconry specific publications still appeared yet much of the work was blatantly copied from previous work (this is discussed elsewhere). This was possible because the basics of the sport did not alter, convention and context certainly did but how one went about falconry in a practical sense remained much the same. Indeed Markham was reproduced finally in 1756, whilst Blome was reprinted in 1744; the original authors were long dead yet their words of some use to a minority of sporting gentlemen.



Despite his interest in the sport, Cromwell retained two falconers only (Sherwood 1977). He was conscious that he ought not replicate the excesses of the deposed Stuart Monarch. Grassby (ibid) articulates that whilst a revival of falconry was seen during the Restoration, the benefit of Charles II involvement was effectively limited due to a retrenchment in the Royal Household. Ultimately King James II could not afford to maintain a mews, stud of hawks and the necessary retained falconers, in the style to which he aspired. The *Collected Ordinances of the Royal Household* that was published in 1780, listed the Keeper of the Mew(s) as an appointment whose cost was £9 per annum. By the reign of Queen Anne between 1702 and 1714, only five pensioned falconers are recorded. The costs associated with the Hereditary Grand Falconer, the Duke of St Albans, were born by Parliament (Ditchfield 1891).

Falconry was a casualty of the fissure between man and nature that occurred in early modern Britain (Silvertown & Sarre 1990, Thomas 1983), although Grassby (op cit) articulates with some accuracy that this was confined initially to England. Sensibilities had changed and man was in a very tangible way becoming dissociated with nature. Rationality, science, commerce, indeed capitalism itself propelled the English on a new course. Whilst much of the British Isles had not yet been touched by enclosure or cultivation, the effect of man was seen throughout. Certainly wilderness had largely disappeared from England and human influence on the environment was increasing.

The red kite, that had long been the favoured sporting quarry for status conscious elite falconers<sup>xi</sup>, was in dramatic decline. The British Trust for Ornithology consider it to have been extinct as a breeding bird by the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however it had been in decline throughout the previous one hundred and fifty years (BTO web-site 2005). Falconers had never taken quarry in numbers

enough to cause such catastrophic collapses of wild bird populations, thus the demise of the red kite was due to other factors. It had ceased to be a bird that scavenged in towns and cities as it is reported to have done in medieval Britain. Whilst the urban environment could not yet be considered to be 'industrialised', the manner in which the towns and cities were developing evidently rendered them unsuitable for kites. Alterations in the rural environment, be it a more efficient husbandry of farmed animals than was seen in previous times<sup>xii</sup>, or disturbance at nesting sites, or even the beginnings of persecution might well have combined to reduce kite populations.

With the kite difficult to find in suitable localities another quarry was sought by falconers, the heron. This was not novel and it had been hunted by falconers for centuries however the kite had taken precedence as preferred quarry. However at the very time when the heron was superseding the kite as the quarry of choice for those who flew large falcons and followed on horseback, it was also struck by the effects of mans activities on the environment. The early to mid 18th century saw much fenland being drained, a process that continued well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The heron, whilst numbers were doubtless reduced, did adapt. The large communal nesting sites; heronries, became fragmented and smaller in size. The heron remained a comparatively common bird however it was too scattered to make hunting it with falcons as attractive a proposition as it had been during the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the herons need to feed on freshwater fish persecution at the hands of both anglers and shooting men increased throughout the period.

The effect that man had on the environment was far more profound than can be explained by looking at the likes of the enclosures (which will be undertaken later). In a relationship that is highly complex and difficult to explain in isolation, wild creatures show

varying abilities to adapt to changes brought about by man, as has been seen in the case of both the kite and the heron. Some species positively benefit from farming, the felling of woodland, draining of fens, and the like. Some adapt in breeding or feeding behaviour with few signs of difficulty. Other species however show little adaptive ability and over time become absent from the environment.

Cartmill (1993) describes the dissolution of the medieval world view, with its stylized imagery and superstitious understanding of nature, as one that altered hunting activities irrevocably. In early modern Britain voices were raised against all field sports and indeed many other practices (Thomas *op cit*), for both moral and practical reasons. The moral demanded an end to that which brutalised both predator and prey. A change in perception had rendered for many, animals as innocents and man as a demonic arbiter of suffering, life and death (*ibid*).

However, it was not just ethical concerns that were directed against falconry in post Commonwealth Britain. Initially seen in the articulation of strong Puritan beliefs from Preachers such as John Dodd (Clarke 1650), the demands of a developing capitalist work ethic also saw falconry amongst other hunting activities as inappropriate (Macpherson 1897, MacFarlane 1987). Grassby (*op cit*) points out that had the sports decline been solely a reaction against the medieval, it would have taken place earlier than it evidently did.

Hunting sports did survive the societal changes, indeed there is little evidence that the voices raised against field sports had any directly discernable impact other than reinforce existing trends (Cartmill *op cit*, Grassby *op cit*). They probably illustrate the beginnings of a town/country or urban/rural divide on field sports, although this in its self might be too simplistic. Hunting the fox was undergoing a sustained increase in popularity; shooting was expanding despite

the fact that the real technological advances were to come in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; angling was developing from a means of obtaining food into a leisure activity and ultimately a sport. Falconry however did not share the fortunes of its close associates.

The archive at Chatsworth in records of building works commissioned, shows that by the 1690s the mews had been partially demolished to make way for a new wing to the stables. The surviving accommodation that had formerly housed the hawks and falcons, served as an agricultural store and was ultimately sleeping accommodation for boys employed in the stables, until it was finally pulled down in 1876<sup>xiii</sup>. The Hunting Tower, also known as Ruthven Tower<sup>xiv</sup> on the outskirts of Perth, a Scots tower house dating from the 1500s, has some detailed records. These describe the conversion of the mews into scullery and kitchen accommodation in 1715 during a major rebuilding phase. Holkham Hall in Norfolk converted their mews prior to an audit of the house and estate in 1740<sup>xv</sup>. Few other records have been found and the 'Great Houses' that remain today have little evidence of the buildings or infrastructure required for falconry.

Whilst there were no widespread calls for an end to falconry, and there was no Royal decree or legal demand to cause such a cessation of the sport, it had certainly declined markedly. There was no single cause but rather a combination of factors ranging from the intangible fashion or social cachet that any popular practice needs; changes in the social structure that lead to some reduction in the resources available to a number of the traditional practitioners; escalating practical difficulties resulting from environmental alterations. In addition, the last of the 'Great Plagues' in 1665 took a high toll of London Society and of the landed in the counties of south east of England (Cannadine 1994). Grassby (op cit pp55) maintains that "*Tradition is not self-perpetuating; each new generation has to be indoctrinated to sustain any pattern of social*

*behaviour.”*

Despite increased urbanization throughout the period, Britain was predominantly rural. Access to the countryside around the market and county towns, much of which was still unenclosed, was possible. Increasing ideas about land ownership and exclusivity of access are evident but there is little to suggest that falconers were denied the ability to pursue their sport. The landowning elite that would have been falconers prior to the Civil War, spent far more time in the towns and cities. In the later years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century those towns catered for leisure needs through drinking and gambling establishments, gardens and parks, coffee houses, theatres and the like. An increased choice certainly existed when it came to leisure. Falconry was but one option and one that was chosen with decreasing frequency.

The Dukes of Gordon in Scotland, continued in the sport throughout the hundred years up to 1750 and beyond, however and somewhat ironically, they were to abandon falconry shortly after Colonel Thornton made his tour of the highlands in 1786 (Graham 1937). At that time two clubs were in existence, one in Scotland, and falconry seemed on a more secure footing than it had for a century. Lord Orford was a practitioner in the 1740s and it is estimated that the Renfrew Subscription Hawks was in operation in late 1750s. Falconry was not entirely defunct in Scotland and one would have to be fairly circumspect before claiming that it was extinct in England. What is clear is that it was no longer a practise with a wide following amongst the elite and gentry, and there is no evidence whatsoever to support the notion that it was undertaken outside this strata of society.

There was no falconer-monarch to provide the profile necessary to perpetuation. Charles II could not afford to undertake the sport in the manner he might have wished and he was not popular enough

with his subjects to venture often out of the comparative safety of the capital or far from the estates owned by his close allies (Walden 1792). Later, the last Stuart King, James II was equally unpopular and unable to catch the public imagination even if he had the purse to undertake falconry on a grand scale. Neither William of Orange and Mary, who jointly accepted the British crown in 1689, nor the Hanoverian monarchs who followed showed any interest in the sport. Whilst the institution of the monarchy had experienced a tumultuous time during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the comparative stability of the 17<sup>th</sup> century did not see a return to their traditional sporting activities. Indeed monarchy may have been so altered that the emulation of Royal interests often to be seen at court and amongst the elite more widely, prior to the Civil War, was perhaps unlikely to be repeated. This is however conjecture for no head of state was to practise falconry after the Stuarts.

A curious memoir written by a Cambridgeshire curate in 1743 (Miltannan 1800), mentions a gathering of falconers that fascinated him in his youth. He describes albeit briefly, a group of men and women, mounted together with a falconer, a cadgeman, and boy. There is no mention of a flight or indeed of the intended quarry, yet the young man was evidently captivated so much so that he saw fit to recount the memory many years later. There is no indication as to how old the curate was when he wrote the memoir, so estimating when this gathering might have occurred is not possible other than to assert it must have been during the period currently under consideration. There is to this authors knowledge no other record from the period (1650-1750), of hawking in Cambridgeshire.

In the year of 1718, a Giles Jacob writing in *The Compleat Sportsman*, was to conclude of falconry: "*By reason of the trouble and experience in keeping and breeding the hawk and the difficulty in the management of her in the field, (hawking) is in a great measure disus'd, especially since sportsmen are arriv'd to such a*

*perfection in shooting and so much improv'd in the making of dogs."* (pp29)<sup>xvi</sup> This was certainly true however it missed the point which as has been discussed, was much more complex and impossible for Jacob to grasp. The sport was increasingly fragmented; it had lost the vast majority of its traditional following amongst the elite; changed environmental conditions, social circumstances and attitudes often rendered the established practice difficult; and falconry was not fashionable as it had been some one hundred or so years before.

The foregoing is the context for the research. How man started to make use of birds of prey was discussed together with the spread of the activity into Europe and thence into Britain. A consideration of medieval falconry and its place in the demonstration of social rank and status was undertaken. The dynamics of early modern Britain illustrated the changing social and philosophical terrain upon which falconry was played out. An assessment of early English literature was made that provided the base for an investigation into the state of the sport from 1650 – 1750. The fall from the lofty status of falconry's 'golden age' and its passage into obscurity was demonstrated by the latter part of the chapter and the comparative paucity of surviving records or historical evidence.

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<sup>i</sup> The above is closely allied to the mediaeval practice of "daring" larks, when a trained falcon was put on the wing and encouraged to stay in the air over the head of a bird-catcher, who was able to net or even pick up small birds that were too frightened to take flight (Meinertzhagen 1959).

<sup>ii</sup> Reciprocal relationships between humans and wild creatures are not uncommon, however few have the complexity that the co-operative hunting activity appears to have had. It is not recorded in current anthropological works if any manifestations of this behaviour are still in evidence. Although of a very different type, one example of a highly complex opportunistic relationship is seen in the small east African bush dwelling bird, the honey-guide, which co-operates with particular honey gatherers of the nomadic Boran tribe in Kenya

<sup>iii</sup> In an interesting symmetry, the lowest ranking on the social scale, the holiwater clerke (the Holy-water clerk was the most humble and poorest of the church officers of the time, receiving only what the priest cared to pay) is allotted the Muskyte (musket - a male sparrowhawk) which is so small and delicate that it is little use in obtaining food for the pot. That both the most noble and the most lowly have raptors of symbolic use only, is perhaps a recognition of the nature of the practice of falconry.

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<sup>v</sup> "Norway falcons" are likely to be grey phase gerfalcons. Until the 19th century Norway falcons, Iceland falcons and Greenland falcons were considered to be three separate species, each being somewhat different colour phases (Salvin & Brodrick 1855). It is now generally accepted that they are sub-species of gerfalcons (Brown & Amadon 1968, Cade 1982). Cummins (1988) traces a predilection of the elite that was close to an obsession with "white" throughout mediaeval hunting. This extended to quarry species as well as the falcons, dogs and horses used by the hunters.

Notions of purity, chasteness and virginity, themselves associated with 'whiteness' are interwoven in European hunting activities. The white gerfalcon was a creature of extreme social significance as well as an indicator of status and high financial value.

<sup>v</sup> Rather later Mary Queen of Scots, whilst imprisoned at Tutbury castle under the wardship of Sir Ralph Sadler, was indulged by her captor in her passion for lark hawking with merlins (Jack manuscript circa 1960).

<sup>vi</sup> A hood is a small leather device that is used to cover the falcons head, depriving it of sight, hence the expression 'to hood wink'. Once such a visually dominant creature such as a bird of prey is deprived of its ability to see, albeit for a short period, it becomes calm and more easily managed (discussed elsewhere)

<sup>vii</sup> This is the same Barnes who is credited with the Boke of St Albans that was printed in 1486.

<sup>viii</sup> Song:

*The trembling fowl that here the jigging hawk-bells ring,  
And find it is too late to trust then to their wing,  
Lie flat upon the flood ...  
The hawks get up again into their former place,  
And ranging here and there in that their airy race,  
Still as the fearful fowl attempt to 'scape away,  
With many a stooping brave them in again they lay.  
But when the falconers take their hawking-poles in hand,  
And, crossing of the brook, do put it over land,  
The hawk gives it a 'souse', that makes it to rebound  
Well near the height of a man sometime above the ground,  
With many a Wo-ha-ha, and jocund cheer again,  
When the quarry makes upon the grassy plain.*

<sup>ix</sup> Bibliographic details of the foregoing texts are not provided in the Reference section of this work but may be obtained through the British Library Integrated Search facility.

<sup>x</sup> See above.

<sup>xi</sup> Being inedible, high flying and hard to bring to book, the kite was a fine example of a conspicuous quarry that demanded conspicuous hunting with large falcons (often non-native).

<sup>xii</sup> Kites are scavengers that feed amongst other things, on any fallen stock or remains of carcasses that are left in the open.

<sup>xiii</sup> Chatsworth has an extensive archive but it is very short of records or mention of the sport. This is in contrast with both hunting and shooting that are recorded both in fiscal, management and building documents.

<sup>xiv</sup> Now in the keeping of the Scottish National Trust.

<sup>xv</sup> Holkams archives have records of the existence of a mews for 'hawkes and doggs', but it had been demolished or converted by 1745.

<sup>xvi</sup> That Jacob (1718) mentions breeding should not be taken to imply captive breeding. There are no authenticated records to substantiate successful captive breeding at this time. It is more likely that he means appropriate release to a likely wood (in the case of a goshawk or sparrowhawk) in the hope that the hawk would breed therein and the young might be obtained for falconry purposes.



## Chapter 3

This chapter examines falconry as a mounted sport and considers its relationship with and dependence upon the landscape of Britain, changes in which created demands hitherto unseen by those who rode with falcons. Falconry began the period under investigation herein, as a mounted activity, yet by the end of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was facing a future in which the mounted field was a thing of the past. This chapter traces how and why this change came about. The link with and distinction from, hunting with hounds is discussed in order to explore the factors necessary to the sport. One of the primary causes that has been claimed for the demise of falconry as a widely practiced activity was the increasing cultivation and enclosure of the countryside. Whilst there is little doubt that both falconers and falconry historians believe this to be the case (Blaine 1936, Fisher 1901, Freeman & Salvin 1859, Lascelles 1892, Mitchell 1900, Salvin & Brodrick 1855, Schlegel & Wulverhorst 1853), the claim demands more investigation.

#### Mounted falconry & the equestrian tradition

A predominance of the recorded falconry practiced from 1750 until the last years of the old Hawking Club, was conducted from horseback and required tracts of open land over which the falcons would be flown. Game hawking with either hawks or falcons was a significant part of falconry as then practiced<sup>i</sup> but was not seen as the highest form of attainment in the sport, it was the mounted form that occupied the pride of place (Thornton 1804, Aspin 1825, Belany 1841). Given the mounted nature of the 'great flight' it is evident that the conformation of the landscape was highly significant to the sport<sup>ii</sup>. The records that remain and in the case of the published material some consideration of those that wrote it, explains a somewhat problematic aspect of these sources in terms

of our understanding of the falconry practised in this period.

The status of the equestrian tradition was more developed in the English social hierarchy than was seen in the Celtic periphery of the United Kingdom (Colley 1992). Therefore the predominantly English falconers or falconry historians who recorded the activity in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as Campbell (1773), Thornton (1804), Sebright (1826), Salvin & Brodrick (1855), Freeman & Salvin (1859) Mitchell (1900), Fisher (1901) and, Harting (1883, 1889, 1906)<sup>iii</sup> were inclined to reflect their own class pre-occupation with riding activities as closely linked to an expression of social position. Thus as articulated by Lascelles (1892 pp121) 'For many years, therefore, the Englishmen who cultivated the higher flights at the rook, the heron and the kite,...', mounted falconry was understood to be at the pinnacle of the sport. It must be noted however, that by the time that Mitchell, Fisher and Harting went to print in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century these 'higher flights'<sup>iv</sup> had already been superseded by game hawking practised on foot. Whilst this reflected the prevalent Scottish tradition that had existed for at least two hundred years prior to this and, one is inclined to believe, had been on the increase in England for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a good proportion of the century before (ibid), game hawking had always been an important aspect of falconry<sup>v</sup>.

However to return to mounted falconry, cultivation and enclosure were facts of life for these falconers as it had been for those who practiced the activity before them, but perhaps the rate of change was quickening by the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The following are some of the documented instances where what can be seen as the modernising of the landscape resulted in changes in the manner in which falconry was practiced or indeed if it was practiced at all.

The Flemings of Barochan Tower who kept the Renfrew (shire) Subscription Hawks from 1780's until 1819, and flew over the

western parts of the Shire south of the River Clyde, experienced difficulty caused by stone walling and ditch construction that rendered much of their former ground unsuitable for the flight at Kite (Fleming letters 1796). By the turn of the century mounted falconry was almost abandoned in favour of flights at woodcock, snipe, grouse and in some districts, pheasant (Belany 1841)

Colonel Thornton is reported to have left Thornville Royal his sporting estate in Yorkshire in 1805, due to the then new cultivation of the Wolds that were enclosed and put to corn (Salvin & Brodrick 1855). His quarry here was reportedly Kite and Heron and both species declined locally. Prior to the Napoleonic Wars the Wolds were unenclosed grasslands that provided sport when the other areas available to him such as the low ground of the moors of Blubber House, Grassington, Clifford and Bramham, and Wetherby (now Beilby) Grange that were newly cultivated and were in crop<sup>vi</sup>. The effect that this cultivation had was to break up the ground through enclosure, whilst much of the moorland was still unaffected the passage of a mounted field was severely hampered. In effect the unenclosed land had been fragmented so an uninterrupted gallop to keep up with the flight became impossible.

Lascelles (1892) reports that the High Ash Club, formerly known as the Falconer's Club, experienced the drainage of the fens and increased cultivation around Didlington in Norfolk in the early 1830's. The drainage reduced the heronry there and the enclosure of land restricted the following of the flight. This was not only detrimental to the sport enjoyed there, leading to many 'blank days' but it ultimately resulted in the club disbanding in 1838. Schegal & Wolverhorst (1853) record how the formation of the Loo Club was directly linked to the demise of that at High Ash, when several members seeking to continue this branch of falconry sought out possibilities in the Low Countries.

The Old Hawking Club eventually abandoned efforts to continue with a mounted field in 1926, although this aspect of the Club's operation had been declining for several decades. Blaine (1936) reflected that too many obstacles existed on their flying ground of Salisbury Plain for them to have any hope of pursuing good quality rook hawking. After being used as a training ground for the Army just prior to and during the Great War (1914-18), the Military took lease of vast tracks of the Plain. Barbed wire had become a staple of tactical defence during the war and had together with the machine gun rendered the cavalry obsolete during the conflict (Strachan 2001). The wire served as insurmountable for mounted falconers and spectators. An attempt was made to follow flights in motor cars but this proved to be inadequate, resulting in not being able to keep up with the flight through having to take lengthy detours on tracks and roads and frequently losing the falcon (Upton 1987).

### Enclosures

As can be seen from the above, there is an oft stated perception in the literature that conditions in the British countryside were becoming less favourable to the practice of falconry. Doubtless this is a reflection of the way those involved in the sport at the time felt. The interplay that exists between perceptions of change and the appeal to the invariant is a fascinating one (Thomas 1983) and this is manifest more strongly in periods of great social change (Ashton 1968, Plumb 1950, Trevelyan 1942). However increasing cultivation, drainage and enclosure of the countryside, significant as it was to those practitioners was not the only cause for relocation, demise or merely increased 'blank' days.

It is important to consider how the landscape changed and what the nature of those changes were. Sweeping assertions about the enclosure of the countryside particularly with regard to the

Parliamentary Enclosure Acts and resulting increase in cultivation of the land are likely to oversimplify the situation (Williamson 2002). It is certainly the case that the likes of Hoskins (1955) and Rackham (1986) see the period from the 1750's to the end of that century as that where the recognisable 'traditional' English countryside was established. However as Plumb (1950) explains the rate of the change across the rural landscape was by no means even, with Scotland, Wales and the north west and south west of England being markedly slower to 'come under the plough'.

The 'open field' system in which there was comparatively little enclosure of the land, was an adequate agricultural formation to provide for a population that was experiencing low levels of growth and that lived in close proximity to the seat of agricultural production (Williamson 2002, Reed 1987). However there had been alterations to the system and some enclosure in the late Medieval period (Hall 1982) and whilst the rate of change was slow and the substance of that change far from radical, the British landscape was not and had not been, a static entity. As the population increased and many started to shift in greater numbers to the towns and cities, Plumb (1950) charts the acceleration of the enclosure system by recording the numbers of Acts throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From a single Act of Parliament between 1700 & 1710, to over 506 between 1790 & 1800, the second half of the century witnessed a marked increase. The demands of the Napoleonic Wars took this increase to 906 in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>vii</sup>. Whilst it would be unwise to say that the enclosure of the land did not lead to a shift in population, it would be equally naïve to attribute the entire trend to this restructuring in the rural environment.

The Parliamentary Enclosure acts were not the sole vehicle that the restructuring of the British countryside took. With enclosure being the mechanism by which the land was converted into 'private'

property it is unsurprising to record that it was achieved through several processes (Yelling 1977). However, all demanded financial resources to achieve enclosure through hedging, walling or ditching. By the mid 1700's land that was not effectively enclosed could not be considered secure property. The financial burden of the mechanism of establishing ownership effectively limited those who could aspire to such<sup>viii</sup>.

From the late medieval and early modern period a significant proportion of the agricultural land was enclosed by hedging and held 'in severly' controlled by one individual. This fell rather short of ownership in the modern sense, the individual was more akin to a 'holder' or 'steward'. Informal enclosure, sometimes known as piecemeal enclosure, was the appropriation of land by private agreement, sale or exchange. This generally resulted in holdings that were often quite modest, of contiguous cultivated land that had formerly been part of the open field system. Formal or general enclosure, was used on a larger scale often engulfing all the unenclosed land in a district. It was the tool used by the wealthy, ambitious and socially adept to label land that had hitherto been common or waste ground and that that had been incompletely enclosed. In the early part of the process of restructuring this type of enclosure lead to the de-population of numerous villages (ibid). However this formal enclosure of land ultimately became enclosure by agreement, being achieved by negotiation between those who would assume ownership. It was often tested in the Court of Chancery and this established rightful ownership<sup>ix</sup>. Ultimately and perhaps infamously in much of the literature that relates to the enclosure of the British landscape, the most costly but in terms of acreage enclosed clearly the most effective form was the Parliamentary Enclosure Act. This can be seen as the method by which those already in positions of both wealth and power established themselves as landowners proper in the modern sense of the term, leaving behind the nuances and vagaries of the

obsolete medieval system.

### Suitable ground

How did the predominately 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure of the landscape effect the practice of falconry? Salvin and Brodrick (1855) writing in the 1850's devote a specific section of their Introduction to Falconry in the British Isles, to a description of the land suitable for the practice of falconry. Entitled 'The Country Requisite for the Sport' (pp16), they reiterate the much expressed warning that a falconer should never fly his falcon in a 'bad situation', by which it is meant over the wrong type of ground (Fisher 1901, Harting 1891, Blaine 1936, Sebright 1826)<sup>x</sup>. They assert that "A district fitted for this amusement cannot be too open or flat;" (Salvin and Brodrick 1855 pp16) going on to explain that the falcon needs open country to prove its superiority in flight over the quarry. Championing heron and rook hawking<sup>xi</sup> as the higher forms of the 'art' they state that grassland is the most desirable ground over which to hawk. It is here that they then say, about grassland "the ground is the very best to ride over, and there is the additional advantage of being able to carry on the sport at all seasons, which on the account of the standing crops, cannot be done elsewhere." (pp16). Proceeding to discuss hawking over cultivated land they state the need for very large fields that are bounded by "weak ill-grown fences" (pp16) or "low, neatly trimmed hedges which the improved method of modern agriculture has introduced," (pp17). This is contrast with "all hedgerow timber, wide fences<sup>xii</sup>, and small enclosures." (pp17) that made following the flight difficult. Evidently a good deal of the enclosure and increased cultivation was considered a problem yet large fields and low well kept hedges resulting from the modern agriculture obviously enabled the sport to continue.

Salvin and Brodrick (ibid) describe the best 'grass districts' known to them. This is of interest because it gives an insight as to the rate



of increased cultivation of the British Countryside some 40 years after the culmination of the rush for enclosure. They list: East Ilsley in Berkshire, Amesbury, Warminster and Lavington in Wiltshire, and the Curragh of Kildare in Ireland<sup>xiii</sup>. They also express the belief that there is good hawking country on Dartmoor, around Portsmouth, Southampton, and Winchester in Hampshire and Bagshot Heath; at Hitchin in Hertfordshire where they claim the ditch is to be found into which Henry VIII fell and nearly drowned whilst out hawking<sup>xiv</sup>; Peterborough, then in Northamptonshire and in Norfolk, Feltwell, Hockwold and, Didlington; Newmarket in Cambridgeshire, Sleaford in Lincolnshire and Rainford in Lancashire; They confirm the fate of the Wolds that, it is claimed elsewhere (Lascelles 1892) forced Colonel Thornton to abandon Yorkshire, stating that 'they are now strongly fenced and intersected with larch plantations; this has spoilt the country for Hawking' (Salvin and Brodrick 1855 pp17); Then as far north as Inverness, the east coast of Scotland is said to provide 'excellent country' and to the west, some of Renfrew the former haunt of the Flemings of Barrochan, also Ayr, Wigtonshire; discussing moorland they claim that there are 'immense tracts' suitable for grouse hawking at Strathconnan in Ross-shire, at Raits upon the Spey in Inversnesshire; in Ireland they cite the heronry and marsh at Castle Martin, Caleny marsh in County Wicklow and the Wicklow mountains, a bog and moor at Banagher in Kings County and finally, at Rathreagan in County Meath.

Quite how Salvin and Brodrick (ibid) actually compiled this is not known. Salvin in particular, was well travelled and would have hawked over much of the ground mentioned. He was also well connected in falconry circles being a keen practitioner so would have been in a position to ascertain from fellow falconers where suitable ground might still be available. Brodrick was also well known and very popular within the fraternity of falconers but was less well travelled. There are some notable absences from the list however; in Scotland the north and west of the Caledonian canal

provides considerable moorland opportunity<sup>xv</sup>; the Borders further south were sheep country and therefore grassland; the Yorkshire moors had a significant grouse population as did the uplands in Cumbria (Stanley 1835), whilst Fisher (1901) recounts grouse hawking in Northumberland.

It seems that whilst much traditional ground used by falconers for their mounted sport, was undoubtedly altered by the enclosures of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of the changes might actually have aided the continuance of this activity, hence the reference to 'large fields' and 'low neatly trimmed hedges'. Much grassland was indeed being brought under the plough and cultivation was a fact of life for those who would ride with the falcons, but this in turn brought falconry into line with what were by the latter years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, notions of set seasons both in fox hunting and shooting (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887, Bovill 1962)<sup>xvi</sup>.

The evidence does seem to indicate that the changes that had taken place in the British rural landscape really had lead to the reduction of the mounted 'field' and falconry from horseback. Perception of difficulty, rather than the sport being rendered impossible is implicated here most strongly. The Renfrew Subscription Hawks kept by the Fleming family at Barrochan Tower, ceased about 1819 but had largely given up mounted falconry some years earlier to concentrate upon partridge, woodcock and grouse (Fleming letters); the Confederate Hawks of Great Britain later known as the Falconer's Club was started by the Earl of Orford, run by Colonel Thornton for nine years before reverting to the Earl, and after his death in 1792 was passed to Major Wilson who became Lord Berners<sup>xvii</sup>. They continued falconry in the 'grand' style, mounted and with a substantial field and eventually became known as the High Ash Club. It folded in 1838 after the enclosure and drainage of the land around Didlington (Salvin & Brodrick 1855)<sup>xviii</sup>; The Old Hawking Club was begun in 1863 with one of its major

objects being the provision of rook hawking, for which being mounted was a prerequisite. Yet this was largely confined to Salisbury Plain, the rest of the Club's operation, game hawking was by then conducted on foot. The O.H.C. never rivalled the earlier clubs in either ambition or numbers when it came to the provision of mounted falconry<sup>xix</sup>. It was more modest in ambition and less select, in the sense of devotees (Blaine 1936)<sup>xx</sup>, than had been the High Ash Club and it finally came to an end in 1926. Mounted falconry had continued albeit in a strictly limited manner into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The difficulties faced by mounted falconers were certainly increased by greater levels of cultivation and enclosure, but in itself the changes to the physical rural landscape did not account for the end of this tradition.

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Falconers perceived that enclosure of the land and increased demands made on the countryside from farming, as major causes of difficulty for them. It is suggested that in actual fact whilst enclosure certainly had eaten into the available 'open' countryside it had not done so to such an extent as made the sport impossible. There were still plenty of districts available over which a falconer could ride after falcons. Falconers of the period certainly articulated that their sport was unsustainable but this perception was born out of a conservative and traditionalist view of mounted falconry. It is

argued later in this research that aesthetic judgements clouded the practitioners to new possibilities. But these were sportsmen whose rationale for their sport was in part at least, the maintenance of a time honoured tradition. Dynamic in embracing change in certain aspects of falconry, they were blinkered when it came to working around alterations in their regular hunting grounds.

### Hunting to hounds

In the full knowledge that there are great differences between mounted falconry and hunting to hounds, it is the contention that there are also some interesting comparisons to be made. In order to illustrate that it is simplistic to accept cultivation and enclosure as the prime difficulties facing falconry from the 1750's, a brief consideration of what is now known as hunting with hounds and focussing specifically on fox hunting will be undertaken.

Modern fox hunting began as a recreation in Britain around the 1700's (Noon 2000), although Billett (1994) is certain that the fox was recognised as a 'sporting' quarry in the north of England at least some hundred years earlier<sup>xxii</sup>. Mounted hunting with packs of hounds had been in existence for many Centuries previously with the main quarry being either deer or hare. Unlike falconry where there was an established tradition of hunting the inedible<sup>xxiii</sup>, those hunting with hounds were initially resistant to the notion that the Fox, an animal unfit for the table, was worthy of the chase (Bovill 1962). Foxes were hunted and destroyed as 'vermin' at least as far back as the Norman Conquest. This can be seen as little more than destruction however; they were tracked to their earths and dug out to be killed. It is claimed that they were occasionally 'bagged'<sup>xxiv</sup> and baited (ibid)<sup>xxv</sup>, although this is not to be confused with the later 19<sup>th</sup> century use of purchased, relocated or even it is claimed, tame foxes to sustain hunting at times when the population of the prime quarry was low in certain locations (Billett 1994)<sup>xxvi</sup>. In a letter to

Walter Stopford, Lord Lilford wrote in 1895 "... hill fox hunting is not bad fun, and I hope that your party will kill all of them, and not send any cubs south for sale alive" (Lilford letters), thus illustrating that there was a ready market for cubs albeit a market that was somewhat disapproved of. Ritvo (1990) sees that the exclusion of the fox from the Game act of 1671 as rendering it as vermin but there is little doubt that 'Reynard' had even then been long considered a problem demanding direct intervention as Man sought increased control over the natural environment and the animals therein (Cartmill 1993).

The elevation of the fox to the status of a 'sporting' quarry is likely to have been a marriage of fortune and convenience, at least for the hunters: the animal was quick and resourceful making it difficult to catch, it was mostly in plentiful supply, was widely considered to be 'vermin', and if one follows Thorstein Veblen's thought (1925) it was an expression of frivolity and ultimately status, to hunt that which had no worth once dead. Dentith (1998) points to the separation of rural cultures at the time, that manifest itself in the increasingly stark economic nature of social relations. With regard to the changing social network seen in the British countryside, Holt (1989) details how the formerly paternalist upper classes withdrew from the established rural sports. The 'new' leisure activities whilst certainly adaptations of older ways of playing, were in fact far more strictly defined and class specific. In the increasingly 'modern' countryside, or more accurately 'modern' rural landscape of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century the fox was hunted by those who could afford to do so. It was not protected by statute or game laws or even convention like most other creatures but it was effectively protected by economics. Hunting it illustrated ones economic status which was increasingly important as the traditional social ties in rural Britain unravelled in the face of the growing industrial influence of the urban.

Despite a quite rapid growth in popularity during the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was not until the 1830's that the number of traditional Harrier packs whose quarry was hare, were exceeded by foxhounds (Billett 1994). Tranter (1998) asserts that there were 28 packs designated as foxhounds in 1837 and this had increased to 178 by 1911, however Brailsford (1999) records that there were well over 200 organised hunts by 1815, although he does not stipulate how designated. Billett (1994) when talking about subscription packs<sup>xxvii</sup>, cites that in 1810 there were 25 such packs out of 100, rising to 86 in 1845 and to 90 in 1854, both still apparently a proportion of 100 foxhound packs overall. Whatever the exact numbers, it is evident that after 1750 the numbers of packs of hounds that were devoted specifically to hunting the fox was increasing, reflecting the growing popularity of this form of hunting.

The form of the foxhunt itself also reflected the age. Initially the hounds were of a type that were suited to the rather more sedate pace of the traditional hare hunt, indeed deer, or stag hunting as it became to be known, was also an activity that required endurance rather than speed<sup>xxviii</sup>. However the improvements or alterations made through selective breeding for specific qualities that can be seen in the farm animals of the day (Darwin 1858, Plumb 1950, Thomas 1983) were not confined there. Both the horse and the hound were being bred to meet new challenges; this project with horses had begun many years earlier and although less well documented, packs of hounds had been subject to regular improvement through the importation of new bloodlines (Cummins 1988, Sebright 1809). Thus it is the case that whilst there is a clear longevity in the selection through breeding of certain characteristics in the domestic animals used for hunting, by the second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century this had a new focus. The aristocratic obsession with the thoroughbred, an obvious metaphor restating their own social standing, had lead to this type of horse to be produced for speed, size and strength (Thomas 1983). The fastest of the thoroughbreds

were destined for the race track but the taller and stronger animals of this type were ideal as 'short hunters'<sup>xxxix</sup> and crossing them with the bigger breeds produced the 'hunter' type. By the 1770's hounds in many packs across the country were also being bred taller, quicker and with improved scenting abilities in order to meet the demands of the new quarry<sup>xxx</sup>: the fox.

By the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century hunting was fast on a day where scent was strong and the going good in country not too interrupted by obstacles. A series of furious gallops, jumps over hedges, walls, fences and ditches that all demanding courage and riding skill. This was interspersed by lulls in the action as hounds worked the cover, allowing the mounts to recover their 'wind', or offering the hunting elite a chance to change horses. The hound work could be appreciated and enjoyed without much technical knowledge (Noon 2000) whilst the kill was usually accomplished out of sight of most of the field which spared the sensitivities of any of the more refined who hunted<sup>xxxi</sup>. The 'field' were mounted spectators and no more, the actual hunting was done by the Huntsman, the Whipper-in and to an extent the Master (Collier 2000). Perhaps for the first time, with the exception of some of the Royal hunting of the late Middle-Ages (Cummins 1988), many of those who hunted with hounds did little more than to use the hunt as a vehicle through which to exercise a skill that in itself was not hunting, but riding. In this respect the 'field' mirrored that seen in mounted falconry, where comparatively few of those who followed the falcons actually possessed either the skill or inclination to participate to a greater degree than as spectator and occasional 'spotter'<sup>xxxii</sup>. Thus it seems that the key to much of the 'sport' was not the hunt but the ride; itself an expression of a traditional skill<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

### Mixed fortunes

Bovill (1962) saw the expansion of mounted hunting as closely

linked to the enclosure of the British landscape and much of the material considered herein supports this assertion. If it is indeed the case, why did the enclosure of the land and increased levels of cultivation that resulted from this, lead to the growth of one form of mounted hunting, namely foxhunting whilst it has been claimed that it resulted in the virtual demise of another? There was evidently more at work here than many falconers of the time understood.

Foxhunting had positively benefited from the enclosure of land although cultivation was an ongoing problem here too. Why then did one mounted activity flourish and another that was quite similar in some respects experience a decline? What were the constituents of hunting that enabled it to thrive, that were absent from the tradition of mounted falconry?

Foxhunting was an adapted form of an older mounted hunting, and an adaptation that was initially quite simple to effect. In keeping with the type of changes seen across British rural society from 1750 onwards it illustrated many key dimensions that enabled it to have resonance for those who aspired to the new high-status order; it was highly visible, frivolous, fast and exciting. It had considerable social cache', it became fashionable. Mounted hunting had a 'tradition' and foxhunting was not slow in absorbing and adapting this. It also enabled the newly wealthy and those aspiring to social status, to 'rub shoulders' with the aristocracy no matter how degenerate or failing was 'old money' it carried much kudos (Cannadine 1982). To ride with the hounds demanded equestrian and social skill, courage, economic status and little more. It grew in popularity steadily from its beginnings in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, quite rapidly through the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and despite challenges to its social and sporting popularity<sup>xxxiv</sup> it maintained its position into the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Foxhunting encompassed not only many of the rural elite both new and old, the educated and professional, but also numbers of the urban wealthy. It was also



eminently well suited to the modern British countryside in which the fox for the most part, was thriving.

Mounted falconry despite superficial similarities, could not lay claim to many of the features asserted above. It could not simply be adapted to accommodate change or taste; there was no selective breeding of falcons that could effect improvements despite a certain interest in the possibility of such by the likes of Colonel Meade-Waldo, St. Quintin and Lord Lilford<sup>xxxv</sup>. By 1750 changing social relations and the loss of Royal patronage had left falconry without a 'living' tradition with the exception of a handful of practitioners scattered across the United Kingdom. It was such a rarity that it had little or no society profile, even in the heyday of the Confederate Hawks or later the High Ash Club, a field of 25 riders was an extremely good and somewhat unusual turn out. It was undoubtedly fast and exciting once the flight had started, but the variables involved in flying falcons were numerous; flights were punctuated by long periods of waiting for the weather to clear, in order to retrieve lost falcons, or to find quarry.

Falconry was a specialist taste, and whilst many of the field were there to ride and would not be involved in the mechanics of the activity, it was only spectacular to the aficionado. The nuances that distinguished a good flight from a more ordinary one came from acquaintance with the capability of the quarry species as well as the falcon in question, its style - be it a haggard, a passager or an eyass, the nature of the terrain and the weather. These were not easily or quickly learned although doubtless common knowledge in falconry's 'golden age', they had long fallen from the general sphere of knowledge (Sebright 1826, Fisher 1901).

#### A hunting man's perception of falconry

In part of Richmond Russell's<sup>xxxvi</sup> journal of 1828, he details several

outings with what appears to be the High Ash Club. He does not mention the club by name but refers to Lord Berners (formerly Col. Wilson) and describes the falconry during a period spent hunting in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. The journal written by a fox hunting man, treats falconry as a novelty but not one that he would be much given to indulge in on a regular basis. His first entry giving some insight into the view that a newcomer to the sport might gain, reads:

*Tuesday. Fine. Over to jaunt with Berners and his hawks. Started out late due to much coming and going at the river. Slow going seeking the old heron. After lunch found two quickly and had a fine gallop after the first. A long way from the kill having to skirt round a small hamlet. Quite a trophy I was told. Young Devon had a tumble and was carted home. Mount a fine chestnut, shot. Berners was beside himself when not one but two of his peregrin (sic) went off. Good beef and wine to close the day. (Russell Journal – May).*

It is illuminating to consider what Russell records: What he means by 'coming and going at the river' and which river he is referring to remain unknown but it is probably the Wissey as it travels through Norfolk; He does not dwell on finding the quarry other than to say it was slow – if this illustrates a decline in the numbers of heron due to the fens being drained or it was just a poor day for the quarry is also unknown but difficulty in getting flights was one of the reasons that the High Ash Club folded some years later; When after lunch, they did find a couple of heron there was evidently the flight of the day, but far from describing it Russell reduces it to a 'fine gallop'; He fails to see the kill having had to go round a settlement – a problem along with cultivation and fencing, that we know were increasingly problematic for the High Ash falconers; It is not discernable if his referring to the kill as 'Quite a trophy I was told' means it was a particularly fine heron or if taking quarry was becoming less common so as to make any kill a trophy; The equestrian focus is maintained in the noting of a fall and

subsequent injury. Many of the riders would have had replacement mounts or be able to borrow one, so 'Young Devon' needing to be 'carted home' and his horse being shot indicates a serious fall. That two of the falcons were lost and that his host was 'beside himself' with this situation was the only mention of the falcons themselves, the very tool of the day's sport, is revealing. Russell concludes the entry with reference to food and drink, with no mention of the recovery or permanent loss of the falcons.

The next entry to mention falconry is:

*Thursday. Clear, wet underfoot. With Berners again what company he is! He is awaiting some new hawks from Iceland of which he has high hopes. Some pretty sport after a pie but not a heron seen. Three gentlemen rode out over the banks after some wager, but most awaited forlorn. Much wine was taken in the afternoon hours.*  
(Russell Journal – May)

Here Russell describes a blank day the likes of which contributed to the end of mounted falconry in Britain. When quarry could either not be found or not followed successfully on a horse there was little point in attempting the 'out of the hood' type of flight and the first attrition was the field. The mounted spectatorship declined from the days of the Confederate Hawks under Col. Thornton or Lord Orford, through to the High Ash days culminating with a far smaller field riding with the Old Hawking Club in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> and opening ones of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>xxxvii</sup>. It is likely that the 'pretty sport after a pie' (magpie) was undertaken in desperation for some amusement. The falcons used for heron hawking would have been female peregrines or gyrfalcons<sup>xxxviii</sup>, known by various names at the time such as Greenland falcons, Iceland falcons, Norway falcons or jerfalcons. These are large powerful falcons physically capable and with the courage to tackle a bird such as the heron. However the best suited hawk for magpie hawking was the tiercel

peregrine<sup>xxxix</sup>. The male was more manoeuvrable and more inclined to stay on the wing during what was frequently, the quite protracted flights at magpie. The quarry would seek to find cover at any cost and would frequently have to be driven out by those accompanying the flight. Both flights, that at heron and that at magpie were undertaken by a cast of hawks, the former females and the latter males. Thus to fly heron hawks at magpie was to use the wrong tool for the job. It is likely that the quarry would either have escaped before the hawks got on terms with it, or have been over-matched and refused to fly from cover, either outcome would have frustrated the falcons. Whilst a diversion on a blank day, this would not have been quality falconry and risked losing the increasingly difficult to obtain falcons.

Making reference to a wager race ridden by three gentlemen of the field he illustrates how in need of amusement the spectators obviously were. In addition Russell again records drinking as an accompaniment to sport, or in this instance the lack of it.

The penultimate reference by Russell is one marked simply: "Thursday. Fine. Hawking." (Russell Journal – May) Whilst the final entry betrays some of the frustration that a non-falconer could be forgiven for exhibiting when expecting a days sport in the saddle:

*Thursday. Rain early. Berners up again with a splitting gallop over a mile and a half. The peregrin (sic) strikes the old heron first one and then the other. We searched past the mill ground but nothing. Later the falconer pitched one up but the best was lost. The heron also was gone. All day in seeking out the strays. Berners will continue. These days are mostly wait and trot, wait and trot, with barely a good spur. And little sport into the bargain. I ache for the voice of hounds.* (Russell Journal – May)

This is the last reference to hawking that Russell makes. Another

loss of a valued falcon for Lord Berners and a failure to find what seems to have been a likely kill. This coupled with the frustrations of expending the day searching for lost hawks, and the reality of the stop-start nature of this type of falconry leave Russell concluding his hawking experiences with the sentences 'And little sport into the bargain. I ache for the voice of hounds'. Of his four recorded outings with Lord Berners, the third of which contains no details whatsoever, Richmond Russell had two blank days witnessed the loss of four hawks, one of which was definitely recovered, the taking of a single heron and one that might have been killed but could not be found, and spent considerable time searching for either quarry at which to fly the falcons or falcons once they had been flown. It was evidently not much to show for four days in the field.

When compared with the more formalised, rather simpler fox hunting that had fewer variables for the sportsmen, in that fox earths could be identified and blocked up to keep the largely territorial fox available for the hounds, one can see that falconry was quite a specialist taste. If one did not share a fascination for birds of prey or the traditions of an old sport, mounted falconry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was unlikely to match the excitement that could be found from riding to hounds after the fox.

Falconry did not capture the imagination of the rural elite as it had done in earlier times, or in the manner that foxhunting did. Despite being able to accommodate to an extent, the changes seen in the modern and enclosed rural landscape, mounted falconry suffered from the decline in specific types of quarry considered to provide the best forms of the sport, such as the kite and heron. It was often the case that even when the quarry was managed in order to provide for the sport as with the heronry at Diddlington in Norfolk, the drainage and cultivation of the fens rendered mounted sport impossible (Schlegel & Wulverhorst 1853). In other areas where following the flight on horses was possible the 'grand' quarry could

not be found. Enclosed and cultivated countryside did not provide the same benefits to mounted falconry that were evident with foxhunting and the fox.

With little possibility of adaptation in the form of the activity available to the mounted falconer; the requirements both social and practical were fixed or so he perceived. With regards to the provision of sport it became increasingly difficult to meet the expectations of the by then paying participants. Mounted falconry became less sustainable for a number of reasons and not merely because the land was increasingly cultivated, enclosed and ultimately fenced by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with barbed wire. It might be considered that the move away from a predominantly mounted activity to other aspects of the sport<sup>xi</sup> was the accommodation that enabled falconry to survive. Had the emphasis not altered from the mounted attempt to follow the 'great flight', then the shortage of quarry in the kite and heron, the changes in the rural landscape and, the lack of a social profile would have rendered the sport entirely redundant by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> or early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The sport demanded similar equestrian skills as foxhunting without providing quite the guarantee of excitement and as discussed previously, without a good degree of ornithological knowledge the spectacle was of limited appeal. It was also equally expensive but due to its rarity often required considerable travel and periods of re-location (Thornton 1804).

Falconry on foot and at gamebirds or ground quarries, was possible. However, the consequences of the divorce from equine culture and the associated status, was far reaching. The key to the survival of the sport was to become more directly associated with the shooting of game; a sport that had been implicated by some as a major factor in the decline of the art of using trained birds of prey (Fisher 1901, Freeman & Salvin 1859, Lascelles 1892, Schlegel &

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<sup>i</sup> The flying of hawks at both game birds and rabbits was undertaken on foot (Sebright 1826) although horses were often used to convey the hawking party to the venue. The flight was not generally followed by a mounted field.

<sup>ii</sup> It is true to say that the nature of the landscape was important to all falconers, the contention here is that mounted falconry demanded open countryside without barriers that would restrict riders from following the flight and cover into which some species of quarry would 'put' in order to escape the pursuing raptor.

<sup>iii</sup> Dates are reiterated here in order to establish the longevity of the tendency to place mounted falconry at the pinnacle of the sport.

<sup>iv</sup> The kite was almost extinct as a breeding bird in Britain (Lydekker 1895). The large heronries were broken up due to anglers wishing to eradicate competition in trout and salmon streams (Grimble 1904) and the countryside had become too enclosed in the districts where they were to be found in any numbers. Rooks alone were still the object of the mounted falconer's sport but this was confined to Salisbury Plain where hawking was done under the auspices of the Old Hawking Club (Blaine 1936).

<sup>v</sup> Artwork of significant figures such as the aristocracy and royalty indulging in game hawking, depicts those individuals mounted. This is convention; the traditional manner in which high status individuals were portrayed rather than an accurate illustration of the activity of game hawking itself (Cummins 1988).

<sup>vi</sup> Whilst it is certainly the case that Thornton moved to the then open downland of Wiltshire taking a lease on Spy (e) Park, and he continued to fly falcons until he departed to live in France in 1815, there is some evidence that the relocation was precipitated by his need to re-pay debts (Salvin letters). His extravagance is touched on elsewhere in this work.

<sup>vii</sup> Mead (1912)) gives much higher figures claiming that some 900 Acts were passed in the 1760's & 70's, whilst over 2000 were passed during the Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815).

<sup>viii</sup> Whilst May (ibid) disputes how many this economic burden actually dispossessed, there is certainly a perception that as a mechanism enclosure benefited the 'haves' and not the 'have not'.

<sup>ix</sup> Both Yelling (1977) and Williamson (2002) see this as a device by which legality of ownership was achieved through a spurious contestation of ownership.

<sup>x</sup> The results of such action were often profound for the falconer in that the chances of being reunited with one's hawk were very slim if it flew either out of sight or following the flight was not possible due to the terrain.

<sup>xi</sup> A hundred years earlier the kite would have featured as the preferred quarry along with the heron, but Kites had almost disappeared from the British countryside by the 1850's (Salvin & Brodrick 1855).

<sup>xii</sup> The term fences encompassed not only the post and rail type but also oxers and double oxers that were much wider, consisting of a laid hedge with a ditch on one side sometimes both sides and a rail Billett op cit). They were stock proof and difficult and dangerous to jump on horseback.

<sup>xiii</sup> The latter being well known to Salvin who was stationed in Ireland when serving in the Army.

<sup>xiv</sup> This is much repeated tale in the falconry literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>xv</sup> This is said in the knowledge that a proportion of this ground was put to deer forest by the 1850's, however this trend did not really take hold until later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Tranter 1998).

<sup>xvi</sup> Standing crops had been an issue for falconers as far back as 821. It is documented that King Kenulph of Mercia was petitioned by the monks of Abingdon to restrict falconers who damaged their crops at harvest time (Harting 1891)

<sup>xvii</sup> Richmond Russell (Journal 1828) makes several entries describing albeit briefly, his experiences hawking with Lord Berners. These are discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>xviii</sup> The tradition of the heron hawking continued however as the sport was effectively continued in the Low Countries at Loo. Several British falconers travelled to the continent and helped revive the practice of hawking that was moribund in that part of Europe. This is discussed elsewhere.

<sup>xix</sup> Indeed the O.H.C. actively restricted the field of turning casual observers away (Lodge 1946)

<sup>xx</sup> Many of the members of the Old Hawking Club were actually practitioners of the sport, not merely mounted followers as numerous members of the earlier clubs had been.

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<sup>xxii</sup> There is strong documentary evidence that in France the fox was a sporting quarry far earlier than in Britain. Earth stopping seems to have been common practice in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>xxiii</sup> The kite, heron, rook and crow were all established highly valued quarries.

<sup>xxiv</sup> 'Bagged' is literally to place in a bag, the method of holding or transportation of a wild animal prior to being used for baiting.

<sup>xxv</sup> Fox tossing, where the animal was repeatedly thrown into the air until such time as it died is a recorded amusement in continental Europe.

<sup>xxvi</sup> These foxes were known as 'bagman', from the earlier term (see note 6) or 'Leadenhallers' due to the place they were often purchased was Leadenhall Street market in London.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Subscription packs were a method of sharing the cost of maintaining a hunt. This grew in the period from 1760 when fewer of the private or aristocratic hunts were maintained (Billett 1994). Because they were open to subscription, those who would hunt were not reliant upon an invitation from a local Master of Foxhounds, normally the highest ranking local aristocrat or one of his sons.

<sup>xxviii</sup> In 'open' country Deer tended to run between coverts that were frequently little more than ¼ of a mile apart. Eventually deer 'took stand' (gave up running and faced the hounds) also in cover. In forest there was little opportunity to break into a canter (Goss 1931).

<sup>xxix</sup> 'Short hunters' were those horses that were used for part of the hunting day being changed once winded or lame (Gentleman's Magazine 1809). Some riders used up to 5 mounts during a day hunting (Billett 1994).

<sup>xxx</sup> Hugo Meynell is attributed with the first selective breeding of hounds specifically to hunt the Fox, in Leicestershire in the 1750's (Billett *ibid*).

<sup>xxxi</sup> This became an issue in the 19<sup>th</sup> century certainly amongst ladies in 'respectable society' (Thompson 1988), when hunting was increasingly popular amongst the urban wealthy. Whilst the extremes of the British class system both top and bottom still delighted in some of the abusive animal baiting and fighting pastimes that were a popular feature of a previous age, those who occupied the centre ground; who had education, aspiration or reformist religion (Cartmill 1993) were less comfortable with the results of Man's dominion over the fowls of the air and the beasts in the fields.

<sup>xxxii</sup> These were outriders stationed at specific points in the hunting country, they signalled the approach of quarry when hunting the likes of heron, and marked the likely location of hawks that had raked away.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Equestrianism was as much an example of Man's place in nature or perhaps domination of it, as was either hunting with hounds or indeed falconry, however the horse appeared such a willing servant and its domesticated role so essential to British society of the period, that few would have considered it problematic (Thomas 1983).

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Both these terms are used in quite a narrow sense here; 'social' in terms of a very limited spectrum of the population and 'sporting' regarding hunting or field sports.

<sup>xxxv</sup> This is returned to later however the breeding of captive birds of prey was not definitely accomplished until the 1940's by Renz Waller (Cade, Enderson, Thelander & White 1988).

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Richmond Russell whilst an avid fox hunter is not connected or related to Parson Jack Russell.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> It is true that the Royal Loo Club in the Low Countries in the 1840's & early 1850's had a considerable mounted following it was undertaken in conditions that for a while were completely distinct from the ones found in Britain at the time.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Due to their large size either male or female gyrfalcons could be used for heron.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Birds of prey exhibit reverse sexual dimorphism, in that the female is larger than the male. This tendency is more marked in the highly rapacious species such as the sparrow hawk, goshawk, merlin & the peregrine.

<sup>xl</sup> Namely game hawking with falcons but also the revival of lark hawking and the re-discovery of shortwings; hawking with the goshawk and sparrow hawk.



## Chapter 4

The following chapter analyses the relationship between falconry and shooting as the latter developed into a highly significant country sport with a large number of participants. Game preservation benefited not only the shooting fraternity but also the game hawkers, although the access to game intended to be shot was not always straight forward for falconers. Attitudes to birds of prey had altered and not to the benefit of the raptors. The social significance of the Game Acts is discussed as is the development of game preservation and ultimately game production and the development of shooting technology. A detailed examination of a shooting man's recollections of hawking is undertaken to illustrate further the relationship between the two hunting activities.

### Establishing seasons

Falconers like other field sportsmen tended to organise their activities to suit the conditions conducive to what they considered 'good sport', hence herons were invariably hunted whilst nesting in May, June and early July (Schlegel & Wulverhorst 1853), kites prior to their becoming too rare to bother with were sought in March, April and May, together with crows, rooks and magpie (Freeman & Salvin 1859, Salvin & Brodrick 1855, Sebright 1826). Game birds whilst always fulfilling an important role in British falconry, and providing welcome addition to the table even after the 1770's when technical advances in firearms were making them safer, quicker to load and more predictable and the growth of 'shooting flying' was assured (Tranter 1998, Brailsford 1999).

Grouse were hunted in August and September during the 1700's and the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but then the practice became to start at grouse on September 1<sup>st</sup> (Freeman & Salvin

1859) and continuing when they left the moors for the low ground in late October. The delay in the 'season' was to allow late hatched or slow growing grouse chicks to attain a good size prior to being hunted with falcons. Partridge were found in corn stubbles and thus could only be hunted after the July or August harvest, mainly in September and October. Woodcock, blackgame, duck and snipe were for the most part an occasional addition to the game hawkers list although some specialised in flying at woodcock (Fisher 1901, Fleming letters, Lascelles 1892). Pheasants were not often found far enough from cover to be quarry for a falcon other than on an infrequent basis albeit welcome, but even after the revival of shortwing hawking in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>i</sup> it was an autumn quest. Larks as the traditional quarry for merlins and blackbirds for sparrowhawks were also late summer and autumn pursuits respectively (Fisher 1901, Mitchell 1900). Other quarries such as the ground game; rabbit and hare were taken whenever possible. It can be observed that the conventions at least during the 100 years from 1750, dictated that high summer was the period in which limited hunting with falcons was undertaken<sup>ii</sup>. Towards the middle and the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century August became used for lark hawking and eventually with the growth of shooting, falconers started to adopt the actual grouse season from the 'Glorious' 12<sup>th</sup>.

The bird of prey was increasingly considered vermin throughout the period and thus falconry was often faced by hostility; from landowners with game rearing interests, from farmers bemused by its irrelevance and hostile to unnecessary mounted intrusion, and by the labouring classes who more often than not killed a trained falcon if they came across one before the falconer managed to ride up and retrieve it (Blaine 1936, Fisher 1901, Freeman & Salvin 1859, Harting 1884, Lascelles 1992).

### Game hawking

Flying hawks or falcons at game as classified under the Game Act of 1671<sup>iii</sup> or indeed as convention had it; quarry that was fit for the table (Harting 1891), began to provide opportunities beyond the mounted aspect of the sport. The flights were not the lengthy ones seen in the 'grand flight' at kite, heron or rook that sometimes covered several miles (Sebright 1826, Thornton 1804). Neither was game hawking a suitable activity for a sizeable 'field' of spectators but rather better suited a select group of active participants (Fisher 1901, Freeman & Salvin 1859). The falconers, both professional and proprietor would travel to the hawking ground mounted and when not actively involved in preparing or retrieving the falcons, would often stay mounted to facilitate a better view of the flight<sup>iv</sup>. Game hawking is not pursuit falconry as the 'out of the hood' type of flight, thus the chase was effectively cut very short if not completely redundant.

Game was not consistently or simply defined in the Game Acts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>v</sup>, however game birds are invariably characterised by being both huntable and edible. This rather loose category also held the distinction of being 'sporting' quarry, that is they provide a testing target for the gun or hawk. Gamebirds have the ability to burst into flight and fly very quickly for a limited distance<sup>vi</sup>. The habitats that remained after the medieval forests were felled, and in particular the enclosed countryside of the mid to late 1700's onwards was ideal for both the major species; the pheasant and the partridge (Rackham 1986). Interspersed with coverts, spinny, hedges, ditches, with growing or standing crops and, frequent stretches of rough pasture 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century lowlands were ideal for the ubiquitous pheasant and tolerable for the partridge<sup>vii</sup>. Most lowland British landscape had plenty of cover in which the birds could take refuge and non-intensive agriculture provided ample food for them. Their escape mechanism; a comparatively short high speed dash from danger was an ideal adaptation both for the game and for those interested in sport, be it with falcon or shotgun. In the

case of the upland game; grouse<sup>viii</sup> of both species and ptarmigan<sup>x</sup> rely heavily on young heather upon which to feed, but mature heather, bracken, woodland or plantation provided the sought after refuge, the latter being a feature of the Scottish highlands after the 1820's (Adams 1889, Brander 1980, Egan 1979). The Capercaillie<sup>x</sup> a woodland species, subject to several attempts to reintroduce it in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, had ceased to be found in the Scottish highlands by the early 1700's (Stanley 1835). Shooters blamed increasing cultivation for the demise of the 'great black fowl' but took to including it as legitimate quarry as soon as it could be found again in reasonable numbers (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887).

The land required for game hawking is very similar to that of the game shooter, with the proviso that flying longwings at grouse, pheasant and partridge requires land of the more open type of game habitat. Hawking with shortwings can be accomplished in almost any habitat that can support a man and shotgun (Maxwell 1850).

### Shooting & the Game Acts

The following section will explore how game shooting with shotguns developed and the social significance of such<sup>xi</sup>. How together with the legal restrictions of the English and Scottish Game Laws, the methods and economics of game preservation and perhaps more crucially the expanding popularity of shooting, this field sport became the determining factor in the development of non-mounted falconry in Britain.

Shooting men had little ground on which to believe that they contributed to the harmony of rural life, and never as did those who rode to hounds had done, had they made more than scant allowance for the other occupiers or users of the countryside. The Game Acts had long divided rich from poor and landed from

landless. They had failed to be inclusive and embrace the rural population, although as is discussed later, some effort was made to rectify this late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the early years of the 1900's tensions already existed between those who hunted foxes on horseback and those who shot. Even within shooting itself there was much dissent as technology, animal husbandry and management became more advanced and game was killed in ever greater numbers. The battue in particular was resented by the older shooters who were schooled in walking up game and making use of dogs.

One aspect of the failure of successive Game Acts was that they were at variance with a needy and increasing market. During the latter years of the 18<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the middle and upper classes in towns and cities demanded a 'game course' at dinner. Thus large numbers of game birds, hares and rabbits were required to be available for sale in season and demand outstripped supply (Mingay 1981). The earlier Game Acts in an attempt to restrict poaching had made the sale of game illegal. However, the demand for game for the table was such that a thriving trade grew and this actually encouraged poaching. It was this activity that revealed more than any other the divisions within the countryside. Landlords became characterised as demented devils from a former age (Punch Jan 17<sup>th</sup> 1863): unreasonable, unapproachable and out of date. Urban gangs who poached were also derided, and the violent confrontations between them, gamekeepers and the police were widely condemned. The single rural poacher became the sinner against and not the sinner in the eyes of many. Even if he sold a few pheasants or hare to local contact, it was a widely held belief that he was motivated by the need to feed his family with what was local and available and the actual ownership of a wild animal was a questionable concept (Hansard 1886). Traditionally the rural poor had legitimately supplemented their diet with ground game – hare and rabbits providing this was done discretely. Once

deprived of these 'fruits of the field and warren' (The Sporting Magazine February 1840), they grew increasingly resentful. Even what was considered a liberalisation of the Game Acts, the Ground Game Act of 1881 failed to address the issue effectively.

The Game Act of 1671 permitted the taking of game by owners of land valued at over £100.00 or tenants holding 99 year leases; the rent of which was in excess of £150:00 per annum (Munsche 1981). In the context of the time (Plumb 1950, Trevelyan 1942) this was a stringent property qualification that certainly excluded the taking of game from all but the landed or tenants with sizeable holdings. In terms of access to game the 1671 Act acknowledged the primacy of the country elite, they had "broken the royal monopoly and secured against competition from below" (Tate 1967, in Kirby 1971 pp357). In 1784, and in what can be seen as a response to the increase in numbers of those shooting or aspiring to shoot, a game certificate needed to be purchased in addition to the meeting of the aforementioned property qualifications<sup>xii</sup>.

However and perhaps significantly, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the certificate was understood by many sportsmen to be the sole formality necessary through which they could validate their 'right' to sport (The Sporting Magazine September 11<sup>th</sup> 1798). Even given this evident equivocation about the necessity to meet the property qualifications, the taking of game by use of the shotgun, was firmly in the hands of the country gentleman, usually but not necessarily a landed entity.

This signalled a change from the situation of some hundred years previously, when taking game was certainly the province of the traditional landed gentry, the rural social elite. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the 'new' sport of shooting flying and the changing social relations in the rural community (Brailsford 1999, Dentith 1998, Tranter 1998) enabled a new and potent aspirant to become part of

the sporting scene. New money made in commerce and industry, the vagaries of inheritance, education and the social flux that the emerging industrial and increasingly urban society was experiencing (Lane 1978) contributed to a new type of country gentleman; one that was frequently wealthy, well connected and socially aspiring but, often without land or title (Bailey 1978, Mangan 1981). With what would ultimately become recognised as the tools of middle-class appropriation, these new sportsmen changed shooting into a 'modern' activity and affected at least a partial or very limited democratisation in shooting; this would be better understood as the successful inclusion of their own social group.

### Game preservation

Game preservation, the term as used herein encompasses the management, protection and, production of game for the purposes of shooting; had become a particular concern for landowners with significant acreages in the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Eden 1974). The tendency to protect game can be traced at least as far back as the Norman conquest of England when game became the property of the King and through him the appointed, titled elite (Cummins 1988). With the changing social environment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the consolidation of Protestantism and the march towards industrialisation there was a need to establish or re-establish ownership and control of the objects of the hunt amongst other aspects of British life (Plumb 1950). This process is illustrated in the frequent and formal announcements in publications such as the *Caledonian Mercury*, published in Edinburgh<sup>xiii</sup>. Whilst the Game Laws that applied to England were for the most part mirrored within a year or two north of the border, in Scotland the legal system there demanded public announcement prior to prosecution of those caught taking game without authority (Statutes at Large Made for the Preservation of Game 1732). By 1780 the notices had become



more perfunctory but no less frequent<sup>xiv</sup>. As preservation of game became little short of an obsession (Streatfield 1913) it was achieved by prosecution and restricting access to the land, with bailiffs, game keepers and watchers being among the retainers who were tasked with ensuring uninvited guests, even those travelling along highways, did not tarry long enough to undertake any poaching.

It was not long however, when more obvious methods came into use (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887); trapping, shooting and nest or den destruction continued for those creatures that might be thought to compete with, or prey upon game birds. The hand of man had long been turned against these unfortunates (Cartmill 1993, Thomas 1983) and all that altered here was the intensity of the persecution. For birds of prey however, destruction was comparatively new; hawks, falcons and eagles that had in the recent past been protected at best, or tolerated at worst, became 'vermin' by the middle years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Howitt 1732). The sight of a 'hooked beak' or 'curved talon' even in the innocuous kestrel or scavenging buzzard was enough to have both those countrymen with vested game interest and in many cases those with none, enjoining the slaughter (Harting 1880). By 1868 The Earl of Wilton was to write "A consequence of this wholesale preservation and destruction is, that while game is slaughtered in the one case (for sport), all other birds are being massacred under the common title of vermin, ..." (Wilton 1864 pp224). Indeed it was widely recognised that man had slowly but relentlessly destroyed much of the '*ferae naturae*' (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887)

However, the preservation of game also encompassed the increasing production of game birds not just the destruction of competitors or predators. This was achieved in two quite distinct manners, the first was the control or improvement of the breeding habitat with pheasantries established such as that at the Earl of

Pembroke's Wilton estate (Peek & Aflalo 1897); clearing dense thickets and re-planting with specific 'game cover', drainage, supplemental feeding and, protection from human disturbance (Knox 1850). On a different tack but one that mirrors the whole project to manage the countryside and all therein; successful attempts were made to farm game birds. In the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Duke of Blenheim's keepers made extensive use of cooped broody hens to incubate collected pheasants eggs (Andrews 1975), meanwhile the Duke of Richmond had in excess of 1,000 partridge eggs imported on an annual basis to bolster his home bred partridge, the shooting of which had made his estate legendary (The Sporting Magazine August 1793). Leadenhall market sold game bird eggs for incubating, young pheasants and partridge, and earlier in the year hen pheasants ready to be used in the 'open cage' system<sup>xv</sup> (ibid June 1802). Lord Lilfords letters written in the last thirty years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mention the market at Leadenhall quite frequently, with one letter, written in 1893, mentioning '... consignments of Scandinavian game, capercaillie, willow grouse, black game, hazel grouse, etc.' (Lilford letters). These would doubtless have been wild taken however. Attempts were made to produce grouse from captive stock but these were unsuccessful whilst the 'incidentals' of woodcock and snipe were never seriously considered, management of the habitat would have to provide for these (Eden 1979).

So successful were the efforts to produce plentiful game for shooters that other interests and land uses suffered (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887, Wilton 1864). At Holkham, Elvedon, Broadlands, Beaulieu, Luton Hoo, Harewood, Chatsworth and as far north as the Buccleuch estates, pheasants were reared in very high numbers (Martin 1987). This was not least because shooting was an important social exercise and vital to the network of status and privilege but revenues where shooting was charged for, provided a greater return than did rents and farm tenancies

(Bateman 1883). However it was recognised by 1790's that such high levels of stocking had serious consequences for the farmer and crop damage by game birds is recorded in *A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk* (Young 1804) and *The Rural Economy of Norfolk* (Marshall 1795). Given the importance of game preservation to the landed elite and the shooting classes of tenant farmers, professional men, those successful in commerce and business; for the former the provision of high numbers of game had both sporting, status and financial imperatives, whilst the latter craved the sport and were increasingly willing to pay for the privilege. There were efforts to petition Parliament with regards to the overstocking through such bodies as the Board of Agriculture and County Assizes that launched an unsuccessful attempt in 1870.

The cost of the provision of game birds for sport was not inconsiderable: Pheasants and duck cost the Harewood estate a little over £340:00 in 1800 but the annual cost had grown to over £4,526:00 in 1855 (Harewood archive: accounts 1850-1870). The Earl Braybrook's accounts for 1825 show that whilst the shooting including all the game preservation, was a little under a sixth of the entire cost of running the estate, it was the second most expensive category of expenditure after running the house (Addison 1953). Thomas William Coke 'Coke of Norfolk' devoted £3,250:00 to the provision of game and improvements to the woodland set aside to hold the pheasants in the eighteen months before he died in 1842<sup>xvi</sup> (Holkham papers xxi, Stirling 1908).

Game preservation operated on a smaller scale as well. W.A. Adams writing about his experiences in the 1850's reports "Every farmer, if the shooting was in his take, preserved his game; he shot it or he let it." (1896 pp2). He proceeds to report that for the working farmers, as opposed to the large estates, preservation was a matter of leaving the stubbles and weeds, allowing clover and feg in the pastures and, not clearing out the ditches too regularly. This

management ensured that "... nice mixed bags were made in covert with hares and rabbits and wild pheasants, ..." (ibid). Smaller enterprises did little in the way of hand rearing of either pheasants or partridge.

Preservation and the domestic production of game resulted in the restriction of 'rights of way' across land. To save disturbance to their expensively produced game birds land owners closed paths and tracks with little consideration to the hardships created for local travellers, labourers and even tenants (Howkins 1991). This further divided shooting proprietors from many of those who lived and worked in the countryside.

Perhaps a more damaging division for sportsmen was that between the fox hunters and those who shot. The quarry for one, was the despised plunderer of the quarry for the other. Where there was shooting foxes were systematically exterminated, indeed the gamekeepers livelihood often depended upon it. So where the two sports existed together as in much of the south and midlands of England, hunting experienced a decline in foxes, many coverts were drawn and found to be without 'Reynard' (Bovil 1962). The tension was not eased very much by blank areas being stocked with 'bag' foxes bought at Leadenhall market and transported in for the hunting days (Billet 1994). These were an easy quarry and provided poor sport. They did however, give a way for those with shooting interests to avoid the damaging accusations levelled at much of the shooting community, they allowed some hunting whilst these 'bagmen' foxes were easily shot or poisoned by the keepers if they survived the hounds. Another accommodation was made between the sports; gamekeepers were paid by the hunts to leave a certain number of foxes. Some proprietors were happy with this arrangement but it was always an uncomfortable relationship, given that in the 1880's to produce, rear and feed in to a particular location meant that a pheasant cost something in the region of

£1.00 (Aflalo 1899).

### Shooting, economics & social structure

It was certainly a perception of the time that hunting or riding to hounds, was a sport far more accessible to a wide section of the community (Wilton 1868). This notion is debatable and by the end of Victoria's reign the range of participants had certainly narrowed if compared to the situation a century earlier, however when compared to shooting it could be considered less exclusive (Sporting Life 1908). Shooting had become less restricted in terms of those who participated. It was not the province of the rural landowner as it had been in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century but was increasingly available to those who could afford to pay for it. The middle classes both urban and rural entered the sport and both drove the expansion of shooting and were encouraged by it. Whilst this diluting of exclusivity did not extend to those outside the middle classes for formal shooting, eventually vermin shooting and ground game were to become available to some of a more modest station in life. It was also considered that the employment of beaters from the ranks of farm and estate workers or men from local hamlets or villages for driven game was in a manner of speaking, the provision of an active and enjoyable spectatorship<sup>xvii</sup>.

Whatever the methods used in game preservation, costs increased for all either through loss of crop yield for the smaller less intensive operation or through the sheer scale of the preservation undertaken on the larger sporting estates (Select Committee on Game Laws Vol. VI). There was a marked pressure to ensure that shooting contributed to the overall economic health of land ownership, as well as providing an exciting amusement (Eden 1979). It is reported that there was an air of limited inclusivity in the shooting field of the first years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (The Field 1854). The rural population be they the landed, the tenant, the farm or indentured labourer had

long shared a common interest<sup>xviii</sup> in what came to be known as field sports of which shooting had taken pride of place (Anonymous 1835). Even when almost all forms of hunting save the destruction of rats and the like, were proscribed in favour of a very few, there was a recognition that somehow those who lived and worked in rural Britain no matter what status, were stakeholders (Smith 1847). The legislation of the 1831 Game Act (England & Wales) and the 1832 Game Act (Scotland) however failed to satisfy either those excluded from the sport or those who were in possession of the privilege (Colquhoun 1851).

The Game Acts of the 1830's were seen by many as a re-appropriation of game by the landed wealthy, that had through recent informal practice become available to a rather less select group of sportsmen (Bovill 1962). Under the Acts, specific permission had to be sought from the owner by tenants or occupiers of land, prior to their being legally entitled to shoot game. This turned back the convention of the time that saw occupancy as a category of persons whose right to shoot was assured unless their tenancy specifically and formally ruled out such action, often with an associated lower rent. Whilst the impetus for the new Acts came from those who had large scale game preserving interests such as the Duke of Richmond and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Grenville, they actually continue a series of consolidating measures stretching back to the 1770's, the Ellenborough Act of 1803 being perhaps the most infamous<sup>xix</sup> (Cannadine 1994). It was feared that so unpopular would be the 1831 and 1832 Game Acts, that poaching would actually increase due to the tenants having no vested interest in protecting the game (Cunningham 1854) and that social unrest would ensue. The Duke of Wellington was joined by a number of peers including Lord Wharnccliffe, in fearing that the situation would lead to a complete breakdown in the social fabric of the rural community (Hansard 1831).

Perhaps this realisation of the importance of stable community or at least the need for popular assent; or the changing power structures in Britain that had started to shift the locus of control away from the landed elite; or the momentum of a 'popular' sporting activity undertaken by a good many of middle and upper class, often educated and professional, men; or a combination of such factors, signalled the end to the type of legislation that the Game Acts of the 1830's were to come to exemplify. Never again did the vested interest and influence of the landed elite achieve the control over game, in quite so obvious a manner and subsequent legislation was more open and reflective of the sport of shooting<sup>xx</sup>.

In practice shooting had become a vehicle through which some quite strictly defined interaction could be undertaken between otherwise distinct social groups. Limited though it was and generally not extended to the lowest tiers in the rural community, landowners valued and financially supported this (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887). Hunt (1820) in his memoirs recalls that some ground was set aside near Marlborough to allow tenants of the estate and property owners from the town to shoot. It was rumoured that possession of game certificates was never sought. The long running Select Committee on Game Laws (Vol. VIII, Vol. XII) reveal a tendency towards granting tenants permission to shoot: In 1828 the Right Honourable John Bennett MP maintained that in Wiltshire, game preservation was tolerated by tenants because they were given the opportunity to shoot; whilst in the 1840's on the Duke of Grafton's Suffolk estate, tenants were invited to shoot regularly during the season and once the game season was over they could do any amount of rabbit or vermin shooting (ibid Vol. XII).

The 1880 Ground Game Act (England & Wales) was at once a recognition of the aforementioned trend of widening the legal category of persons that were permitted to shoot and, an attempt to rectify what had become a glaring mismatch between the law and

what was actually occurring in rural Britain (Adams 1889). The occupier became entitled to kill ground game on the land they leased and whilst they could not sub-let this entitlement, they were permitted by providing written consent, to allow one other person to shoot over such land under their occupancy (The Field 1884). This removed the often piecemeal, informal inclusion, and indeed for some the exclusion from the shooting fraternity that tenants had been party to for many years, conveying upon them instead what many appreciated as close to ownership as they would ever achieve (Streatfield 1913). Although many sportsmen believed that the Act lead quickly to the extinction of the hare in numerous districts and that there were problems in attempting to let shooting ground where 'ground game' was already shot out (Adams op cit).

Despite these complaints and whilst falling short of allowing tenants the shooting of winged game and not completely removing the property qualification this 'loosening' of restriction appeared to be a popular move. By the final decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were over 190,000 shotgun licences in existence these having risen almost 30,000 since the 1880 Ground Game Act came into force (Inland Revenue)<sup>xxi</sup>. The growth in popularity of shooting that had begun more than one hundred and seventy years earlier, had been steadily maintained despite the vagaries of the rural economy and the tendency towards restrictive legislation, and was to continue unabated until the outbreak of the Great War.

### Technical advances

During this expansion and certainly driven in part by it<sup>xxii</sup>, the technology of shooting had progressed. Described in Belany's 1841 text, although actually written in the first quarter of the century, "... (the gun) is ever to be regarded as a dangerous agent in the hands of man, not only from its liability to accidental explosion or the most fatal accidents ..." (pp10). From the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century



muzzle loaded, crude, cumbersome and often dangerous firelock that required powder, shot and wadding to be measured and loaded in the field, the shotgun was much changed by the late 1900's. It had become a precision breach loaded sporting weapon that fired quickly, loaded pre-prepared cartridges that delivered shot of standard weight, in predictable patterns for determined distances (Ruffer 1977). Gone were the days of exploding barrels, damp powder and, there was no 'hang fire'<sup>xxiii</sup> which had bedevilled earlier shooters, due to the invention of percussion caps which were much faster, more reliable and safer (The Field 1889). Britain's industrial technology had produced hardware that was capable of killing game in a manner that required only the mastery of the 'art'. The technical difficulties that had created real problems for the early proponents of 'shooting flying' were surpassed. It became a sport that was comparatively simply mastered, reasonably safe in a mechanical sense and, reflective of the gentlemanly aspiration; clean, consistent, predictable, highly social and modern but in keeping with rural 'English' traditions (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887).

'Shooting flying' was attempted quite early despite the inaccurate and frequently dangerous nature of the firelocks of the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Ridinger (1698-1767), the German artist who specialised in sporting engravings, represented shooting frequently and amongst these 'shooting flying' features regularly (Baillie-Grohman 1925). Most of these engravings show duck being shot whilst flying and it is surmised that the rapid yet 'straight line' flight of these water fowl, enabled the shooters of the day with sufficient skill to predict the flight path and allow for the hang fire by giving sufficient 'lead' in the shot. Whilst shooting duck in flight was certainly possible, the lower flying partridge and cover loving pheasant were far more difficult quarry for the early shooter, thus these birds were generally shot at whilst on the ground or at the point of the flush.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century shooting was carried out in the following manner: 'walking up', a shooting party would walk often in line abreast, and shoot at game that they themselves flushed; alternatively, the game was 'marked down' that is using a setting or pointing dog. When the 'guns' were in place having moved forward to within shotgun range a flushing dog such as a spaniel would be sent in and the birds 'sprung' or flushed (Eden 1979). Once in the air the fleeing game would be shot at and kills picked up by servants or under-keepers. In both of these methods the shooting party was necessarily rather small perhaps averaging only four or five guns, each accompanied by a loader or two who were usually either under-keepers or footmen, plus dog handlers and pickers up. Moving was important for the shooters because the black powder used made copious smoke that hung in the air and obscured vision. The notion of the static 'gun' or station in game shooting was one that only occurred later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unsurprisingly and given the difficulties of moving even quite small groups of people through countryside in a manner that enabled them to approach wild game birds close enough to shoot them<sup>xxiv</sup>, keen shooting men often preferred to shoot in couples with few or even no servants in attendance (Adams 1889). This was more difficult to sustain for the higher profile social elite, who invariably needed to function within the conventions of their status. To shoot with the trappings of privilege was evidently a rather difficult and inefficient activity. Shooting despite the improvements in shooting technology, needed a change in order to enable larger parties with their attendant footmen, keepers and even spectators to be present, rather than the smaller outings that whilst more productive did not meet the needs of the social elite who required expression of status in addition to 'sport' (Ruffer 1977).

The railway system in an astonishing expansion, was largely in place by the 1860's, was a further component of the growth and popularity of shooting (ibid). It did not effect the shooting in the way

it threatened to ruin hunting to hounds. It was instrumental in allowing access to the northern moors and facilitated an English 'invasion' of Scotland in sporting terms. Whilst some of the more remote venues required conveyance by pony and trap, such as north and west from Inverness where the railway stopped, and due to the difficulties of engineering a line over Shap Fell, the moors of the north-west of England were also considered 'remote' (Lefevre 1874). Further south however railway access to the great sporting estates was taken for granted (Adams 1889)<sup>xxv</sup>. This comparatively quick and regular transport provided a further mechanism that embedded shooting into the social lives of landed elite and significantly, of the sporting middle and upper classes.

### The Battue

Very early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century driven shooting was introduced as a way to facilitate improved sport when shooting grouse in northern England and Scotland (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887). This was where the guns would either form a well spaced line perhaps behind a dry stone wall or over a rise depending on the terrain, and the birds would be 'driven' towards them by beaters working across the moor. Later 'batteries', now known as 'butts' from which the guns shot, were constructed on the moors (ibid). Where grouse were numerous this method led to far higher bags being taken and soon became the standard arrangement. Lowland shooting adopted the *battue* or driven shoot towards the middle of the century. It had some years earlier become popular in Europe, and it is claimed was 'imported' to the United Kingdom after British sportsmen took to shooting in France, Spain and Hungary<sup>xxvi</sup> (Ruffer 1977). This mode of shooting did not receive a universal welcome from the shooting fraternity (Duke of Devonshire pers con), but it was ideally suited to social shooting and the rather tamer products of the game rearing project<sup>xxvii</sup> and once it received the approval of the Prince of Wales in the late 1860's it became firmly established (The Field 1892).

The battue method where large numbers of pheasants and partridges were driven over the 'guns' did provide a more difficult shot than the more traditional 'walking up', that produced a shot at game birds as they flew away. Indeed it was considered more sporting for a short period testing the shot and the improved technology of shooting in a more taxing way (Streatfield 1911), however it was not long before it was considered differently. It was indeed a more difficult shot but one that was soon mastered by the participants and once learned proved to be a comparatively simple skill. The bag numbers soon mounted, the game books from Sandringham record 1,220 pheasants and 459 partridges shot in the 1804 season, whereas in 1882 after 19 years of occupancy by the Prince of Wales in which time he turned the estate into one of the premier shoots in the country, on a single November day 3,127 pheasants were shot (Sandringham game books). The numbers of game shot became a source of pride and indicator of the quality of the shooting.

The Earl of Wilton in 'On the Sports and Pursuits of the English' (1864) articulated grave doubts about the wisdom and ethics of the new shooting:

*But whether we have improved as sportsmen may be questioned, if we look at the custom now become 'common' of collecting together within narrow bounds large quantities of game, artificially reared and semi-domesticated, which has tended to greatly of late years to destroy the taste for real sport amongst the upper orders, and at the same time crowd the gaols from the lower ranks of society. No pursuit deserves the title of sport which taxes nothing beyond the organ of destruction in those who follow it. (pp223)*

He continued:

*The battue system, in which hundreds of pheasants reared almost by the hand of the keeper, and scores of hares enclosed within nets, are driven into the very faces of sportsmen posted in advantageous situations, and slaughtered by wholesale with the smallest possible expenditure of trouble to the slayers, may be styled in newspaper paragraphs glorious day's sport, but has certainly nothing in common with that description of sport which brings into play the qualities of energy, perseverance, endurance of fatigue, great self command, and calmness of nerve in times of difficulty, and which has given to the national character its title to respect the sportsman by flood and field at home, and the warrior abroad. (pp223-224)*

His caution and sentiments like it were largely unheard in the buoyant and growing shooting fraternity. The battue became the method of choice on lowland ground, it produced vast numbers of game shot and comparatively little risk of blank days, it was certainly expensive but in all respects it met the demands of the new shooting.

Partridges were the most important lowland game bird throughout the 1700's but pheasants were to take this place once large scale game preservation became commonplace in the 1800's. Being robust, large, fast in the air and prone to flying in straight lines or long sweeping arcs they became very popular with the shooting fraternity<sup>xxviii</sup>. Once driven shooting was started in the lowlands they became the particular focus of this system, they could be 'fed into' a particular wood or cover strip for several days before the shoot, the guns were then arranged between the birds and the home or roosting wood. Once disturbed by the beaters the birds instinctively attempted to fly to their roosting area, having to pass over the waiting guns. The numbers of game taken soared (Ruffer 1977). Partridge drives were also arranged but they required far more careful attention to the terrain than in the case of pheasant

(Holkham papers xxiii), however Sandringham and Holkham had become famous for driven partridge by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Martin 1987, Ruffer 1977).

Where voices of dissent were raised and it seems heard, were not in the context of the battue but in the comparatively restricted practice of shooting captive pigeons at the likes of the Hurlingham Club. In a strongly worded attack, the Times (1871) "... practiced by aristocratic amateurs out of mere wantonness and love of killing ...". This attack was class motivated with the moral high ground claimed by the educated middle classes who had moved on or so it was believed, from such shows of barbarity and whose organised games were rule or convention bound. Whilst the shooting of live captive pigeons out of traps or launchers was the preserve of the wealthy and undertaken at various private clubs, the organised driven game shoot was where the aristocracy and the middle classes met and few sporting sources record being troubled by the scale of the slaughter. However, religious dissent was regular, urban and evangelical in its form

#### A shooting man's perception of falconry

A consideration of falconry from a shooting mans' perspective is now undertaken. Frank Streatfield C.M.G., the author of *Sporting Recollections of an Old 'un* (1913), left detailed notes on the chapter he devotes to falconry in a proof copy now in the Kotsiopoulos collection. Written some time in 1910 or 1911 Streatfield's chapter makes no attempt to describe how falconry was undertaken but concentrates upon the writers impressions of it. In addition his notes allow a further insight that the author chose not to publish.

Chapter XI begins:

*There was a time in my career as a sportsman when a great deal of hawking was interpolated amongst the shooting. Usually at a place in one of the eastern counties, where a large party of us were in the habit of staying on a very good and rather big partridge shoot that was never more than half shot over, at least two days a week were devoted to hawking. (pp324)*

This 'place' in the eastern counties was near Lakenheath, for in his notes Streatfield mentions arriving at the railway station there. Quite which estate he was shooting over however is uncertain. It is known that he had shot on the Holkham estate which is rather further north towards the Norfolk coast, but doubtful if the hawking he mentions took place there. E.C.Newcome had property nearer to Lakenheath and hawked partridges regularly, but he was one of the finest falconers of his day and in all likelihood would not have earned the assessment "In all probability the partridge-hawking I have witnessed, and I have been out some scores of times, has been of an inferior description" (pp352). Newcome's son retained the estate after his fathers sudden death in 1871. Streatfield may have been a guest on the Elveden estate whose tenant was the Prince, later Maharajah Duleep Singh. The Prince who had been effectively dispossessed by the British when his Mogul kingdom of Punjab was annexed after friction between Sikhs and the British initiated a war in which British interests were attacked in the neighbouring province<sup>xxix</sup>. Whilst maintaining a large collection of hawks and being a founder member of the Old Hawking Club, Duleep Singh was a poor falconer by all accounts, even though he employed the very able professional John Barr (The Maharaja is discussed later in this work). However it is most likely that the estate that Streatfield was referring to was that retained by T. J. Mann at Docking Heath in Norfolk. It is known that Streatfield both shot and fished with Mann in the 1880's and mentions him elsewhere in the book however there is no actual confirmation of this in either the text or indeed in the handwritten notes.

In the usual practice when shooting was undertaken as well as falconry, the days would be single sport; that is there would be either shooting or falconry. Normally the hawks would be flown twice or three times a week depending on the weather. Streatfield included hawking days with Sundays<sup>xxx</sup> as wasted or blank days "On the days that hawking was the order of the day, there was no shooting at all for anyone. If they didn't care to go out hawking, the sportsmen could stop at home and bite their finger-nails, read third class magazines, or even play patience." (pp324) His notes betray a frustration more acute "Like a child with his nose against the glass we gaze out .... the coveys lay to the dog uncanny in the knowledge that no gun would be raised, chance after chance goes past."

He continued:

*Now usually among our party there were two who honestly liked hawking – our host and one other. There were two more who **said** they liked it; but their names, although they were both to me, spelt Ananias and Sapphira. These two also, as I noticed on Sundays, said they liked going to Church, but their looks betrayed them.*" (pp324 enboldened as original)

Streatfield continued "I never saw two men look so frightfully bored in my life as they did during the performance, or so joyous when it was all over." (ibid) In his notes he replaced 'the' with 'either' and underlined it, implying this boredom extended to the performance of flying hawks as well.

He went on:

*The rest of us hated hawking like poison, especially as it took us away from the most excellent partridge-driving. I don't think we ever*



*attempted to conceal our dislike. To us it was waste of time that might have been more profitably spent in the pursuit of partridges, only with guns and drivers instead of falconers, peregrines and a cadge. (pp325)*

His notes add that it was “Due to the damned hawks several of the party would stay away next season. B----- had taken other ground.” Streatfield used the convention of avoiding naming his companions throughout large portions of both the text and indeed his notes.<sup>xxx</sup> He does however make exclamation:

*Now, peace, you Geordie Lodge! you Gerald Lascelles! and you others! I am not going to worry you with any lengthy dissertation on hawking.... But I wish to say a few words on the subject as it appears to an ordinary – a very ordinary – sportsman who was not brought up to the art, for art it undoubtedly is, and a very high art, too. (pp325)*

Here the notes have ‘Hoo ha ha’ written against this paragraph, a traditional cry of falconers in an earlier age. Lodge and Lascelles are discussed at length elsewhere in this work.

In his ‘few words’ on the art, Streatfield recognises the need for very open ground and describes the stoop of the falcon “... when he or she flashes out of the far blue vault of heaven like lighting and strikes the quarry, is a sight for the gods, and is perfectly glorious.” (pp326) However he then articulates the often raised criticism of all branches of falconry “But the endless abortive waiting about, ‘the restless unsatisfied longing,’ that I have suffered day after day and then plodded my weary way homewards with nothing accomplished, has gone far to make me hate the very sight of a cadge.” His notes say ‘... cadge, hood and glove.’

Declaring that he had derived “... more pleasure from rook-hawking

in Cambridgeshire than from any other kind of hawking.” (pp326) he bemoans his lack of a horse and declares that he “... missed the very best of the chase, ...” An outcome that any rook hawking falconer could have predicted and indeed undertaking that type of flight on foot is not something that the established 19<sup>th</sup> century falconers would have attempted. He does record that the falconer was mounted but it is unclear if he is referring to his host or the professional falconer who would have been retained to manage the falcons and flights. He further describes with a good deal of enthusiasm a flight at woodcock, one of his favourite game birds, that out-flies the tiercel flown at it. This illustrates another slightly unorthodox approach to the sport, that does suggest that the falconry he witnessed was not of the highest standard:

*I am delighted to say the ‘cock’ won by many lengths. We were partridge-hawking, and happened to see a woodcock alight in a hedge in the distance. We walked up to the place, put him up, and the tiercel was instantly undooded and let go. The cock was off like a ----- Well! like a woodcock; and I know of no faster-flying bird when he means going. He made for a little wood about a mile away. Peregrines can fly a bit too, can’t they? Our tiercel did his best, but he never even turned the cock, who reached his haven in safety fully thirty yards ahead. It was the prettiest bit of hawking that I ever saw. (pp326-327)*

In knowledge of the limitations of the peregrine, few experienced falconers would have flown the woodcock in the manner described. The ‘waiting on’ mode of flying to which the partridge hawking tiercel would have doubtless been trained, was the correct method to use. ‘Out of the hood’ at woodcock gave the falcon little chance of success despite the enjoyment Streatfield obviously gained from the flight.

In discussing goshawking, and giving another indication that it may

well have been T. J. Mann who was his host, he describes a very efficient goshawk. In 1886 Mann had a famous gos by the name of 'Shadow of Death' that took very many rabbits (Lodge letters Xii). Streatfield states: " I don't admire goshawking for rabbits at all." (pp327) and his notes show several attempts to describe adequately his displeasure, eventually he settled for:

*The wretched bunny appears to me to have next to no chance at all, and then when the poor little brute is squealing in the goshawk's talons, along comes the falconer with his open knife, and over the subsequent rites that ensue we had better draw a veil. I must allow that to the goshawk they appeared to be delightful: to me they were distinctly beastly.* (Notes & 1911 pp327)

This failure to appreciate the nature of another man's sport is common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century literature, as seen in the foregoing Streatfield a shooting man, had little empathy with falconry in the field. Belany (1841), Salvin & Brodrick (1855) and Harting (1883) all show a similar dissatisfaction but in their case the criticism is directed at shooting. Belany in discussing shooting points out that "Much game may be killed by it, it is true, but then the mere slaughtering of birds is not the object of a sportsman" (1841 pp10). To many falconers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the 'bags' obtainable in shooting rendered the shotgun an instrument of slaughter. Game being taken in such small numbers by the use of trained hawks or falcons as to render any comparison with shooting quite pointless. However it has to be acknowledged that many falconers were keen game shooters as well. Quite how they stood on this argument is not clear although the likes of Lodge seem to have been able to completely compartmentalise his sport (Lodge 1946). Where numbers of game shot was an indicator of the quality of the sport in the shooting of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was not and could not be considered a measure of the quality of falconry. Taking quarry was nonetheless important for falconers but a good hawk

might in an entire season, take what a proficient shot could bag in a morning on good shooting ground, and a modest hawk would take many less.

Where Streatfield was impressed with falconry was articulated in the final section of Chapter XI. It was in the training of the hawks or falcons that he saw real wonder “The amount of knowledge, patience, and acumen required by a man who is to become a successful falconer appears to me to be next door to miraculous.” (1913 pp328) His notes bear the comment that ‘John ought to appreciate this at least!’<sup>xxxii</sup> He continued in the text:

*The peregrine, as we all know, is one of the wildest of all birds, and yet a skilful trainer will take a mature bird, caught when fully grown in the course of migration, and called, I believe, ‘a passage hawk,’ and by his infinite skill and unwearied patience will change the, by nature most exceptionally wild fellow into a tame, well behaved, and obedient servant. (ibid)*

The Streatfield passages reveal the uneasy accommodation that was made between shooting and falconry. For the most part this accommodation was all one way; falconry was an occasional nuisance for a few shooting men and perhaps a passing entertainment. Most shooters would not have come across actual falconry however, the nearest they would have come to it would probably have been through articles in the sporting press. Falconry on the other hand, was beholden to shooting even when the falconer was wealthy enough to own be an estate owner or lease his own partridge manor. Shooting was a commercially driven activity by the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, despite the predilection of the ‘old money’ or aristocracy to use it as a social entertainment for their social circle (Bateman 1883), falconry was not in a position to compete.

The foregoing has analysed some of the defining aspects in the development of shooting game birds, which by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had become the most significant of all British field sports both in terms of the number of participants and its economic importance. The succession of Game Laws illustrate the tension between traditional control of the objects of shooting and the imperative to include and enable the new professional and increasingly influential though landless, middle classes and farming tenants. The Acts also reflect the shift in the mechanisms of power in British society that ultimately rendered the landed elite an anachronism in terms of governance although not in terms of field sports. The development of game protection and where it was possible, the wholesale production of game birds to provide for an increasingly economically driven sport; a sport that was able to meet the demands of technologically advanced methods of killing, showing it subject to the same canons as the rest of the 'modern' age.

Consideration of a text and original notes made by a shooting man about his impression of falconry illustrate both the gulf that separated the sports and the commonalities that drew them together. There was an accommodation made for falconry by many who shot, however little or none was shown for the wild counterparts of the captive falcons.

Game shooting was the controlling influence through both economics and popularity, that defined much of the way the rural environment and indeed, the rural community functioned. It did compete with, but more often tolerated fox hunting, however in terms of expenditure, employment, management, technological innovation and sporting involvement, game shooting outstripped all other field sports by a considerable margin. It was shooting and the associated demands thereof that modern, non-mounted, falconry had to accommodate in order to survive.

<sup>i</sup> Colonel Thornton is known to have kept the occasional goshawk and notes that the Laird of Rothemurcos gave him a gift of a young bird still in down (Thornton 1804). Sebright (1826) writes about the training and use of both the goshawk and the sparrow hawk but there is little other evidence that the shortwings were much in use at that time.

<sup>ii</sup> This was not strictly applied however and there are records of falconry occurring in almost every month of the year (Fisher 1901, Freeman & Salvin 1859, Lascelles 1892)

<sup>iii</sup> Pheasants and partridges were the prime concern but the Act included rabbits and perhaps curiously omitted both grouse and 'black game' (black grouse). This situation was reversed some years later with the removal of rabbits and the inclusion of both species of grouse.

<sup>iv</sup> Dog handlers and the cadgeman who carried the hawks to the hawking ground were not of the status to be provided with mounts.

<sup>v</sup> Game in the 1831 Act (Section 2), is defined as hares, pheasants, partridges, grouse, heath or moor game and black game. Woodcock, snipe and rabbits are covered under the provisions of the Act but not defined as game. In Scotland the 1832 Act includes wild duck. In Britain deer are not classified as game but specifically legislated for in separate Acts of Parliament.

<sup>vi</sup> The exception here being woodcock and to a lesser extent, snipe both of which have a tendency to 'take to the air' and seek in the first instance to out fly the falcon (Lascelles 1892).

<sup>vii</sup> The partridge is essentially a bird of more open countryside and did best where the enclosures were large.

<sup>viii</sup> Mature grouse can and do fly considerable distances to reach cover if necessary.

<sup>ix</sup> Ptarmigan live at greater altitude than do the other grouse, often being found around the tree-line and above on mountain sides and very high moors.

<sup>x</sup> Formerly spelled Capercaillie (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887).

<sup>xi</sup> Stalking or deer shooting is not considered herein, being distinct in both quarry and habitat.

<sup>xii</sup> At the time there was some dissent at this 'tax' on sport and it was widely understood as a method used by the Monarch George III to increase revenue (The Gentleman's Companion 1785).

<sup>xiii</sup> The common form taken by such announcements was, as published in the Caledonian Mercury numerous times during 1722:

*By order of the Right Honourable the Earl of DALKIETH,*

These are to give Notice, That his Lordship has given Directions for preserving the GAME upon his Estate in the Parishes of Langholm, Westerkirk, Eskdale-muir, Ewis and Cannobie. – He expects no Gentleman will, without proper Authority, hunt upon his grounds; and has given Orders to prosecute Transgressors in Terms of Law (upper & lower case, italics, grammar & spelling as original)

Or on Tuesday September 30<sup>th</sup> 1729:

At a meeting of the Gentlemen Heritors, whose Estates ly within six or seven Miles of the Town o' stirling, There is an Agreement and Resolve entred into and subscribed for the more effectual preserving of the GAME: By which all persons whatsoever, who shall be seen *hunting* or *fowling* with Dogs, Guns or Nets upon any of these Gentlemen's Grounds, without Warrant or Licence from the Proprietor, are upon their common Charge to be prosecute according to Law, with all Rigour. And in which Agreement there is particular provision made for the preservation of the GAME in Earlshill and the adjacent Muires, where no Fowling is to be allowed even by the Heritors themselves till October 1730 (upper & lower case, italics, grammar & spelling as original)

<sup>xiv</sup> By 1780 the notices in the Caledonian Mercury were of the following style:

PRESERVATION of GAME.

THE DUKE of BUCCLEUGH being desitous to preserve the GAME on his estates in the counties of Dumfries, Roxburgh, Selkirk, Peebles and Edinburgh, it is hoped no person will shoot or kill any game thereon, without liberty. (upper & lower case, italics, grammar & spelling as original)

It is interesting that a preservation of game notice (reproduced below) was placed by the then Duke of Hamilton, whose father had had inserted some 54 years earlier in 1726. several notices seeking the return of a lost falcon: This is discussed elsewhere.

PRESERVATION of GAME.

THE DUKE of HAMILTON being resolved to preserve the GAME on his estates in the counties of Lanark, Linlithgow, and Isle of Arran, it is hoped that no person will shoot or kill Game thereon without having liberty. The game-keepers have received directions to detect all transgressors. (upper & lower case, italics, grammar & spelling as original) Both of the above were published on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>xv</sup> The 'open cage' system was adapted from one of the methods that Sir John (Saunders) Sebright used in his production of specialist poultry (1809 *The art of improving domestic animals*, Flamstead letters 1798), in which the hen pheasant was caged in a twin cage arrangement that would allow wild cock pheasants to fly in, mate and then leave, whilst the hen remained captive to ensure that her eggs could be pulled and clutch maximised. Sebright was also the author of *Observations on Hawking* (1826) referenced elsewhere in this work. Sebright is also mentioned in *The Origin of Species* (Darwin 1859).

<sup>xvi</sup> Coke 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Leicester, was a committed 'improver' on his estate at Holkham, renown for his agricultural innovations and successful selective breeding of domestic animals, most notably sheep and cattle (Ritvo 1990).

<sup>xvii</sup> The payment for a days beating in the 1880's was in the region of 2d. If peppered by one of the guns, that is wounded by gunshot, the convention was that the land owner would pay between 6d & a crown depending on the wound (Bells *Life in London* 1848).

<sup>xviii</sup> Letters to the *Sporting Magazine* illustrate such (June 1793 - December 1800).

<sup>xix</sup> Under this legislation resisting arrest for poaching was made a capital offence.

<sup>xx</sup> This is to no way imply that Acts of Parliament regarding hunted animals were overturned or revised quickly or indeed that many restrictive and devisive practices and conventions were abandoned (Streatfield 1913).

<sup>xxi</sup> During this period there was also an increase in game certificates (also known as licences) issued. The number here stood at 70,092 at the end of 1895 (*Inland Revenue Audit Abstracts supplement* 1890 - 1928).

<sup>xxii</sup> The technological advances in sporting firearms were also the result of demands by the military for innovation that were then adapted to provide for the growing market in shotguns and stalking rifles.

<sup>xxiii</sup> 'Hang fire' was the delay between the flintlock striker igniting the powder in the flash pan on the side of the weapon and then the burning gunpowder travelling down into the barrel chamber, and setting off the charge.

<sup>xxiv</sup> The effective killing range of a barrel loading shot gun in the 1770's was reported as being in the region of 40 yards (Walsingham & Payne-Gallwey 1887). Whilst the killing range increased by less than a third by 1850, shot could travel upwards of 180 yards and draw blood as when the Duke of Roxburghe was shot in the face by 7<sup>th</sup> Lord Chesterfield taking a cross shot. They were in adjacent batterie, shooting driven grouse (*ibid*).

<sup>xxv</sup> The Duke of Wales on purchasing Sandringham in the 1860's, had a railway station built at Wolferton to bring guests onto the estate (Ruffer 1977).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Once established and refined the English battue or driven shoot was actually exported back to the Continent as the most efficient way to operate game shooting.

<sup>xxvii</sup> In the lowlands pheasants were the easiest bird to manipulate in this respect whilst partridge needed more thoughtful management. The lesser quarries such as woodcock and snipe were incidental in the driven method, although were always a welcome addition to the bag.

<sup>xxviii</sup> They could also be produced in very high numbers and were, in captivity, much less prone to stress and disease than the partridge.

<sup>xxix</sup> Duleep Singh was a young boy at this time and after being taken into care for his own safety, he was sent to England to be educated. Once an adult he was granted tenancy at Elveden and a pension of £40,000 per annum. Part of the Princes inheritance the Kohinoor diamond, then the largest cut diamond in the world was the mark of sovereignty over Punjab became the property of the British Crown. Queen Victoria wore the diamond on being proclaimed Empress of India in 1876. The loss of his position and wealth ultimately turned Duleep Singh against the British he left England for France and after being enmeshed in a plot to overturn British rule in the Punjab, he had his pension stopped. He died in 1896.

<sup>xxx</sup> Under the Game Laws it is illegal to kill game on a Sunday, a convention that dates from a 1690 statute.

<sup>xxxi</sup> It ought to be stated however in the earlier sections of the published text he does not avoid naming those with whom he shared sport, being shooting, fishing, stalking or cricket.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Unfortunately there is no indication who 'John' was, but it might indicate that it was a falconer companion.

## Chapter 5



Although what can be considered as falconry's 'golden age' was undoubtedly over, the sport did not die out in Britain as had certainly seemed likely. Whether those that were active in its continuance did so as an appeal to a romantic tradition, because falconry provided a particular and sought after type of hunting activity, or as an expression of defiance in face of the rapidly changing society of the 1700 and 1800's is difficult to determine. What can be ascertained from the surviving diaries and published works of those practitioners and their contemporaries, is that the modern social construction of the United Kingdom created a completely novel and rather unfavourable environment in which to hunt with hawks and falcons (Campbell 1773, Belamy 1841, Walpole 1859). The following examines how the practitioners organised their sport, and the clubs they formed to facilitate continuation; why those clubs seemed incapable of a longevity that might have been expected given that falconry itself survived; and the social and philosophical context in which they operated.

### New ways of thinking

After the Reformation, English philosophy and teaching reinterpreted what had gone before in order to drive forward into a new age (Porter 2000). Man moved to the centre of all reflection with God above and the natural world as the milieu (Thomas 1983) Of those who articulated this re-definition of man and nature, Francis Bacon is credited with articulating the overtly aggressive ideology that was to signal an imperialism over nature (Silvertown & Sarre 1990). This perspective places humans apart from the natural world, and

projected them on a course that would subjugate and subdue nature on one hand, and exploit it relentlessly on the other. Protestantism<sup>i</sup> in particular provided the change in emphasis that enabled this notion of man's position in creation to be forged into British life (Thomas 1983).

The likes of Grassby (1997) argue that an essential link between man and nature is broken at this time in early modern England. What follows is a stronger reliance on rationality and the growth of the new natural science or natural history. These are intrinsically linked with the development of capitalism and associated property rights and contributed to a dislocation between man and the natural world; a dislocation that would have profound effects upon all of man's activities; particularly those relating to nature.

Bacon had articulated what had increasingly marked the practice of all Europeans bent on 'improvement' (Merchant 1980): Man had a duty to subjugate nature and all therein, to rid the mountains and the moors of 'dragons' and devils' and to make the world his garden (Spedding 1874). People in feudal Britain would in all likelihood, have seen the activities of the proto-capitalist, and early modern society as one that was unacceptably blasphemous. The change in orientation was profound and had deep consequences both for activities such as falconry that were essentially situated in the previous and now defunct ideology of nature and, as has been discussed previously, the practice of game shooting. Whilst not a term coined at the time, 'stewardship' (Manning & Serpell 1994) has come to signify the more sustainable exploitation that was a feature of earlier European societies uses of nature<sup>ii</sup> (Gurevich 1988). In the writings of Belamy (1841), Fisher (1901), Freeman & Salvin (1859), Harting (1880) and Sebright (1826) this sentiment is expressed.

In the face of the altering social order, the prevailing economics of the time and as has been outlined a change of philosophical orientation<sup>iii</sup>, for falconry to continue adaptations in the structure of the sport had to be effected. These were neither directed nor planned with specific direction or overview, rather the changes came about as a set of responses to the altering circumstances. What a number of commentators considered to be an anachronistic activity in modern times (Wood 1858, Scott 1818); falconry, was facing considerable difficulties. In what can be understood to be an adaptation to changing circumstances was the development of the notion of the provision of falconry through joint financing and organisation: 'clubs'. Falconry was not alone in this as is reported by Birley (1993).

The following is an investigation into the significant British clubs that have facilitated falconry outside the private or individual sphere. Whilst and in keeping with this research, the focus is on the British manifestation of falconry, the Dutch club formed at Het Loo is included herein, so important was the contribution by falconers from the United Kingdom and to the continuation of the mounted form of the sport

### The Confederate Hawks

In the early 1770's the Confederate Hawks of Great Britain was begun. It was to become known under several names as mentioned previously, but is most often recorded as the Falconer's Club. It was to be founded, proposed and managed by Colonel Thornton<sup>iv</sup> until 1781. The Club owned its own hawks & falcons that were purchased from the Low Countries, where the tradition of trapping passage hawks and falcons had continued<sup>v</sup>, in addition to this but to a somewhat a lesser extent, eyasses were taken from peregrine eyries

in Scotland or Ireland, whilst gerfalcons<sup>vi</sup> were procured by expedition to Norway or Iceland (Salvin & Brodrick 1855).

The Club employed Dutch professional falconers, Lascelles (1892) recounts that the Earl of Orford and until the early 1830's, the Duke of Leeds found the necessary skills and experience were difficult to find in Britain<sup>vii</sup>. Professional falconers were integral to the operation of the sport at all stages in falconry's history (Mediaevalia 1981). Whilst later in the 19th century many practitioners did keep just one or two hawks and train and hunt with them themselves, this was both time consuming and demanding work. The actual training and conditioning of the hawks and falcons was often considered tedious and rather beneath the 'dignity' of those of status; the wealthy and elite, and certainly of the aristocratic membership of the Confederate Hawks (Osbaldiston 1792 anonymous hand written entry circa 1805)<sup>viii</sup>.

The Club met in March at its headquarters at Bourn Bridge in Cambridgeshire to fly at crows, rooks, herons and kites<sup>ix</sup> (The Sporting Magazine 1826). This was the 'great flight', followed by the 'field' on horseback and the quality of the sport judged upon the duration and excitement of the gallop (Harting 1883). Indeed Fisher in 1901 (pp40), a number of years after both heron and kite hawking ceased to be practiced in Britain, wrote "The noblest of all possible flights in which the powers of a trained hawk could be employed were confessedly those of the wild kite and the heron."

Harting (1891) describes a silver gilt urn that was presented to Thornton on the 17th June 1781, by the members of the Falconers' Club. It was given in appreciation of the eight years of management that Thornton had given the Club and bears the names of the then members:

*Earl of Orford; Mr. Sturt; Mr. Snow; Mr. Smith; Mr. Stephens; Earl Ferrers; Hon. Thos. Shirley; Sir Thos. Tancred; Mr. A. Wilkinson; Mr. B. Wrightson; Mr. Drummond; Sir Cornwallis Maude; Duke of Ancaster; Mr. Williamson; Mr. Baker; Mr. William Baker; Mr. Pierce; Mr. Coke; Duke of Rutland; Mr Bedford; Mr Lascelles Lascelles; Mr. Parker; Mr Tyssen; Mr Molloy; Mr. Affleck; Mr. St. George; Earl of Eglinton; Mr. Vaughan; Mr. R. Wilson; Mr. Musters; Mr. Barrington Price; Mr. Daniel; Hin. Mr. Rowley; Lord Musgrave; Captain Grimston; Captain Yarburgh; Earl of Leicester; Mr. Stanhope; Mr. Leighton; Mr. Francis Barnard; Mr. Nelthorpe; Mr. Porter; Colonel St. Leger; Mr. Serle; Mr. Parkhurst; Mr. Molyneux; Earl of Surrey; Sir William Milner; Sir John Ramsden; Mr. Royds; Sir Richard Symonds; Earl of Leinster; Earl of Lincoln; Marquis of Granby; Mr. Parsons; & Chaplain Mr. Edward Parsons<sup>x</sup>.*

Of the 56 members almost a third are titled, with a further 3 bearing military rank<sup>xi</sup>. It is not possible to ascertain the extent of private ownership of hawks or falcons due to the paucity of remaining information on many of those named on the urn. However it is likely that a good number of these men were subscribers in order to ride with the falcons rather than falconers proper<sup>xii</sup>.

The broadsheet advertisements placed by Orford for the Confederate Hawks of Great Britain, portrays an established and structured organisation:

*Swaffam, February 5th 1783.*

*HAWKING*

*Earl of Orford, Manager of this year.*

*The gentlemen of the Falconers' Society are hereby acquainted, that the hawks will be in England in the first week in March, and will begin kite and crow hawking immediately on arrival. The quarters are fixed at Bourn Bridge, Cambridgeshire, forty-eight miles from London, until the first of April Meeting, when they will go to Barton Mills and Brandon till the 31st May, when the season will finish.*

*The hawks to be out every Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday, in each week at ten o'clock, provided the weather is favourable.*

*Subscribers are desired to pay in their subscriptions, for the season, on or before the 20th March, to Messrs. Coutts and Co., Bankers in the Strand, London.*

*N.B.- The cage consists of thirty-two slight falcons, thirteen German hawks, and seven Iceland falcons*

(Lascelles 1892, pp335)

After the death of Lord Orford and the departure of Colonel Thornton, the Club was to become a rather smaller gathering of the elite, charging in the 1820's, a subscription of £40:00 per season (Berners papers). The administration in all its respects, from social to financial was conducted by the manager, then Major Wilson<sup>xiii</sup> of Didlington Hall, Norfolk. Managing all the hawking from the provision, training and maintenance of the hawks, to selecting the suitable slips at quarry was undertaken by the professional falconer, then the Dutchman Frank van der Heuvell, who was once in the service of Thornton. The subscribers were spectators who followed the flights on horseback<sup>xiv</sup>. Salvin & Brodrick (1855) seem to deny that what became known as the High Ash Club was a continuation of the Falconers Club, formerly known as the Confederate Hawks. They state that of Lord Berners' hawks "Latterly they became subscription Hawks, ..." and they continue "...and they were retained until 1836, when they were given up." (pp75). This is at variance with their

contemporaries Schlegel & Wulverhorst (1853) and later writers such as Lascelles (1892) and Michell (1900). It seems clear that Jan Botts the professional falconer, was engaged at Didlington until 1838 and it is doubtful if he would have been retained had the hawks not still been based there (Berners papers, Lascelles 1892). Whatever the actuality, it seems that by the end the High Ash Club was a fairly loosely constituted group that was wholly reliant upon Lord Berners to maintain it. That the difficulty of obtaining 'good sport' at heron in the eastern counties was increasing in the Club's later years and that their patron died, combined to end this particular project.

#### The Renfrew Subscription Hawks

Much less information remains about another of the early clubs: the Renfrew (shire) Subscription Hawks. It is believed that it was instituted in the early 1760's to hawk the then open grassland and moor of the shire near Paisley. It was proposed and managed by Malcolm Fleming of Barochan Tower, Salvin & Brodrick (1855 pp9) report that Mr Fleming who housed the Club's hawks at the tower<sup>xv</sup> "...for many years, until his death in 1819." It is also known that Sir John Maxwell Baronet of Pollock and Mr Wallace of Kelly were members who also maintained their own hawking establishments. The British Museum possesses an 1816 print published by Alex Findley of Glasgow, of a James Howe painting of a mounted falconer with two assistants and dogs. This is variously thought to be Sir John Maxwell of Pollock together with John Anderson and a William Harvey (British Sporting Painting 1650 – 1850 1974) or Malcolm Fleming and Anderson, with the third individual unnamed (Upton 1980).

Whilst the Scottish tradition of hawking was always more orientated towards game hawking than was the Dutch or the English, there are

two letters lamenting the enclosure of their hawking ground in Renfrewshire (Fleming letters), and a complete abandonment of what he terms the “grand flit” for game hawking of partridge, grouse and woodcock that did not require a mounted pursuit. These appear to be the only records other than reports in the later literature (Harting 1898, Lascelles 1892, Salvin & Brodrick 1855). The Scottish tradition of training eyass falcons taken from the eyrie was far more suited to flights at game than it was for the ‘out of the hood’ flight at kite or heron, this due to the perceived courage and experience of the passage hawk over the eyass. However the Scottish tradition had evidently catered for flying ‘out of the hood’ but it was Sebright who was credited as being the first falconer to have success with eyasses at rook<sup>xvi</sup> (Salvin & Brodrick 1855). It is certainly the case however that much of the falconry of this period that was practiced in Scotland was at game, much of the countryside being less suitable for a large field of mounted followers to pursue the flight<sup>xvii</sup>. Scottish ‘society’ was more widely spread with clan and highland and lowland divisions fragmenting the nation in a way that did not occur to such an extent in England, furthermore it was not until the mid 19th century that modes of transport in the north enabled easy travel into the remoter areas for sport.

Fleming came from a family of falconers that boasted a jewelled falcon hood presented to one of their ancestors; Peter Fleming, by James IV of Scotland, after his hawk had out-flown that of the King<sup>xviii</sup>. The jewels and pearls were removed in 1600 but the hood remained in the possession of the family until the Malcolm Flemings’ death. It is believed that John Anderson the professional falconer with the Club, and Peter Ballantyne an under falconer, continued for several years at Barochan after Flemings’ death under the proprietorship of the aforementioned John Maxwell. Anderson had first gone to Barochan



as an assistant to a John Hainshaw the head falconer until the end of the 18th century after a period as falconer for Sir Alexander Donne of Ochiltree. He worked for two years for the Earl of Morton at Dalmahoy prior to retirement and died shortly after leaving his employ.

Ballantyne moved on to work with the Dutchman Jan Peels in the employ of Lord Carmathen. The cross fertilisation of the Scottish and the Dutch traditions was important later in the 19th century.

One of the specialities of the Renfrew hawks under the professional tender of Anderson, was the flight at woodcock (Salvin & Brodrick 1855). Woodcock could be found in young plantations put down in the early years of the 19th century to provide wood for shipbuilding after the shortages of timber during the early Napoleonic wars, and subsequently for the growing of pit-props for the coal mining industry. Whilst the trees were below shoulder height on a man, sport at this game bird was possible because they took to the air as their form of defence and would only put into mature stands of trees or thick cover, unlike either the pheasant or partridge that would use whatever cover was available. Each season Anderson took the Club hawks to Kelly, the seat of the late Hon. Robert Wallace Esq. the former member for Greenock in the Westminster Parliament, in order to fly the woodcock. Either tiercels or falcons could be use but they required to be high fliers for this flight. Salvin (ibid) recounts a tale told to him by General Sir Maxwell Wallace, son of the aforementioned Robert Wallace, about a memorable flight. Having marked down a woodcock on a 'rough braeside', a tiercel with a fine pitch was put on the wing and once placed aloft, the woodcock was flushed from cover. The flight took place over the broad Clyde estuary with the woodcock rising in its characteristic 'zig – zag' flight and the tiercel attempting to strike it with successive stoops. The hard pressed game bird abandoned the attempt to get to the other side of the estuary and returned to the

bank from whence it had come. Some distance from shore, Salvin states that it was between two or three hundred yards, the tiercel struck the woodcock into the water, from where it was retrieved by one of Anderson's spaniels. So fine was the flight that the dead woodcock was thrown out to the tiercel to feed upon, as woodcock were a bird valued for the table, the flight must have been most memorable to have the hawk rewarded in such a manner. It was the search for that quality that motivated Anderson who apparently preferred flying tiercels rather than falcons (op cit), this might have accounted for his predilection for woodcock for few tiercels could take cock grouse regularly<sup>xix</sup>.

There are apparently no remaining details of how the Club operated or indeed what the subscription or membership was. Neither are there records that inform the extent of the hawking undertaken or the numbers or species of hawks that they kept. During this research detailed examination of many documents held by the University Library in Glasgow, Glasgow Central Library and the Archives of the Paisley Museum, the University of Paisley Renfrewshire Study Group and the Renfrewshire Local History Forum failed to produce results in this respect.

Sir John Maxwell continued hawking after the Renfrew Club ceased operations, employing in 1845 William Barr of Arrochar, as his falconer. After leaving Maxwell, Barr became an exhibitor of hawks, flying them at race-courses and various other public places. This was a commercial aspect to the sport that was fiercely rejected by the predominantly English purists who saw falconry as a hunting sport of taking wild quarry and not one of circus like performances for a paying audience. Criticism of the professionals who undertook such commercial work was always muted but many of the gentlemen who

undertook and financed falconry, and often employed those same professionals to manage their own hawks, were very uncomfortable about this aspect of the 19th century manifestation of the sport (Lascelles 1892).

### Hawking at Loo

After the Lord Berners' death the High Ash Club folded in 1838, some of the remaining enthusiasts and most notably Mr. E.C. Newcome, in an attempt continue with the traditional mounted form of falconry in pursuit of the 'great flight', were to take their sport abroad. The heath and downs of southern Holland where the open ground was ideal for flights at heron (Freeman & Salvin 1855), were chosen, this was due in part to having had a strong tradition of falconry, although it was by then somewhat moribund (Schlegel & Wulverhorst 1853) and two well populated heronries. The tradition that persisted was the commercial activity of trapping and training hawks and falcons on passage during the autumn months. These were then sold to falconers in Britain and France. The relocation of the British sport combining with local aspiration lead to the formation of the Loo Hawking Club in 1839, implied by Upton (1987) to have been a continuation of the previously mentioned British Club. This however, is a mis-reading of Lascelles;

*Hence it occurred to the members of the club (the High Ash or Falconers' Club) that they might find better sport further a-field, and instead of bringing their hawks from Holland over to England to fly at a quarry becoming more and more scarce, they might go over to Holland with their hawks, and in that country turn them to better advantage. A prospecting party was formed of Mr. Stuart Wortley and the Baron d'Offemont, with the result that in 1839 the Loo Hawking Club was formed. (1892, pp337)*

Whilst the Loo Hawking Club was to be a very Anglo-Dutch organisation, with a considerable proportion of its membership being drawn from Britain, it was from 1840 under the patronage of the Dutch Royal family<sup>xx</sup>; to operate with a distinctly Dutch protocol<sup>xxi</sup> and; to employ Dutch falconers<sup>xxii</sup>.

Again this was a subscription formation and the principal articles of its ordinances state:

*The club shall be composed of members who will pay one hundred florins or more, each year for the support of the falconry.*

*Flights will take place in the royal domains of Loo. His Majesty having deigned to give his permission.*

*The season will begin each year on May 15 and continue until about July 10.*

*The president shall choose a secretary and a treasurer to administer the affairs of the club.*

*At the end of each season, on a day designated by the president, the treasurer shall give an account of the expenses for that year before the members assembled at the Hague.*

*The annual membership fee must be paid on or before June 15.*

*The president is responsible for directing the chase; in his absence the member in longest standing will take charge.*

*The horses belonging to the club are intended exclusively for the use of falconers.*

*The chase will take place only on working days.*

*Members who desire to resign from the club are obliged to inform the secretary before September 1.*

*In order to become a member of the club it is necessary to be proposed by a member.*

## (The Royal Loo Club)

The membership reflected a similar or slightly more select society as was seen in the previously given list of members of the Confederate Hawks some sixty years earlier, with the exception that the British Club had not been patronised by the King or Royal family<sup>xxiii</sup>. To an extent the club became pan-European drawing members from across the continent.

The Royal Loo Hawking Club was to enjoy considerable success providing what was deemed high quality sport and bringing numerous herons to book. Schlegel & Wulverhorst (1853) report that in 1840 twenty two falcons took 138 heron<sup>xxiv</sup>; in 1842 forty four falcons took 148 heron; in 1843 forty falcons took in excess of 200 heron; in 1844 thirty six falcons took about 100 heron; in 1849 a reduced team of fourteen falcons took 128 heron; the 1850's saw marked fluctuations in both falcons flown and quarry taken. This was probably the last European example of the 'great flight', in anything other than an occasional or chance instance<sup>xxv</sup>. It is maintained by Schlegel & Wulverhorst (ibid) that the Club continued at the time of the final publication of the *Traite De Fauconnerie* in 1853<sup>xxvi</sup>, however Lascelles (1892) gives that very year as the one when royal patronage was withdrawn and hawking ceased. It seems that by that date however, few of the British travelled to the Low countries for the heron hawking in May, June or July. Schlegel & Wulverhorst correctly observed that:

*...the future of falconry will depend almost entirely on the interest which our sovereigns take in it and on the maintenance of the Society whose history we have just retraced. There are two principal factors which could lead to its dissolution: the clearing of the heaths*

*surrounding the large heronry near the chateau at the Loo and, secondly, lack of the funds necessary to cover the expenses which the maintenance of falconry demands.* (1853, pp99)

In the British context the three aspects had all been experienced some years previously; royal patronage had been lost with no British monarch having participated since the pre-Commonwealth Stuarts (James I - James VI of Scotland who ascended the Throne of England 1603 - & Charles I); cultivation and enclosure<sup>xxvii</sup> and; the expense of maintaining a substantial hawking establishment<sup>xxviii</sup>.

With the passing of the Royal Loo Club came the end of falconry on a grand or royal scale in Europe. In 1866 a French effort to revive it under the name of the Club de Champagne was attempted. The president M. Alfred Werle and the founder members: M. Pierre Pichot; Comte de Montebello; Vicomte de Grandmaison; Comte Alphonse de Aldama; Count le Couteulx de Cantelou; together with the Scottish professional John Barr<sup>xxix</sup> endeavoured to emulate the sport once seen at Loo and elsewhere but this time on the grassland around Chalons. The project was ambitious and the mews extensive, the Club had a uniform of a green jacket with club buttons, waistcoat and breeches together with a brimmed hat and cockade<sup>xxx</sup>. Whilst Lascelles (1892) asserted that the French Club did ensure the revival of falconry in France, the Club itself failed, with circumstances conspiring to end its activities in 1869 after a mere three years operation<sup>xxxi</sup>. The Comte Alphonse de Aldama did keep the establishment up after the Club closed but this too was short lived, lasting only a year.

#### The Old Hawking Club

The aforementioned Mr E. C. Newcome one of the founders of the Loo Hawking Club continued to fly falcons<sup>xxxii</sup> in the United Kingdom, but in a much more modest manner than had been seen at Loo. Newcome was an amateur in the 19th century sense of the word. He had been an important member of the High Ash Club, a founder of the Loo Hawking Club and was to be one of the founding members and the first manager and secretary of the Old Hawking Club (O.H.C.), formed in 1864. Lascelles (1892 pp340-341) provides an interesting insight into the necessity to start up a new club:

*In 1863 the Hon. C. Duncombe, with Robert Barr as his falconer, commenced rook hawking on Salisbury Plain. conjointly with Major Fisher; and in the year following, finding that the management of the hawks, which was left on his hands, was more than he could attend to, a club was organised which grew and prospered as the present Old Hawking Club<sup>xxxiii</sup>.*

Whilst certainly along the lines of previous clubs in that it was dedicated to the continuation of mounted falconry<sup>xxxiv</sup>; its hawks were the property of the club; and it employed a professional falconer and assistant, the Club was always more modest in aspiration. The Old Hawking Club began with a membership of seven<sup>xxxv</sup>. Again the majority of which were either titled or held military rank. Robert Barr<sup>xxxvi</sup> was employed full time as falconer. The O.H.C. was never to attempt to emulate the grand hawking establishments of the past, its objectives were as stated above, to maintain an organisation capable of supporting mounted falconry after rooks and being conducted on Salisbury Plain. An offshoot of this setup was the ability of the club to supply the Club hawks and sometimes the professional to members to enable them to pursue game or magpie hawking at other times of the year.

The creation of specific 'seasons' for specific quarry was by this time well established and the Club met in March and April for rook hawking on Salisbury Plain and the Wiltshire downs. In May the hawks were taken to Norfolk, in an attempt to obtain some sport at heron<sup>xxxvii</sup>. In August they went north to Perthshire or Caithness to be flown at grouse and in October they were flown at partridge back in Norfolk. Occasionally they were removed to Ireland to hunt magpies<sup>xxxviii</sup>. This was the hawking calendar that became the backbone of organised falconry in the United Kingdom for the rest of the 19th century.

Newcome died at the age of 60 in 1871, and his unexpected death was almost the end of the Club. As organiser and manager his skills were sorely missed and more difficult to replace, his wealth of falconry experience was an immense loss. Indeed his illness and decline had resulted in most of the previous hawking season being written off (Lascelles 1892). At a gathering of several falconers in 1872 including Lascelles, Duncombe and Mr. A.E. Knox, who were invited guests of the Duke of Richmond at Gordon Castle, it was proposed that the Club begin its operations once more. In seeking support former members were written to including Lord Lilford and Captain Brooksbank. With promises of support from Brooksbank and continued patronage from Lilford, Lascelles agreed to become manager and Hon. Secretary (Lilford letters). He contacted John Barr, the brother of Robert the professional who had been engaged by the Club under Newcome. Robert Barr was in poor health and could not be re-employed, he died in 1874.

Writing in 1892, Lascelles perhaps unsurprisingly given his position at the helm of the Club claimed:



*A first class team of hawks has ever since 1872 been maintained, suitable for every description of hawking. The annual two months' visit to the Wiltshire downs has been kept up as the leading feature of the club's sport; and the great kindness and liberality of a large body of owners and occupiers of land on the open downs of Salisbury Plain has enabled the club to establish itself on a tract of country wide enough to show sport every day without doing damage to anyone.*  
(1892 pp340)

It is the manager and Hon. Secretary who through his own writing and his private correspondence with Lilford provides the most profound insight into the complexities and machinations of the Club. Firstly, the role Lascelles had accepted entailed constant appeals to the members for subscriptions. Undated notes to Lord Lilford with whom he kept up a copious correspondence, illuminate:

*Will you excuse me writing to you before you go abroad to ask for your annual subscription to the OHC, I shall have to pay for the passage hawks in another month, and without you, we should hardly carry on at all. I have succeeded in reclaiming Salvin at a low subscription, but we really need new blood.*  
(Lilford letters)

Continuing in this vein but as always with an eye to the Club finances:

*Our butcher's bill as you will see is already very large. I dread having more hawks than we really require for work. Is not this right? Salvin's lanner is a ridiculous bird, very tame and nice, but more suited to a flight at the ringing stag beetle than larger quarry.*  
(Lilford letters)

And:

*I enclose a balance sheet for the year just terminated ... I dare say some of our members have told you what a good season we had this spring. The record shows we were out 32 days and killed 141 head. Nearly every day there was a flight or two above average.*

(Lilford letters)

Finally, and evidently written in the closing years of Lilfords' life:

*Many thanks for your generous subscription received this morning. I must say it is most good and generous on your part to support us so handsomely when you can take so little share in the sport you practically keep alive yourself.*

(Lilford letters)

With regards to the search for new members in order to finance the Club adequately:

*I wish we could light on a couple of members. I went to stay with Dick Oswald this autumn in Kirkudbrightshire. He has got old Peter Ballantyne in his employment. This fine old fellow at 76 years of age has now got a really first rate lot of eyases, all of his own training. He has made hoods, lures, and all. A really grand old Scotch falconer. He abhors a passage hawk or a rook flight.*

(Lilford letters)

The Club did not have aspirations to become very large or to expand its hawking operations, but the fewer members the higher the cost to each of them:

*I have heard of a man named Harrison in the East Riding who might*

*suit us, and I have set Brooksbank on him to see what he is like. If we can only get him and two or three others we shall do. Our sport has been so good for the last five years in Wilts, that it is hardly a precarious venture to become a member of the OHC now. ... look at the excellent partridge hawking Brooksbank has had this year, the very first year any of our members took up this branch; 40 head in about three weeks.*

(Lilford letters)

Lascelles was always careful to discuss the Club affairs with their benefactor Lilford, without whose financial support hawking would probably have had to be curtailed. The following extract illustrates some of the tensions that existed in the very aspirations that were held by the Club. In seeking to make the Club hawks available to members and at a time when a professional would have normally accompanied, conditioned and flown the whole team:

*Brookshank and St Quenton are very anxious to take Frost and the two club tiercels to Ireland, whither they start next Friday. I have written to you first, that it must depend solely upon whether you can spare Frost or not, and secondly, that I think it a thousand pities to take him at all when he is urgently required to go to Holland just now to take charge of the newly caught passage hawks which are spoiling in their ruffer hoods. Brooksbank cares for nothing else but hunting magpies in bramble bushes with a nestling tiercel 10 feet high over his head, and despises grand passage falcons.*

(Lilford letters)

John Frost had become the Club under-falconer to John Barr, in 1872 and at the end the following year he took over as head falconer<sup>xxxix</sup>.

Barr having left the Club after the returning from Valkenswaard with that years passage hawks. Lascelles seems to believe that John Frost was the first English professional to hold a 'head falconer' position since a William Lawson who was Colonel Thornton's head falconer at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Lascelles 1892). This particular correspondence reveals another likely source of friction. Lascelles was a champion of the passage hawk, believing that they represented the possibility of the very highest quality of the sport. Indeed much of his writing in the Badminton Library Volume on Coursing and Falconry in 1892 was an anthem to the peregrine taken on passage. To receive a request from two members to take the Club falconer to Ireland for a type of hawking that Lascelles himself did not rate as high quality, "... hunting magpies in bramble bushes with a nestling tiercel" (Lilford letters). Furthermore this came at a time when the passagers had already been trapped and were awaiting transport from the Low Countries for their subsequent training.

### Amateurism & control of the sport

In 1871 circumstances conspired to bring about a major conflict within the falconry community in Britain. The O.H.C. had assumed the authority of the sole organisation responsible for hawking in the United Kingdom, whilst it had never assumed a management role of private falconry and the days of the sport requiring representation in anything other than an informal manner had not yet dawned. This assumption was resented by some falconers however, and there were many who would not join, either because they had made adequate arrangements for themselves, that they found the O.H.C. not to be to their taste or, they disliked some of the leading members of the Club. Indeed, whilst no records exist to confirm this, the Club members are likely have had strong views on other falconers of the period and may

have closed the door to any application from such. It was always a select Club proud of its traditions and aspirations.

The 400 acres of park land around the Alexandra Palace in London became the venue of an elaborate and extensive attempt to both revive falconry as an active field sport and promote it in the consciousness of the nation. In 1870 the Barnet Committee was attempting to develop the recreational potential of the park and invited essays in a competition “to illustrate the history and nature of the ancient and noble science of falconry” (Bromwich Preliminary Note in Lilford et al 1871). It was planned to exhibit falcons and undertake flying displays. Of the essays, three are of note; the winner by C.H. Fisher entitled “A fat hawk makes a lean horse, a tired falconer and an empty purse”: ‘A fat hawk, ...’ is a traditional falconry truism. A hawk that was fat would not want to hunt and therefore would in all likelihood fly off and be difficult to recover. The falconer would have to ride many miles and expend considerable time and effort in searching for the lost falcon, hence the ‘lean horse and tired falconer’. Reward would have to be paid to any person who found the hawk, thus the ‘empty purse’. The essay was reproduced in Fisher’s book (1901).

In second place was an essay by a writer better known in his day as a regular contributor to ‘The Field’ publication under the pseudonym ‘Peregrine’. The Rev. G.E. Freeman had been the main author of a significant and popular addition to falconry literature in 1859 when with Captain F.H. Salvin<sup>1</sup>, he produced ‘Falconry, Its Claims, History and Practice.’ The third essay, by Captain F.S. Dugmore was partially an attack upon the Duke of St Albans, the Hereditary Grand Falconer who had paid off his professional falconer John Pells, after some forty years as a retainer and sold off the remaining State hawks. At the time when the Duke of St Albans broke up the state mews in 1867, it

contained 6 peregrine falcons (Dugmore in Lilford, et al, 1871). This was by no means a large collection of hawks by the standards of the time; Dugmore's own club that came into existence about this time, held over 40 birds of prey of various species. The pensioned Pells was in receipt of £50 per year whilst the Duke, or so Dugmore maintained, kept the remainder of the £1,000 annual emolument without further expense<sup>xli</sup>.

Perhaps as a result of Dugmore's essay for the Barnet Committee competition, the House of Commons discussed the case for an Hereditary Grand Falconer in 1890. Whilst the title was retained, the emoluments were suspended on the payment of some £18,335 as single sum (Hansard 1892).

A common theme in all three of the essays was the conflict between displays of flying birds, either to the lure or to 'bagged' quarry: This was live prey predominantly pigeons or partridge previously obtained by the falconer and carried prior to release in a bag, hence the name. If the falcon failed to kill in fair flight, was proving difficult to recover, or there was no wild quarry available the 'bagged' quarry was thrown out to it. This practice was much used during the training of birds of prey in the 19th century. In the commercial flying displays and exhibitions of the day bagged pigeons were considered a necessity.

Whilst all of the authors that either were awarded prizes or were commended, supported the idea of an exhibit and some form of flying display, they all cautioned that for the sport to be seen only in those terms, was to lose an element vital to the activity; falconry was understood to be the practice of taking wild quarry in its natural habitat, by the means of trained hawks or falcons. However Dugmore particularly, in his enthusiasm to promote falconry, considered the

benefits gained from exhibition to outweigh the risks of changing the nature of the sport.

He located his club at Alexandra Park where he assembled a collection of hawks that he termed “a modern hawking stud” (Dugmore in Lilford, et al 1871) as Upton (1987) points out a misuse of the term; there was no attempt to breed falcons at all<sup>xlii</sup>. Also set up was a ‘school of falconry’, although little evidence remains to inform about its aims and practice. Neither does there remain much documentation about Dugmore’s, ‘The Falconry Club’, however Harting the much published and well respected falconer was manager of the enterprise for a number of years. It was begun with a membership of sixteen gentlemen and boasted two patrons of note: His Imperial Highness, the Crown Prince of Austro-Hungary and, the Duke of Connaught. Dugmore employed three professional falconers including the previous mentioned John Barr.

The formation of the new Club, and the seeming commercialisation of the activity in both the school of falconry and the hawking stud, resulted in a major difference of opinion between falconers of the day. This was in addition to the irritation caused by Dugmore purchasing as many of the available falcons as he could, both passage and eyass. Lascelles wrote:

*There is a desperate struggle going on for hawks I hear, but I think Mollen will send us what we ordered (all red falcons, passage hawks) all right. I have only ordered a few as I am certain many hawks are a mistake. Still one must have a certain number of useful ones to draft out the bad ones from, and leave a nucleus of useful ones. Barr has collared 13 hawks (mostly haggards and tiercels for Dugmore) already against our 5. Poor Fisher has got none.*

(Lilford letters)

Robinson (2003) asserts that there were rumours to suggest that Dugmore intended to hawk over ground that the O.H.C. used in Wiltshire, unfortunately there is no corroboration of this. However if it were the case it would have been a highly inflammatory move.

The dispute was to become a struggle to control how the sport continued, or perhaps rather more profoundly; what the essence of the sport was. A considerable acrimony appears to exist between Dugmore's circle, that included Reverend Freeman and J.E.Harting, and the members of the O.H.C. The latter were appalled at what they believed to be the exhibitionist tendencies inherent in the public promotion of flying trained hawks. Furthermore, it was Capt. Dugmore's avowed aim to revive falconry from extinction in Britain, and he had been much published on this subject. The less flamboyant perhaps, but nonetheless highly active, O.H.C. became resentful at the insinuation that falconry was anything other than a flourishing sport and that it was not capable of carrying falconry through to the turn of the century. Lascelles, as the manager of the O. H. C. began what developed into a prolonged and acrimonious exchange of letters published in the Marlborough Times<sup>xliii</sup>.

At meetings where the new Club displayed and flew its hawks and falcons, all were owned by Dugmore, it became the practice to charge 'field-money'. An addition to 'Memoranda for Gentlemen Attending Meets of the Hawks' written by Harting, informs the reader:

*The Club subscriptions do not nearly cover the cost of the Hawking establishment and the expenses of meetings, but leave a very heavy deficit to be born by the Master: consequently the collection of Field-*



*money (optional) is authorized on public days. Field-money is however not expected either from the members of the Falconry Club, or from Ladies who may honour the meetings with their presence (ibid pp63)*

This in fact, was the passing of a hat amongst those present to help with the cost of the hawks upkeep and the like. This payment, or at least the idea of it, was the subject of the initial, direct clash. Seeing such a way of raising funds as deeply unpleasant, the traditionalists of the O.H.C. questioned the ethics of such a practice when related to a gentlemanly occupation like falconry. This dispute proceeded despite both the Renfrew and the High Ash Club having raised subscriptions in this way during previous attempts at organised hawking.

Upton (1987 pp66) cites a letter and editorial response published in the Marlborough Times:

*Sir, I have been informed that an exhibition of the hawks now kept at Aldershot, and called I believe, by the very remarkable and ambitious title of 'International Hawking Club', a cap was sent round to collect money in the field. I trust this report, if untrue, will be immediately contradicted, as I can conceive nothing more likely to bring discredit on the grand old sport of falconry as this unsportsmanlike proceeding.*  
*'A Falconer of Twenty-five Years Standing'*

*(We are informed that the correct title of the club referred to is 'The Falconry Club'. We cannot say whether the report is true or not; but our correspondent seems to have overlooked the fact that the practice to which he objects is sanctioned by many sportsmen who ride to subscription packs of hounds, and is therefore not without precedent.*  
*– ed.)*

However Dugmore responded in an aggressive manner, denying the accusations and threatening legal action. The very public exchange continued and revealed many of the tensions within the sport. Pleas to restrain the literary combatants by Delme' Radcliffe and Fisher, both now elder and much respected practitioners, were to little avail but the lengthy correspondence was finally ended after a clever and highly politic letter from Lascelles: Upton (ibid) reproduces the series of letters in this correspondence, some are reproduced in the endnotes<sup>xliv</sup>. The letters show much about the falconers of the time, their view of their sport and how it ought to be conducted and, particularly in Lascelles case an assessment of the health of the sport in the late 1870's.

Over the next couple of years Dugmore, who was by all accounts not an easy person to remain on good terms with (Upton, 1980), also entered into public arguments with many of those involved in falconry, including former members of his own Falconry Club, such as Harting (Upton 1987). By 1878 the club that Dugmore had run with the hope of it becoming the falconry establishment had failed, it was too expensive and its activities, particularly the demonstrations of flying falcons at bagged quarry, did not sustain its popularity (Ap Evans 1960). Indeed Harting had been left to settle a number of the outstanding accounts and tie up many loose ends. Both in the operation of the Club and its closure he had been far more fundamental than the flamboyant Dugmore admitted.

Their former professional John Barr died suddenly in May of 1880. After his obituary in 'The Field', penned by Harting, Dugmore wrote a number of letters to the Editor claiming that Barr was the Club's senior professional until his death, denying that the Club had been closed down and stating that the resignation of Harting, as Hon. Secretary,

was inconsequential.

Barr having left the Falconers Club in the 1878 after a serious bout of drinking had subsequently been employed by a Mr Evans of Sawston, Cambridgeshire. He wrote in response to Dugmore's claim:

*Sir, I have read with some surprise a letter in last week's 'Field' signed 'The Master of the Falconry Club', and, as I am the person referred to (not very courteously) as an 'outsider', I beg you will allow me to pen a few words in reply. . . . 'The Master of the Falconry Club' says that "Barr's connection with the club was terminated only by his death, an understanding existing, in pursuance of which he took service during the past year with outsiders only while not required by any of our own members." He does not state with whom this understanding existed. Certainly not with me, nor with Barr, who entered my service after having been for some time out of employment, and in consequence of my having advertised in 'The Field' for a falconer. Not only was I satisfied that Barr had no engagement when he came to me, but he himself several times assured me that nothing would induce him again to enter the service of 'The Master of the Falconry Club'. That gentleman next makes the extraordinary statement that he, 'was preparing at the time of Barr's death to send him out with a team of hawks, to develop an offshoot of the Falconry Club in one of our most important colonies.' No such project was ever named to me, nor to Barr as far as I know; and the idea of one man 'preparing' to send another man's servant out of the country, without first obtaining the consent of both master and servant, is really too absurd. Why I should be termed an outsider because I kept a stud of hawks without the aid of a club, I do not know. But this does not trouble me much, and under the circumstances I am content to remain  
An Outsider.*

(Upton 1987 pp79)

Harting enjoined the correspondence:

*... That the 'objects of the club have never been abandoned or lost sight of' by 'The Master' I can well understand; but that they have been long ago abandoned by everybody else I can also easily believe. The fact is that, on the lines originally projected, the club would not and could not work, and it is much better to admit this candidly than to continue a forlorn hope. If the club is still in existence, as alleged, why do we not hear something about it from time to time? Where are the headquarters? What hawks are there? Where were they flown during the past autumn and spring? What sport was obtained? And who are the 'thoroughly competent professional falconers' retained? (ibid)*

As always it was the Editor who had the final word:

*We have not the slightest wish to suppress any correspondence which can interest our readers, so long as it is conducted in language which one gentleman ought to use to another. This certainly was not the case with 'A Master's' letter, withheld from publication last week, which was written in a tone very different from that adopted by 'Outsider' and 'The Writer of the Article'. - Ed.*

(Upton ibid pp79/80)

At the heart of the disputes was a difference in the ideologies held by practising falconers of the day: Here there are two uses of the notion of 'amateur': Firstly it has been a distinction between those that employ a falconer and those who train their hawks for themselves, the latter being amateurs, and secondly it is used to distinguish those who

practice falconry as field sport for recreational purposes (the amateurs) and those who exhibit or display hawks on a commercial basis. Whilst neither use is totally distinct from the other, they have different and strongly evaluative frames of meaning. The Victorian gentleman was of course always the amateur. There also exists a double standard in relation to the opposite of the gentlemanly amateur, the professional; if in the employ of a club or a gentleman who owned hawks or falcons that were used in keeping with the amateur code of non-commercial recreation, then that professional was highly esteemed for his skill in his traditional calling (Fisher 1901, Upton 1987). However, if the products of his labour, the trained birds, were used for display purposes and were thus commercial, then that professional was often considered to be demeaning the sport of falconry (Lilford et al 1871, Lascelles 1892, Upton 1987). Some of the professionals moved from one side of the divide to the other and back again with impunity; they were in short demand and if good were always able to find employment. One only needs to consider the previous example of John Barr, who had been publicly castigated for his drunkenness by Dugmore in his first letter to the Marlborough Times and subsequently dismissed from the Falconer's Club, was still able to find employment as a professional falconer. He was recognised within falconry circles as an excellent falconer and a problematic drinker.

Such were the complexities of the late 19th century social construction. The subject matter of the arguments was of little importance, the exchange was merely the manifestation of a dispute that was to re-surface time and again. The friction between those who hunted with birds of prey and those that exhibited them as trained creatures, those who in one sense are amateur and those who are professional remains unresolved in falconry.

### Business as usual

To return to the O.H.C.; the year of 1884 saw the election of two new members of quite contrasting types. The Duke of Portland whilst never keeping hawks himself regularly invited Club members to hawk over his grouse moor on the Langewell Estate in Caithness, and the Hereditary Grand Falconer, the Duke of St. Albans. The latter joined for what appear to be 'political' reasons having given up keeping a mews or retaining a professional falconer in 1867. By accounts Charles, Duke of St. Albans, did not care for falconry and had begrudged the £200 per annum that it cost him to maintain the establishment, despite the annual state pension that was paid with the title of Hereditary Grand Falconer of £1,200. The Duke agreed two conditions with the Club: Firstly, that His Grace would pay an annual subscription of £50, and secondly, that if at any time he required he would have at his disposal the exclusive use of the falconer and four hawks for a specified period of time despite any other arrangements made by the Club (Lascelles 1915, Upton 1987). In 1890 the Duke's annual pension was the subject of questions at Westminster and this resulted, on the payment of a sum of £13,000, in the pension being commuted. Once relinquished of any responsibility to the State or Crown, the Duke cancelled his subscription to the O.H.C.

In the spring of 1884 Lascelles reported:

*I have not yet sent the hawks to Wilts., although it is long past time, as none of the other fellows seem ready to come down, and I thought they were just as well here. I propose to send them on Saturday next, and am ready to go there myself for a day or two on Tuesday. I expect St Quentin and Newcombe will come on*

*Monday, and after that, the hawks will be out every day till May at least. I think we have got a very fair lot after all, and they are all fit to fly at any time. Our quarters are the George Inn, Amesbury, 8 miles from Salisbury. ...We shall be highly delighted to welcome your son into the fraternity ... your boy should bring a horse with him, but the quality here is doubtful.*

(Lilford letters)

The 1880's were good years for the O.H.C. Lascelles writing for the Club journal, perhaps better described as a news sheet, and in his letters to Lilford shows less frustration than was seen in the 1870's, he was of course well experienced by this time. The 1890's began with difficulty due to the death of Frost, the Club falconer. George Oker was given the professional's position, having worked under Frost three years previously and then been in the service of a Club member, Herbert St. Quintin, and continued with the O.H.C. in unbroken service until 1915.

The closing years of the 19th century were propitious for the activity of falconry. The O.H.C. and a small number of true amateur falconers saw out the century flying their hawks and falcons during what had become to be recognised as seasons and at specific quarry. The problem of plantations and fencing ruining open ground such as Salisbury Plain continued, and the days of mounted falconry were coming to an end. However the activity was altering to accommodate the seemingly inevitable and rapid changes in the countryside and indeed to the lives of the members. Rook hawking, that required open expanses and a mounted field, was undergoing a decline, whilst game hawking for pheasant and partridge, that could be undertaken in more enclosed cultivated lowland country, or grouse hawking that utilised the moors that the shooting fraternity had protected were

becoming the falconers favourite. The functional projection of preference and taste common to most humans (Douglas 1973) enabled falconers to construct their sport in such a way that they could continue to practice it as a countryside recreation. The traditional manifestation of falconry as undertaken by the O.H.C. was actually a highly adapted version of what had been practiced in previous clubs; it was suited to conditions both social and environmental that prevailed during latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### The new century

The 20th century began with a decade that owed more to the previous century than the new one although major changes were occurring in the current of affairs. In 1902 the Club was to abandon its headquarters at Avesbury in Wiltshire. The surrounding countryside had become too enclosed for the flying of longwings. They moved to Shrewton, not far away, but the area of Tilshead and Shrewton were not yet ruined. Although declining slowly, rook hawking was still the major social activity of the O.H.C. The field was reduced to a mere four or five in addition to the professional far fewer than in the 1880's when those who rode with the hawks often numbered fifteen or twenty (Lilford letters)<sup>xlv</sup>. This was the only remaining type of hawking that lent itself to a mounted field. Flying falcons at game increasingly the focus for falconers was for the most part carried out with few spectators. In itself, this change may not seem to be very significant, but the consequences to the sport of restricting the numbers of its followers, and thus losing the social exposure that the riding set (Cannadine, 1991) brought to hawking, was to forego the hard won popular profile of the activity that had been achieved in the previous 40 or 50 years.



Falconry had experienced only a minor increase in practitioners during this period, it is the contention here that a rather greater proportion of them had been recruited by the O.H.C. Whilst numbers of members had increased three fold since the Club had been first set up in 1864, after 1902 the membership gradually dropped away. Many of the older and respected members of the Club, that had seen the practice of falconry through the second half of the 1800's had died or ceased to be involved due to age or infirmity; Brooksbank, Lord Lilford, Salvin, St Quintin, Watson, whilst others were to become less influential due to age; Lascelles, Heywood Jones and the Earl of Sefton. Newcomers such as C. Garnett, N. Heywood, Capt. Noble and Gilbert Blaine filled the ranks of the O.H.C. Lascelles did act as manager and Hon. Secretary until the Club went into suspension in 1915, although he had found the task onerous after the death of one of his sons, John Beilby Lascelles in 1907 (O'Carol Scott papers). Lascelles had written a letter to Harting in 1919 "Our ground in Wiltshire is I am told, all cut to pieces with artillery and shell practice and we cannot tell whether it is of any use to us any more. We must go and inspect." (Lilford letters)

In the last few decades of the previous century there had been a growing interest in the flying of merlins at larks with increasing success (Michell, op cit). The flight was a miniature 'great flight', with the lark rising high into the air and the merlin ringing up after it. Indeed, Freeman & Salvin said:

*Those who have seen a cast of merlins fly a good ringing lark, have seen a portion of heron-hawking in miniature; that is they have seen a quarry attempt to outstrip his pursuers by rising into the skies. One element in heron-hawking, however, was omitted; the lark was very small and unarmed, whereas the heron is larger than the hawks, has*

*formidable claws, and, above all, a most frightful dagger of a beak.*  
(1855 pp141)

This type of hawking was becoming more popular because it could be undertaken in cultivated countryside provided it was not too enclosed. A lark rarely travelled far, so there was no need to be mounted; larks were abundant and there was no conflict with game preservationists; and vitally the season was very short, lasting from August until the beginning of October, after which time the larks were generally too strong on the wing and the merlins started to refuse them. This short season for lark hawking enabled those falconers with working commitments to indulge in their pastime in their vacations and, if they had not to travel far in the lengthy evenings of late summer. Michell and latterly, Allen were keen proponents of this branch of the sport and under their guidance and with their enthusiasm it became an important aspect for the members of the Club.

The O.H.C. had seen off the commercial, exhibitionist challenge from Dugmore's Falconry Club, and the sport had gained something in popularity, aided no doubt partly by Dugmore's efforts. However the environmental changes were beyond its control. Once the mounted aspect of falconry was reduced the sport seemed destined to make another lurch towards the periphery of British country life and thus obscurity. The Club ceased to operate during the Great War, and the hawks were split up, one going to Gilbert Blain's falconer, one was retained by Oxter, and four going to the Zoological Gardens in Regents Park (Z.S.L. Archive). Others were sent to various members, but died apparently from inactivity in captivity, the lack of a good diet together with comparative neglect for most of the members and professionals were eventually engaged on active service or other war work<sup>xlvi</sup>. In the 1920 diary of C. Garnett:

*The club has been in abeyance during the War, but we hope to revive it. For a first attempt we have done well. Sixty-five rooks to date and bad weather all April. B. Haywood Jones died just over a year ago, in 1918. It is not for me to write his obituary, but he was a great falconer, a good sportsman all round, and universally liked by all who knew him. Gerald Lascelles has broken down in health and will be with us no more on the Plain, I fear. The Old Club as we knew it is dead. May a new one arise. I shall miss the genial company of these two at the Church House more than I yet realise.*

(Garnett diary)

In the early 1920's it did seem that the Club might be able to thrive once again, however Garnett's fears were well founded and the disruption caused by the War and the loss of some key figures, were hard to get over. When hawking did resume in 1920 it was very limited, further fencing on Salisbury Plain, this time with barbed wire, put paid to any hope of following a flight on horseback with any success. Some efforts were made to use motor-cars but this proved unsatisfactory. The Hon. Gilbert Blaine took up the position of manager and Hon. Secretary and in 1921 the Club had four members: Garnett; Major Allen; Captain Palmer; and Blaine himself. They flew Blaine's hawks having been able to procure none of its own from Valkenswaard.

### The end of a tradition

The supply of passage falcons from the traditional source was resumed with the trapping now organised by Karl Mollen. He was working on his own and spent his time in the trapping huts thus the hawks did not get the handling that they had formerly received under

his father when several people shared the work. The falcons thus took rather longer to train once in the hands of the O.H.C. or the few remaining professionals, the opportunity to make in-roads with newly caught hawks having been missed (Upton 1987). A limited supply of passengers was maintained by Mollen for the years until, on hearing that the O.H.C. was to cease operations the following season, he retired in 1925. The demise of the centuries old tradition of autumn trapping in the district of Valkenswaard had come to an end.

The change from mounted rook hawking to the flying of falcons at game did not require passage hawks in quite the same way that rook hawking had done. Gradually the passage hawk was replaced by the eyass, in effect the Dutch tradition after a century of dominance, gave way to the Scottish one. As has been explained elsewhere, eyasses were better suited to the waiting on flight than the more experienced autumn trapped hawks. The abandonment of rook hawking as a primary hawking activity had another impact upon the Club; its social focus was gone.

### The transit of falconry

In this way game hawking became, or indeed remained, an activity that was better undertaken by private individuals or small groups. A number of falconers of the time, Blaine, Palmer and Stanley Allen rented either grouse moors or partridge manors as had Fisher and Freeman in the previous century. Game hawking was now the sustainable form of falconry that suited the prevailing conditions. The sporting rights to hunt for game were rented and had been so for years. Game, the main province of the shooting sportsman, was despite all the efforts at preservation and production, never so common that it was to become cheap and the O.H.C. could not afford

to rent the sporting rights to good quality ground when it would have to restrict the numbers of members who had access to it. Now there was little practical activity for a club of the conformation of the O.H.C. to indulge in. Thus the Old Hawking Club folded, it had been operational for more than sixty years and had provided some high quality falconry since its inception. In effect it had sustained organised falconry in Britain in a manner that no other club from the Confederate Hawks, the Loo Club and Dugmore's Falconry Club, could have claimed to have done. The skill of its professionals was recognised as exceptional (Lascelles 1892) and they practiced the sport in a manner that was both honest to their Victorian notions of sportsmanship and to the traditional manifestation of falconry as they understood it.

This type of club, however, was outmoded. Its conformation was that of the 19th century gentleman's sporting club and, whilst the focus of it remained the active pursuit of falconry, the very manner in which it proceeded was not one that could thrive during the 20th century. The British context had changed for all field sportsmen, but particularly for the falconer. Clubs had come into existence in order to meet the changing circumstances and had carried the sport through times that were not comfortable ones for falconry. The type of club reflected what was possible in respect to the tradition of the sport when mediated with the social and environmental conditions at the time of their operation. The political, intellectual and social conditions were changing with a marked rapidity, these as much as any other changes formed the metaphorical landscape in which falconry existed.

#### A changing sport in changing times

In early modern and ultimately modern, Britain, the way nature was understood, categorised and used; the interaction between man and

the natural world, was much changed. A rejection of the ideological consequences of this imperialism over nature was coming about as part of numerous strands of resistance to modernism. During the same period 'Romanticism' as it came to be known, became popular particularly among the highly literate<sup>xlvii</sup>. This concept of 'man in nature' whilst born out of modern thinking was certainly a rejection of the rational separation that had replaced the medieval understanding of the Universe. Previous notions had seen man as either duty bound to tame and sanitize the wild or, whilst understanding it as part of God's creation, fearing that in it's extremes nature was too terrible for humans to be intimate with (Silvertown & Sarre 1990). The new thinking removed the fear of the wild and wilderness. For falconers as indeed all hunters, this opened up new landscapes and new quarry species. The grouse already established as a quarry but now far more accessible, together with ptarmigan became available to hunt and game hawking on moors and mountain side grew.

In Thornton's (1804) account of a sporting expedition made to Scotland in 1786 which reveals not only the grand scale on which the recreation was carried out by this celebrated individual, but also an interesting insight into how his hunting with falcons was constructed. Thornton's sporting tour involved the chartering of a sloop and two further boats in London, with a Captain and seamen. Together with groom, waggoner, falconer and boy they took the Colonel's servants, dogs, horses, falcons, guns, rods and nets, tents and supplies. The falcons were flown at any species of bird, that could be found in open ground, from snipe size and larger. In addition, Thornton delighted in flying at hare with his gyrfalcons (ibid).

This differs from mediaeval falconry and indeed the more codified falconry of the mid to late 19th century, where certain raptors were

trained for specific quarries, gerfalcons, peregrines and sakers were kept for flights at crane and heron, or flown at kite, crows and rooks, or at species of gamebird<sup>xlviii</sup>. Each of these quarries required the falcon to be differently prepared and trained and whilst there are reports of the OHC using the Club hawks at different quarry in different locations and times of the year, this was not usual<sup>xlix</sup>.

It is evident that Thornton had no such qualms with his hawks and that a large part of his notion of 'good sport' was the chase and kill, not confined to the quality of the flight (ibid pp143). What is significant however, is that far from being put off by the bleakness and barren nature of the Scottish highlands and moors, Thornton was able to encompass them into his 'tour' albeit by ensuring that he travelled and lived in considerable style whilst so doing<sup>i</sup>. The 'tour' was perhaps the end of one particular falconry tradition already being superseded by the notion of the 'club' and the organisation inherent in that shift. What is certain is that Thornton was the last of the gentlemen falconers to undertake his falconry on such a scale, even the Earl of Orford and later Lord Lilford were rather more modest in their provisioning of their sport<sup>ii</sup>.

With a life-style that was split between town and country becoming fashionable for those with social rank and money in the late 1700's, the advent of 'a falconers club' overcame what might otherwise have been an insurmountable problem. For a subscription<sup>iii</sup>, a field sportsman interested in falconry could see hawks flown, spend days mounted riding through the countryside and interact with like-minded companions of the correct class, without having to forgo the social life of the cities and pay in both social and financial terms for the upkeep of a costly private founding. This rational structuring of a formal recreation is seen throughout British and subsequently European

social life, both in field sports and other activities adapting to meet the changing demands of the times.

The foregoing has considered the conditions that lead to the formation of the falconry clubs throughout the period. The Confederate Hawks of Great Britain had been the first organisation to structure the sport outside the great private establishments that had been a feature of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Despite profound social changes the Club had attempted to reproduce the hawking of a previous age. It was conducted by a select elite; was focused upon the social, mounted aspect of the sport that was essential as a distinguishing feature of rank; maintained a large mews and employed professional falconers. It shared a feature common to all those clubs examined in that it was dependent upon the leadership of a single committed individual around which the organisation was structured, firstly Thornton, then Lord Orford and finally Wilson, later to become Lord Berners. It ceased to function due to its lack of flexibility in the face of changing circumstances and the loss of what was to be its final significant manager, Berners. The Renfrew Subscription Hawks is less well documented but it seems to have shared several of the conditions detailed above. It was more modest in outlook but it was an attempt to continue the established tradition, it was a select society of gentlemen, it relied upon professional falconers, and was run by a single aficionado, Malcolm Fleming from a family long associated with the sport. It petered out a few years after the death of its mentor. The Loo Hawking Club, later the Royal Loo Club, whilst situated in the Low Countries, followed the former pattern. It was an attempt at grand scale, mounted falconry for an elite society many of them British. It also relied upon professional falconers. This Club depended upon the patronage of the Dutch Royal family rather than a dedicated amateur individual, once the patronage was withdrawn the Club ceased.



The Falconers Club was another attempt to provide falconry on a large and ambitious scale, although as a novel feature it was to provide public demonstrations as well as sport. Created by Dugmore who was its significant driving individual although run by Harting, it saw itself as the vehicle through which falconry could be revived. Whilst populist in its outlook, it was a select Club boasting high ranking patrons. It failed financially amidst considerable acrimony both within its own membership and throughout the falconry fraternity itself. The most modern of the clubs was the O.H.C. It was certainly an elite gentleman's club that modelled its sport on that of former and grander entities. However, it was always rather modest in aspiration being limited firmly by its finances. Like the aforementioned clubs it was structured around the expertise and commitment of a single individual in the guise of its manager, firstly Newcome and then Lascelles and ultimately Blaine although his tenure was limited to the last few years of its operation. Under Lascelles and then Blaine it does appear to have been conducted on a far more collegial basis than those former clubs whose operation was solely predicated upon the directions of a single individual, as indeed the O.H.C. had been under Newcome. The Club also had its mentor in the form of Lord Lilford, who was committed to the sport despite being a limited practitioner himself. It also relied upon the services of professional falconers and organised the procurement of hawks. The Old Hawking Club was more flexible than the clubs that went before it; it allowed for its members to make use of the hawks and professional when this did not clash with the scheduled hawking calendar. In effect the Club oversaw the death of the mounted aspect of the sport in the United Kingdom and whilst game hawking and to a lesser extent lark hawking had assumed the mantle of sustainable falconry, the loss of the traditional form of the sport proved to be insurmountable for it. It

was the last of the clubs that assumed organisation of the sport for its members.

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<sup>i</sup> Protestantism can be understood as both articulating what became known as the enlightenment and resulting from it.

<sup>ii</sup> Exploitation of nature in the medieval context was extensive and in the case of animals often cruel and wanton (Thomas 1983), however it was undertaken because it could be (Salisbury 1992). Later exploitation was conducted because it ought to be, which is quite a different way of thinking. Even when concerns about cruelty were to be voiced (Thomas 1983, Ritvo 1990, Cartmill 1993) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were focussed on the particular and not critical of the extent of exploitation, so ingrained was it into the world view of the time.

<sup>iii</sup> 'Philosophical orientation' is used here in terms of a change in the way of thinking, rather than a specific school of thought.

<sup>iv</sup> Much celebrated in falconry literature, Colonel Thomas Thornton of Thornville Royal in Yorkshire. Born in 1747 (many sources incorrectly date his birth as 1757) and educated at Charterhouse. This devotee of sports was a fanatical huntsman, falconry being only one of his passions among shooting, coursing and fox and stag hunting (Thornton 1804, Salvin & Brodrick 1855). He followed the example set by mediaeval nobility and kept birds of prey, mainly falcons, on a considerable scale (The Old Sports of England 1835).

<sup>v</sup> Valkenswaard now in North Brabant, the Netherlands, is a confluence on the northern European migration route for birds of prey, particularly falcons. In the autumn many immature (first year birds), and to a lesser extent adult, raptors travel south to avoid the extreme winters returning in the spring to take up breeding territories. From a very early date the heath land in Brabant had been an area where hawks and falcons had been trapped to supply the demand for falconry birds. The name Valkenswaard (falcon-sward) is testament to this industry (Mitchell 1900 Schlegel & Wulverhorst 1853). Whilst much reduced in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, the tradition actually continued until the 1939-45 war after which both trapping and equipment making ceased (Glasier pers con 1994).

<sup>vi</sup> Known at that time as Iceland, Norwegian or Greenland falcons, depending upon the plumage (Lydekker 1895). These are now recognised as a single species.

<sup>vii</sup> In the 1880's Colonel Thorton had an English falconer, a William Lawson. It is unclear however if he was in the employ of the Confederate Hawks during Thornton's management of the Club. See section on 'traditions' in Chapter 1 for a further discussion as to why the nationality of the professional might be important.

<sup>viii</sup> During the 'golden age' of falconry had become a predilection of the elite and powerful, and the maintenance of impressive hawking establishments became a symbol of status, it was necessary to have skilled and full-time falconers to manage them.

<sup>ix</sup> Hares also provided good sport for the gyrfalcons and a fine gallop for the 'field' (Stanley 1838)

<sup>x</sup> Auctioned in 1999 at Southerby's, Colonel Thorton's silver gilt tea urn now resides in the United States and on display in the American Archives of Falconry, at the Peregrine Foundation in Boise, Idaho.

<sup>xi</sup> Officer status was still purchased or appointed at this point.

<sup>xii</sup> Much of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century literature such as Fisher's *Reminiscences* (1901), Freeman & Salvin (1859), Lascelles (1892), Salvin & Brodrick (1855), claims that the continuance of the sport was in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, solely dependant upon Colonel Thornton and Lord Orford. This is likely to understate the case in England and there is good reason to believe that there were numbers of falconers and falconry establishments in Scotland, this is discussed elsewhere.

<sup>xiii</sup> Major, later Colonel, Wilson was to become Lord Berners and continue the management of the Club until his death in 1838 when it, by then known as the High Ash Club, ceased to operate due to the drainage and cultivation of the surrounding land.

<sup>xiv</sup> The similarities with riding to hounds is discussed in an earlier section.

<sup>xv</sup> The site of Barrochan Tower, sometimes referred to as Castle, is now part of Glasgow Airport.

<sup>xvi</sup> Falcons were entered at rooks prior to flights at kite or heron, the organisation of the flight being much the same. Rooks were good sport in their own right but until the kite and heron had become unavailable they were often considered a stepping stone.

<sup>xvii</sup> Moor was notoriously difficult to ride over at any speed (Eden 1979).

<sup>xviii</sup> Salvin & Brodrick (op cit) recite that the match was between a tiercel (male peregrine) belonging to Fleming and a falcon (strictly speaking a female peregrine) belonging to King James IV. This hood is currently in the possession of the National Museum of Scotland.

<sup>xix</sup> Tiercels are approximately a third smaller and somewhat lighter than the falcons in the peregrine, thus rendering the cocks of grouse and pheasant generally beyond them

<sup>xx</sup> In 1840 HRH The Prince of Orange, HRH The Prince Fredric of the Netherlands, HRH The Prince Alexandra of the Netherlands (President) and, HRH The Prince Henry of the Netherlands were to grace the Club and thus have the name changed to The Royal Loo Club.

<sup>xxi</sup> Newcome relating the reasons behind the ultimate failure of the Club said that by the late 1840's the Dutch King habitually chose to eat in the middle of the afternoon and so because they were part of the court, the members of the Club were obliged to do the same. Mid-afternoon is the most advantageous time to hawk for heron (Harting 1891).

<sup>xxii</sup> The Club employed Jan Botts as falconer and, A. Botts & J. van den Boom as under falconers. In the early 1840's A. Mollen was employed, he was one of a family famous for the trapping, training and supplying of hawks at Valkensward (Schlegel & Wulverhorst 1853).

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Members subscribing in 1839*: Baron Tindal; Baron van Capellen; Baron V.v. Tuyll v. Serooskerken; Baron d'Offemont; Honn. C. Stuart Wortley; E.C. Newcome Esq; *for part of 1839 & 1840*: Sir Joseph Copley; *Subscribing in 1840*: Z.K.H. The prince of Orange; Z.K.H. Prince Frederic of the Netherlands; Z.K.H. The Prince Alexander of the Netherlands; Z.K.H. The Prince Henry of the Netherlands; Baron Nyvenheim; Baron W.A. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye; Baron Sloet van Toutenburg; Baron Sloet v. Oldruitenburg; H. Steengracht; Graaf van Ranzow; Baron A. Sirtema van Grovestins; Baron v. Zuijlen v. d. Schaffelaar; Baron de Constant Rebecque; Generaal Nahuys van Burcht; Baron H. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye; Hodson; A. van der Hoop; Van Loon; Huijdecoper van Zeist; Baron Th. Van Bienen; Sir Ed. Disbrowe; Sir Alex Malet Bt; Honn. W.S. Jerningham; W.P. Barnaart van Bergen; Fabricus van Leijenburg en Heukelom; Baron van Rhemen; Baron van Bienen van de Groote Lindt; Brugmans (Staatsraad); Graaf von Wylich und Lottum; Hertog van Leeds; W. Newcome Esq; Lord Willoughby d'Eresby; Honn. Colonel Dawson Damer; Evelyn Dennison Esq; Lord Cranstoun; Prins N. Esterhazy; Baron von Trautmansdorff; Edward Beaumont Esq; Sir Hume Hugh Campbell; *Subscribing in 1841*: Baron von Otterstedt; Horace Hamond Esq; *Subscribing in 1842*: Lord C. Hamilton; Honn. W. Twisselton Fiennes; J. Wellesley Esq; Knight; J.T. Hales Tooke; Edw. Humphrijs Green; J. Balfour; E.H. Dennison Esq; A. Foster Esq; R. Knightly; Lord Suffield; Earl of Kinnoul; Lord Loftus; W.H. Gregory Esq; *Subscribing in 1843*: H.C. Dubois; Baron von Westreenen; Baron van Verschuer; Baron von Gablentz; Sir John Hanmer; Milbank; *Subscribing in 1844*: Stirling Crawford; W. Ellis; Graaf Westerholt; J. Borski; John Melvil; *Subscribing in 1845*: Graaf de noailles; Baron van den Bogaerde; Baron Mollerus; Lord Alvanley; Sir Horace Seymour; Earl of Chesterfield; Graaf Alfred von Hatzfeld; Baron van Tuyll van Serooskerken van Vleuten; D.J.C. van Lennep; Crommelin; Baron van Brakel van Doornwerth; *Subscribing in 1846*: Generaal Hare Clarges; Graaf von Hatzfeld; Baron van Knobelsdorff van Hamerstein; Graaf Breteuil; *Subscribing in 1847*: Majoor Mountjoy Martin; Lord Villers; Fred. Millbank; Lord Strathmore; Chs. Martins; Z.D.H. de Regeerende Hertog van Nassau; Meijnard; *Subscribing in 1848*: Graaf Esterhazij; Baron C.J. v. Tuyll v. Serooskerken; Graaf Karl zu Eltz; Baron Frederik Breidbach Burressheim; James Brown Esq; H.K.H. de Prinses van Oranje; Baron de Pfeill; Ridder Louis v. d. Bogaerde; R. Clifton; J.F. Rowlands; *Subscribing in 1849*: Baron de Lareinty. (from Portefeuille 'de Valkenjacht', Kon. Huisarchief. Zie ook: Geillustreerde Catalogus van Diploma's. Kunstvoorwerpen, Boek).

<sup>xxiv</sup> The heron was generally released alive: Being a large robust bird it was often unharmed by the act of being caught. A brass ring was placed upon its leg stating when it had been captured. It was reported that some herons wore three such rings. Falcons that were inclined to injure the herons perhaps by breaking a wing when striking them were not flown again at that quarry (Freeman & Salvin 1855, Lascelles 1892). Despite this assertion, a number of the representations of heron hawking show dead herons - Sonderland's Le vol du Heron 1 is depicted elsewhere.

<sup>xxx</sup> What was known as the 'great flight' was that by the larger falcons; peregrines, gerfalcons or sakers, often flown in a cast or pair at heron, crane or formerly kite. These quarry species attempt to escape from a falcon by gaining height, which they did very rapidly due to their broad wings (although being comparatively slow fliers). The falcons at the other extreme, do not gain lift quickly, but were very fast although rather less manoeuvrable. The flight was thus; a large, slow flying bird rising steadily being pursued by a quicker flying falcon or falcons. The falcons had to get above the quarry in order to stoop at it, and to do this they had to fly in rings or gyrations around the fleeing quarry. This flight was much valued by falconers and spectators, who would have been mounted and may have covered several miles. The quarry and falcons often went so high as to disappear into clouds (Fisher, 1901).

<sup>xxvi</sup> They record that in 1852 A. Mollen was the falconer assisted by under-falconers, J. van den Boom, P. Bekkers, P. Mollen and J. Peels.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Discussed previously.

<sup>xxviii</sup> The advent of the 'subscription' clubs in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century can be considered to be evidence of such: Running a major hawking establishment, with its falconers, under-falconers, horses & dogs, together with the annual cost of replacing lost falcons or poor performers was considerable. In 1855 Salvin & Brodrick (1855) estimate for a 'regular' hawking establishment of 8 hawks; a falconer and assistant (including wages); 1 or 2 horses & 3 or 4 dogs, would be not less than £200 per year.

<sup>xxix</sup> He was a younger brother of William Barr once falconer for Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, who had taken to exhibiting his hawks commercially

<sup>xxx</sup> A water colour by Imegal de Azars, of a falconer wearing the Club uniform is in the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris.

<sup>xxxi</sup> What these 'circumstances' were, is not detailed by Lascelles or any of his contemporaries.

<sup>xxxii</sup> He did continue to fly heron where possible but turned increasingly to game hawking, however Lascelles (1892) informs us that Newcome was never fond of this branch of the sport, preferring rook hawking and the flight at larks with merlins. Lark hawking had similarities to the 'great flight' whereby the lark and merlin had to compete for mastery in the air by ringing up, often out of sight. It however did not require the field to be mounted being on a much smaller scale.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Duncombe at that stage engaged only a single falconer between March and December (O'Carroll-Scott).

<sup>xxxiv</sup> It must be pointed out however, that the O.H.C. also embraced game and lark hawking unlike the previous clubs.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Lascelles (1892) records the original members as: The Hon. C. Duncombe; Lord Lilford; The Maharajah Dhuleep Singh; Mr. E.C. Newcome; Mr. Amherst; Col. Brooksbank; A.E. Knox Esq.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> He was the brother of William Barr, mentioned previously, and John Barr who had been the falconer with the French experiment; the Champagne Hawking Club.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Barr was not comfortable with this believing that the hawks would easily be lost due to enclosure (O'Carroll-Scott).

<sup>xxxviii</sup> As with the above note, this caused some concern and Lascelles records his reluctance to send them (letters).

<sup>xxxix</sup> In 1890 it was reported by Lascelles in the OHC journal (Upton 1987 pp97): *On September 17<sup>th</sup>. The Club sustained the severest loss it has yet had to undergo in the death of its falconer, John Frost. He died from a heart complaint after a brief illness. He had been continuously in the service of the Club since 1872, first as under falconer, then, since autumn 1873, as head falconer. To his skill and energy most of the success and good sport recorded in these journals of the Club is due. His keenness was unfailing and caused him frequently to over-exert himself. His early death at the age of thirty-six is to some extent attributable to the manner in which he worked, never sparing himself and always anxious to show sport. His loss is deeply regretted by every member of the Club.*

<sup>xl</sup> Salvin appears to dispute that he authorised the inclusion of the material that he penned and went to some lengths to distance himself from Freeman's work (discussed elsewhere).

<sup>xli</sup> Dugmore was incorrect in that the pension paid to the Hereditary Grand Falconer was actually £1,200 per annum.

<sup>xlii</sup> This term 'stud' was used by many others in describing collections of hawks (Mitchell 1900, Fisher 1871)

<sup>xliii</sup> Marlborough Times April 1878: Lascelles wrote:

*Sir, I have read with pleasure an article in your paper of March 30<sup>th</sup>, expressing satisfaction at the so-*

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called 'revival' of the beautiful sport of falconry by Capt. Dugmore, and at the proposed introduction of the sport into this district; speaking of it, as though hawking were a novelty in this part of the country. I therefore write to inform you that the present is the sixteenth season during which a club of gentlemen devoted to falconry have pursued this sport over the country in this neighbourhood, by the courtesy and kindness of the owners and occupiers of the land in giving them leave to do so. This club is called the 'Old Hawking Club', it has been in existence for many years, and has no connection whatever with Capt. Dugmore and the proposed new club. Its members are only too glad to see any inhabitants of this district out with their hawks, in order that they may be able to make some slight return to those who have so kindly and liberally encouraged falconry by showing sport to them and their friends. That they have been able to do so in former years their 'list of head killed' will testify.

I would therefore suggest that the term 'revival of falconry' is altogether a misnomer, and the more so, as there has never been fewer than three or four distinct hawking establishments maintained in the United Kingdom since the days when hawking was the principal sport of the country, whilst an unbroken line of professional falconers can be traced from the present day to the time when one formed a necessary part of the appanage of every large country house.

I am sir, yours truly,

Gerald Lascelles

Hon. Sec. O.H.C.

Crown Inn, Everley

<sup>xliv</sup> Upton (1987) reproduces the following:

Sir, The animus of the letter in your last number, signed 'A Falconer of Twenty-five Years' Standing', is so very apparent that at first it seemed to me hardly worth while to notice what is evidently a mere splenetic outburst, and a gratuitous attempt to injure the infant Falconry Club from behind the safe cover of an anonymous letter.

However, as you, Sir, in the exercise of your discretion, considered the attack worth printing, I suppose that I, as the Master of the Falconry Club, and myself a falconer of some twenty-two years' standing, ought (though rather against my own judgement) to treat it as worth answering. I answer accordingly. First, it is not the case that 'a cap was sent round', or that any money was collected at the public meet referred to, or at any public meet that has taken place this season up to the present date. And had 'A Falconer etc.' wished it, or cared about such trifles as acting in good faith, it would have been perfectly easy for him to ascertain this fact before giving currency to an incorrect statement,

But, secondly, the collection of field money from non-members is authorised when the hawks of the Falconry Club are flown publicly. I should be very glad to dispense with it, as personally I cannot help disliking by precedent. . . . However . . . this field money is purely optional; so that there is nothing to prevent persons of 'A Falconer's' stamp from enjoying their sport at other people's expense, if so minded, as I doubt not such gentry would be.

Thirdly, the reason for the non-collection of field money on the occasion referred to was the failure of sport, consequent on the then falconer's [John Barr] drunkenness (even in the hawking field) and mismanagement. There have been no public days since, and consequently no field money; but the hawks have been for the last fortnight, and still are, flying daily, and flying right well, at rooks and carrion crows at Aldershot, for the private enjoyment of members of the club and their friends . . . In such an attempt we arouse of course, but despise and ignore, the jealousy and opposition of such 'Falconers of Twenty-five Years Standing' as wish selfishly to keep falconry to themselves, even though the art should die with them, and dislike - this is where the shoe really pinches - having to pay the higher prices for their fresh hawks, which are inevitably consequent on the increased demand stimulated by our proceedings. The excuse of anxiety for the interests of falconry comes ill from persons who have done, and will do, nothing to promote these interests, or any interests but their own.

An anonymous circular, which I enclose for your private perusal, and a copy of which I have handed to my solicitor, will show you what we have to put up with from persons (falconers, forsooth!) of this stamp, and to what depths they will stoop. . . .

I trust, therefore, that in case you should see fit to afford publicity to any further attacks on the Falconry Club, you will insist on, at the same time, publishing the names of our assailants.

Master of Hawks.

The correspondence continued:

Sir, With regard to the communication by 'A Falconer of Twenty-five Years' Standing' in your columns

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for May 11th, will you allow me to observe that I think that the said falconer ought to have signed his name?

E. Delme Radcliffe, Lieut. Col.

And:

Sir, Although I have not the slightest wish to continue this correspondence in your columns, I must ask you to allow me to make a few remarks on the letter signed 'Master of Hawks', and they will be positively the last I shall offer. First, I must point out to the person who writes under this nom de plume that abuse is no argument and that if he cannot write with temper and propriety he had better not write at all; hard words, imputations of motives, and abuse will only damage his case.

'A Falconer of Twenty-five Years' Standing'

The 'Master of Hawks' replied in a manner of his first (not reproduced but a highly respected falconer did write:

Sir, Permit me to echo Col. E. Delme Radcliffe's wish, in your last number, that your correspondents on this subject should henceforth drop their 'noms de plume'. But if I had any influence with them I would beg them, in the interest of the old sport, to abstain from thus writing to you at all in future, as I am of the opinion that no good can come of it, either to our fine old sport or to themselves.

Charles Hawkins Fisher (Major)

Letters continued to be published until:

Sir, I trust you will allow me to heartily indorse Major Fisher's deprecation of the acrimonious, not to say abusive, correspondence that has been lately carried on in your paper under the heading of 'The Falconry Club'. I have read the various letters with no little amusement, but am decidedly of opinion that letters of this style must of necessity do very much to lower falconry in the eyes of such of the public as may happen to read them, and that the matter has now been carried rather too far.

Falconers cannot afford to forget that they form a very small minority among the sportsmen of this country; that their favourite pastime is carrying on a struggling and precarious existence, and that it is largely dependent upon the goodwill of many sportsmen and landowners in this country who from various causes, principally that of having never been properly 'entered' to the sport, have not perhaps a very high opinion of what they may possibly consider an obsolete amusement. Such gentlemen as these, when they read such a correspondence between a few of the small band of falconers, as that which has lately appeared in your columns, must inevitably form a somewhat mean opinion of those few persons who still patronize falconry. I feel sure that each of your correspondents has the good of the fine old sport at heart, but am equally sure that abusing one another in the newspapers is the most certain way to damage the cause they desire to promote. Whatever opinions, then, those falconers who have perhaps been trained under older-fashioned auspices to different ideas of this sport may hold, as to the comparatively recent innovations of such practices as collecting field money, of holding public exhibitions of hawks, and of even flying them at tame quarry before large crowds of spectators; and as to the effect of such performances upon the public mind, I would entreat them to keep such opinions to themselves, and not to draw attention by these heated discussions to practices which are better left to stand or fall on their own merits.

I see that several of your correspondents throw much blame on the 'Falconer of Twenty-five Years Standing' for having used a nom de plume. In my opinion, rather unjustly so, for I cannot see why he was bound to sign his name to a simple query which his first letter contained, as to the truth of a report that had long been well-known throughout the hawking world, and which had been published in at least one of your contemporaries; while the tone in which his question was answered was such as certainly to prevent his signing his name to his second letter had he been so disposed.

In apologising for occupying so much of your space, I will say that I sincerely hope I have said nothing that can possibly provoke a reply or a continuance of this unhappy discussion, and that any want of unanimity existing among the small band of falconers may in future not be so openly proclaimed to the world.

G. Lascelles,

Hon. Sec. Old Hawking Club.

This letter was accompanied by the editors comment:

*This correspondence must now be closed. Ed.*

<sup>14</sup> The O.H.C. had actually thrived on the reduction in the numbers of those who wished to accompany them out rook hawking, and in some respects had encouraged it (Lilford letters).

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<sup>xlvi</sup> Blaine in correspondence with his publisher in 1935 (Allen correspondence 1935-36) records that most of the hawks were left in the charge of people with little or no experience during the war years and subsequently died.

<sup>xlvii</sup> Honderich (1995) – records the popular or non-philosophical. Romanticism as a disdain for ordinary rationality that they perceive leaves us with a distorted picture of what the world is really like.

<sup>xlviii</sup> The accipiters (hawks) are creatures that hunt only at "the bolt", they see the quarry and they fly directly at it. The falcons however, can be trained to hunt in two ways: 1) they can be slipped 'out of the hood' straight at the quarry like a hawk, or 2) they can be taught to "wait on"; that is stay on the wing at some height over falconer or dog, then the quarry which has been marked down before the falcon is flown is flushed and the falcon stoops upon it. A falcon that is trained to wait on may well ignore possible prey nearby and mount to its pitch, whilst one that is regularly flown directly at its quarry will not behave like the former, as it will not have been conditioned to wait on. Birds of prey are comparatively simple creatures and have an inclination to repeat successful behaviours.

<sup>xlix</sup> Both Lascelles (1892) and Harting (1891) record that the falcons owned by the Old Hawking Club were flown at different quarries during the year this was accomplished by having set "seasons" for each. In this way the hawks could be entered, that is introduced to a specific prey, and then flown at that type of quarry for a period of time, before being entered at a different quarry in a different landscape and after a lay-off.

<sup>i</sup> Thornton (1804 pp16-73) was not merely a falconer. He shot, fished and rode to hounds. Indeed, on his 'tour', falconry takes a lower priority to both shooting and fishing.

<sup>ii</sup> The Duke of St Albans, the Hereditary Grand Falconer of England, maintained a far smaller establishment even when in receipt of the endowment of £1,000:00 per annum from the Crown. This amounted to some half dozen falcons in the 1860's and was discontinued completely in 1870 (Lilford, et al 1871).

<sup>iii</sup> Whilst not cheap by the standards of the day, these were a fraction of what it financial cost to maintain a hawking establishment oneself.

# Chapter 6



Thomas Littleton Powys, fourth Baron Lilford, died on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1896. His letters and those of his friends and colleagues that span some thirty years; an unpublished collection of which reside in the Yale Library, and are supplemented by a published collection (1903) edited by Trevor-Battye, together they form an unique record. These together with the memoirs written after his death by the Hon. Mrs Dawtrey Drewitt (1900), his sister, provide an opportunity to consider the relationship between the Victorian naturalist, science and falconry. Lilford, through his membership and support of the Old Hawking Club became an highly influential and significant figure in terms of the sport during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, although, not as might be expected as a practitioner. Rather, Lord Lilford was an intellectual link between falconry, ornithology and natural history, he was a mentor to the OHC both financially and through friendship and unwavering support, and he was tirelessly enthusiastic about birds of prey. An overview of this man's life and interests will be undertaken to provide context to the OHC's most important benefactor. Without Lilford the club, being the mainstay of organised falconry in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, would not have flourished.

### Lilford

The fourth Baron who was widely known as Lord Lilford, was the son of Thomas Atherton Powys the third Baron, and his wife Mary Elizabeth. She, Mary Elizabeth, was the daughter of Henry Richard Fox, the Baron Holland, and Elizabeth Vassell. Their eldest son Thomas was born in Stanhope Street, Mayfair, London on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1833. He was prepped at Barkswell in Warwickshire under Dr Bickmore, and attended Harrow for two years until the summer of 1850. After a short stay in Lausanne with a private tutor, he embarked on university life at Christ College, Oxford where he

matriculated on June 12<sup>th</sup> 1851 but subsequently left prior to taking a degree. In 1854 he took a commission in the Northamptonshire Militia but after spending a short spell of duty in Ireland and at Devonport he resigned in 1855 and returned to the life of a Victorian gentleman and amateur naturalist. He was incapacitated by rheumatics from his mid-thirties and this increasingly prevented his involvement in physically demanding pursuits.

Lord Lilford inherited Lilford Park, an estate in Northamptonshire, on the death of his father. The Hall had been built in the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century and considerable alterations had been undertaken throughout the successive centuries. William Pitt created the first Lord Lilford of Thomas Powys, sometimes spelled Pavys, he was the fourth Lords great, great grandfather.

Between 1856 & 1858 Lilford joined Hercules Rowley on a yachting tour of the Mediterranean much of which was devoted to bird watching and specimen collecting. He was married on his return to the youngest daughter of Robert William Branding of Northumberland. Between the years of 1864 & 1882 he made regular collecting trips to Spain and the countries bordering the Mediterranean and is known for his re-discovery of *Larus audouini*, a rare mid-latitude gull thought to be extinct so far West. These field trips were curtailed by increasingly poor health and by the death firstly of his eldest son in 1882 and followed by that of his wife, Emma Elisabeth, in 1884.

### The Naturalist

He was an active field naturalist of some note and in his young adulthood prior to his rheumatic condition restricting him. He had been a collector of specimens not only for himself but for fellow naturalists and the increasingly fashionable zoological gardens throughout Europe (ibid). After a relatively active young adulthood

he was forced in later life to confine himself to purchasing specimens from dealers, much as he had done as a schoolboy when at Harrow and later whilst studying at Oxford. He amassed a large collection of birds and animals at his home at Lilford Park. The aviaries at there were extensive and visited by many ornithologists and naturalists. They were noted for the collection of birds of prey perhaps unsurprisingly given Lilford's association with falconry.

Whilst birds were his major interest he also collected and kept numerous mammals. He had an old European brown bear that lived at Lilford Park and ended its' days in Regent Park Zoological Gardens on loan to the ZSL<sup>1</sup>. Otters were a particular favourite and Lilford kept several in an enclosure at his home. He constantly strove to breed these creatures that so fascinated him, in captivity but never succeeded. Salvin, his friend and one time falconry mentor, sent him harvest mice that he kept and successfully bred for many years. His scope of interest was wide and he constantly strove for new knowledge about the natural world.

Elected Fellow of the Zoological Society as early as 1852, and Fellow of the Linnean Society in 1862 he was held in considerable regard by those interested in the natural world. He was a founder of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1858, and became its President from March 1867. He was also the first President of Northamptonshire Natural History Society, also known as the Northamptonshire Field Club (ibid).

His passion for ornithological study was one that would be recognised today as very professional, but of course was entirely in keeping with the Victorian sense of the amateur. On his visits to Spain and the Mediterranean in the 1870's he visited many local museums and was disappointed at their lack of specimens and organisation. He was to say of the museum at Palermo that it had in the way of Sicilian birds 'only a fair collection', of Naples University

museum 'nothing very remarkable' and that what was on show was 'crowded and badly arranged' (cited in Mearns & Mearns 1998), he was equally damning about collections at Pisa and the Barboza du Bocage at Lisbon. The latter he found particularly regrettable because in excess of 3,000 species were represented there, mostly from the Portuguese colonies in Africa, but they were poorly mounted, labelled incorrectly, and exhibited a lack of general care that would ultimately shorten their life as a collection of scientific worth.

A letter to the Reverend Murray Matthew illustrates further concerns, this time not with museums but with dealers:

March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1892

*I was with Edward Verreaux (egg dealer) in Paris when there arrived a large consignment of skins and eggs from South Russia. I was asked to assist at the unpacking of the two cases. There was no list or invoice of any kind. The first box contained perhaps two hundred eggs, of I should say perhaps fifty or sixty species beautifully packed, with names of the species in Russian, written on each egg; no date, no locality. A big note-book was produced, and the two brothers proceeded to separate and name the eggs in the book, as it seemed to me, purely as fancy dictated. I was consulted now and then, and prevented some eggs of the little bustard being put down to a gull (*Larus melanocephalus*), but I held my tongue, except when questioned, and a lot of eggs of redshank were named and priced in the book as a rare plover's. Some eggs of a crane (*Grus virgo*) did duty for those of an eagle (*Aquila imperialis*); eggs of *H. nigra*, the black tern and probably *H. leucopterus*, were lumped into those of a pratincole, and labelled as belonging to this last species. Four white eggs that I have no doubt were laid by an eagle owl (*Bubo maximus*) went down in the list as those of a black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), and so on ad infinitum. The naïve way in which the brothers confessed their entire ignorance, and shot at*

*probabilities was most amusing, and gave me a lesson about buying eggs that I have never forgotten. I feel convinced that both brothers were honestly dealing according to their lights, which were certainly very dim, in the matter of oology, and theirs was the leading zoological business in Paris at the time, 1862. (letters)*

However he was not a mean spirited man and did give praise and show admiration where it was deserved. Of the Marchese Giacomo Doria, in Genoa, who had become the curator of his own collection after gifting it to the municipality, Lilford was very complimentary. He records that whilst most of the collection remained in skins, he thought the museum was laid out in an excellent manner. Whilst admiring the parts of the collection from Persia and from Borneo, it was the local specimens that captivated him; the Audouin's gull<sup>11</sup>, the little bunting, and Eleonora's falcon being amongst those of note. There was a collection of bats and a menagerie that was very much to Lilford's taste featuring a tiger, puma, Sardinian red deer, moufflon, and an eagle that he supposed to be a spotted, and a francolin a species of which the visiting aristocrat was very fond. He was also gratified to be given by the curator, a copy of Salvadori's work on the birds of Italy, some copies of the 'Proceedings' of the museum society and a number of reptiles.

### Ornithology, identification & collection

In the years prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, identification of wild creatures and particularly birds, was problematic. Prior to the availability of field guides that became popular in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ornithological texts were often heavy, cumbersome, and expensive books unsuited to the rigours of use in the field. Furthermore, they were not intended for the identification of wild living birds but to aid identification once the specimen was in the hand. This can be supported by observing that the first impression of Bewick's History of British Birds (1796 – 1804) and Yarrell's text of the same title

(1843) were illustrated in black and white. Colour printing was available but comparatively expensive and considered by many of the early school of ornithologists to be unnecessary (Montague 1802). Even once this view was superseded later in the century, and colour printing more widely available, the texts were still generally produced in multiple volumes; Swainsland for example, needed four volumes for his Familiar Wild Birds (1883).

In keeping with the canons of the science of the day, the demands on knowledge were ever more rigorous and the need for verification increasingly acute (Keynes 2003). In 1753 Linnaeus, a Swedish scientist, refined the hitherto chaotic efforts at classification by introducing the binomial system: Family or generic name and type or specific name – for example *Falco peregrinus*.

With common and easily approached species sketches, could be made and coloured that, depending on the eye and skill of the ornithologist, might suffice in providing reliable reference material. Trapping was also used to obtain specimens for examination and recording, however this method was useful for a limited number of the avian species encountered. Furthermore it was not specific so identified and required targets were not possible in normal circumstances. Field glasses or prism binoculars did not become widely available until the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and they were very expensive until after the Great War. The task before the ornithologist was a daunting one were they to be considered worthy of the expectations of science (Jones 2001).

Shooting was the obvious answer to some of the difficulties faced by those who would study birds. Attitudes to, and engagement with, nature were often very functional: Could such and such be eaten? Did it produce anything useful that might be commercially desirable? Could it tell me anything? Does it enhance my reputation? And of course, did it provide good sport? Just as

collecting legitimised shooting, the hunt was an important aspect of collecting, as Mearns and Mearns (1998) identify:

*Collecting provided a convenient and socially acceptable excuse for respectable grown men to climb trees, scramble down cliffs, go camping and roam freely out of doors, pitting themselves against the terrain, the weather and wary, elusive quarry. Success demanded physical fitness, endurance, patience, skill with guns and a level of fieldcraft now rare amongst bird watchers. In short it was considered good, manly fun ... whether practiced as a hobby, lifestyle or profession ... (pp21)*

It is ironic from a modern perspective that a 19<sup>th</sup> century ornithologist would learn the habits, nesting behaviours, and song of the commoner species, shooting a few for reference, but immediately 'bag' anything rarer that he came across. Whilst there is obvious logic in this methodology – if a bird was rare or unusual, by very definition you were less likely to witness it again, so it ought to be collected without hesitation – it did little for the real furtherance of knowledge save in the area of physiological examination, indication of range and plumage identification.

Much collecting was done during the breeding season. The breeding plumage of many species is the most brilliant and definitive. A breeding bird once shot can be dissected to properly identify the sex, something that had perplexed many of the earlier students of aves (White 1875). When shot on or near a nest site, young or more often eggs could be collected and tied together by physical evidence<sup>iii</sup>. However and more pragmatically, breeding birds are easier to shoot, being biologically driven to return to the nest site for either incubation or the feeding of young.

It was only as collections grew to substantial sizes that racial differences within species began to be recognised and recorded by

ornithologists, although with regards to birds of prey falconers have been aware of such geographical distinctions since Fredrick II in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. From the scientific identification of these came much further inquiry: Why did these differences occur? In the century before Darwin published his *Origin of Species By Means Of Natural Selection* (1859), many ornithologists were puzzled by the array or variety of divine creation. Explanations were not forthcoming until Darwin, at great personal cost, figuratively 'killed God' and freed scientific endeavour from the shackles of the traditional religious approach to knowledge (Jones 2001). The subsequent unfettering of the scientific imagination<sup>iv</sup> combined with sizeable, well established and classified collections allowed marked steps forward in ornithological understanding.

The technology of collecting was also developing apace: by 1850 the breach loading shotgun and faster burning powder (discussed previously) allowed for more accurate shooting; the development and commercial availability of Becoeur's arsenical soap to aid specimen preservation and ward off insect and fungal attack; improved transport both for specimens and collectors to and from all parts of the British empire and beyond; the growth in and wide readership of, bird related natural history literature, all contributed to the project.

#### Publications, commissions & letters

Lilford worked tirelessly at his chosen science and at the time of his death on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1896 was still to complete his major text; Coloured Figures of the Birds of the British Islands. Some sections of this work had been published in 1885 and in 1891 under the title of Coloured Figures of the British Birds<sup>v</sup>. As the titles suggest these texts contained coloured plates of the birds, these were commissioned by Lilford and discussed elsewhere in this work. His other book was the 1895 Notes on the Birds of Northamptonshire &



Neighbourhood and was a printing of a previously privately published work. His greatest contribution to ornithological literature however, is contained in his articles in *The Ibis* and *Zoologist*<sup>vi</sup>, furthermore he wrote occasionally for *The Field*.

During his lifetime Leadenhall market was an important source of unusual birds including raptors, and Lilford was a regular visitor whenever he was in London<sup>vii</sup>. His interest in natural history or 'the science of nature' as he was to refer to it (letters), was to govern his life and formulate his concerns. In addition to his live menagerie he owned an extensive egg collection and collection of taxidermy, both mounted specimens and 'museum' skins<sup>viii</sup>. Of these many were by the highly regarded Mr Cullingford of Durham and some by T.E. Gunn of Norwich who specialised in mounted birds in a 'natural habitat' featured in a glass fronted display case. On Lilford's death some of the specimens were donated to the British Museum but most were disposed of to private collectors.

The most important aspect of collecting was accurate, legible and comprehensive labelling<sup>ix</sup>. To these requirements might be added honesty, and whilst proof of fraudulent labelling is difficult to distinguish from common incompetence or crass inaccuracy, Lilford (letters) was certain that the former occurred. There were many zoological dealers, some specialising in birds, and they serviced a flourishing trade in specimens. A rare or exotic example commanded comparatively high prices, thus it was in the interests of the unscrupulous collector in the field, or dealer, to record specimens as out of the ordinary. Another 'trick' was to mount or treat the specimen to have it appear unusual.

He was a patron to numerous artists who specialised in natural history subjects. The likes of Joseph Keulmans, Joseph Wolf, Archibald Thorburn, and George Lodge were all commissioned to produce work mostly of birds and particularly birds of prey. It was

through one of Lilford's major projects, the ornithological text *Coloured Figures of the Birds of the British Islands* (detailed above), that Thorburn established his reputation. Interestingly, Thorburn's first commission was to another falconer ornithologist, the widely respected James Edmund Harting. Two monochrome plates contributed to *Sketches of Bird Life* (1883) and these paved the way for work on Walter Swaysland's four volume *Familiar Wild Birds* (1883 - 88), Lilford had copies of these in his library.

In the collection of letters sent to Thorburn regarding commissioned work, the extent of Lilford's ornithological knowledge and attention to detail is revealed together with a remarkable engagement with the process. He was concerned not only with the avian subject itself in both aspect and plumage but with the setting, or as he was to put it, with the 'surrounding' (Drewitt 1900).

April 13<sup>th</sup>

1888

*...the oyster catcher should be on a sea beach of shingle or sand, ...the ruff and reeve on grassy marshland with any marsh flowers that you may think suit the picture – marsh marigold, meadow sweet, forget-me-not, etc; white-fronted goose, one of a flock – flat sea coast; bernicle, I think swimming – in the foreground sea, high mountains in the background; ...* (Trevor-Battye 1903 pp90-91)

He continues concerning the whooper and Bewick's swan and puffin, and in later letters goes through the same process with regards to a white-shouldered eagle, a booted eagle, mergansers, and more. And whilst these corrections or suggestions are with reference to the surrounding and landscape, he was not adverse to observation on the subject itself:

July 8<sup>th</sup> 1888

*The angle of the eye in teal is rather too acute.* (ibid pp91)

And;

August 10<sup>th</sup> 1888

*Is not the toe of oyster catcher in the water – I mean the inner toe of right foot – a little too much fore-shortened, and ought not the bill to be rather more yellow near the point? (ibid pp91)*

May 19<sup>th</sup> 1893

*The osprey drawing has only one slight defect, and is otherwise quite perfect: namely this, that the principal figure is rather too broad – thick – and gives to me a certain impression of heaviness. ... (ibid pp95)*

April 17<sup>th</sup> 1889

*The eagle is perfect with the exception of the iris, which should, I think, be a shade lighter in colour. (ibid pp93)*

August 21<sup>st</sup>

(no year given)

*The colour of neck and breast of water-rail is, I think, now quite right. I presume that you took the colour of the irides from authority; I must confess that I never saw them so bright, and should have been inclined to say that reddish hazel-brown was the usual colour. (ibid pp94)*

From the above, it can be seen that the sketches and works in progress went back and forth between artist and patron a number of times prior to completion.

The accuracy of the plates that were to feature in his publications was very important to him, and whilst artists of the day were adept at the painting of bird plumage, what marked those of real quality was the ability to get what Lilford referred to as the 'aspect' correct. This is the way the bird actually looked; its stance, which was in traditional illustration often at variance with the manner in which it was represented. In this respect Lilford's commissions were most definitely of the new or 'modern' school of wildlife art that demanded scientific accuracy and far less artistic license than was seen in work of the mid-Century or earlier. They were of the birds in nature

in keeping with the canons of Victorian rationalism that defined Lilford's ornithology.

Lilford often supplied Thorburn, Lodge, and to a lesser extent Wolf, with specimens from his collection of taxidermy and museum skins, or had them visit the Park to sketch the birds in the aviaries, in order to facilitate accuracy.

February 14<sup>th</sup>

1890

*I enclose two little crakes (Crex parva) just received from Spain, and should be glad to have a drawing for the book taken from it. The beak of the March-killed specimen should be green, with red at the base; irides pale currant red, legs and toes green, of a somewhat darker shade than beak. ... (ibid pp94)*

February 19<sup>th</sup>

1892

*I fear that you will be sick of spotted eagles, but I write to say that I am sending you the Subborne specimen just as I received it last night from Messrs. Pratt of Brighton. It is one of the most beautifully marked of its species that I ever saw, and I shall be much obliged if you will make a careful drawing of it for the book. ... (ibid pp95)*

And;

January 28<sup>th</sup>

1889

*I do not remember at this moment if you took a sketch of my old white-tailed eagle at Lilford, or not; if not it might be as well to defer finishing the sketch of the adult till you have an opportunity of taking her portrait, as she is thirty five years old, and has always moulted out very clean; alive or dead you could hardly have a more perfect specimen. (ibid pp 92)*

Lilford was also ambitious for his artists;

January 28<sup>th</sup>

1889

*I do not know whether it would be possible to convey in a drawing the pearly bloom on the plumage of this bird – at all events I have never seen an attempt at it; but you have succeeded so admirably with the plum bloom on a golden eagle and a buzzard that I am inclined to think that you would not be beaten by this peculiarity.*

(ibid pp92)

Neither was he mean in congratulation when the work met with his approval;

May 2<sup>nd</sup>

(no year given)

*We are both delighted with your beautiful picture of the eagle, which has just arrived. You have not only admirably portrayed the characteristic aspect of the bird, but thrown an element of highland poetry into the work that is not often attained, and it deserves all praise. I most gladly retain it, and shall always treasure it for my heart is very often in the Highlands amongst the eagles and wild deer.* (ibid pp94)

July 31, 1890

*To Archibald Thorburn*

*The drawings and plates arrived this morning. I have nothing but admiration to bestow upon them, and Mr Lodge, who is at least as good a judge of birds as I am, and an infinitely superior critic of Art, is entirely of my opinion.* (letters)

Whilst he commissioned a great deal of natural history art work and illustration for his publications, much was for his private collection and Lilford Hall was hung with many fine paintings. He was by nature a generous man and after persuading his friend and fellow

ornithologist Lieutenant Colonel Howard Irby, to write *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar* in 1875, when in 1895 a complete and updated volume of the text was to be published, it was Lilford who commissioned and paid for Thorburn and Smitt to provide the colour plates.

### Owls

Whilst particularly interested in owls in general, he had a special fondness for the little owl. Although not alone in this project, for it had been attempted at least in both Sussex and Hampshire, Lilford is credited with establishing it in central England. A European species not naturally found in the British Isles, the introduction was successful. Whilst from a modern perspective this action seems far from responsible for a naturalist and expert ornithologist, it was entirely consistent with the Victorian gentleman scientists engagement with nature. He was both passionate and industrious with regards to his 'introduction'<sup>x</sup>:

*For several years past I have annually set at liberty a considerable number of the Little Owl properly so called (Athene noctua), from Holland, and that several pairs of these most amusing birds have nested and reared broods in the neighbourhood of Lilford ... I trust, however that I have now fully succeeded in establishing it as a Northamptonshire bird . . . they are excellent mouse catchers and very bad neighbours to young sparrows in their nests . (Presidential Address to The Northamptonshire Field Club in February 1894)*

In the Lilford collection there were some hawk owls who in the confines of their aviary, had become accustomed to fly to the keepers hand in order to feed. Lilford became convinced that 'they might be trained to take young rabbits and rats' (letters). There is no record of this ever having been attempted but it would not have been beyond the experimental part of his nature to have attempted

such.

## Records

The day-book kept by Lilford in 1893 contains numerous entries detailing the events in his live collection (only a few entries relating to birds of prey will be recorded here):

*Addition of 2 horned owls received on January 6<sup>th</sup>;*

*Death of grey eagle owl 'that had lived here for more than twenty years ...' January 16<sup>th</sup> (Trevor-Battye op cit pp274);*

*Death by 'frounce'<sup>xi</sup> of a La Marmora's falcon (elsewhere detailed Eleonora's) January 20<sup>th</sup> ' This bird, perfect in plumage, and by far the most beautiful of many of its species that I have kept alive here, was bought last year of William Blake of Ross, Herefordshire, through an advertisement in the Bazaar, sent to me by Lieut-Colonel E. Butler. It had been obtained two years ago by the present vendor from a London dealer, and in all probability came originally from Morocco' (ibid);*

*Death by 'frounce' of a barbary falcon 'This bird, a most beautiful adult, was bought last autumn and came from Mogador. I have been most unfortunate with many of this species' February 14<sup>th</sup> (ibid pp276);*

*Cape barn owl laid egg, March 2<sup>nd</sup>;*

*Addition 'American peregrine or 'duck hawk' (Falco anatum) received as a present from major Ernest Anne, who informs me that it was taken on board ship at about 1500 miles off the coast of Canada. This bird is considerably smaller than the average Falco peregrinus of the same sex, it is very dark in colour. I am disposed to consider her as a bird of last year' May 6<sup>th</sup> (ibid pp281);*

*A tawny and golden eagle were received 'on approval' from a dealer – Jamrach. The tawny was kept and the golden returned, 'I returned the golden eagle, as I do not want one of that species; this was a remarkably large. strong young bird with pure white tarsi', June 30<sup>th</sup> (ibid pp284);*

*Death of tawny eagle – killed by white-bellied seas eagle through bars of aviary, August 1<sup>st</sup>;*

*Addition a lanner 'received from Consul Hunot, of Saffi in Morocco' (ibid pp286).*

This is an illustration of the meticulous record keeping that Lilford undertook and that underpinned his work, indeed his approach to his science.

Whilst in London, Lilford kept a journal illustrating a similar attention to detail;

*November 4<sup>th</sup> 1881 Went round to the Den<sup>xii</sup>, and did some work at my Birds of Northamptonshire;*

*November 5<sup>th</sup> Went in the morning to the Zoological Gardens specially to see my Spanish bear, which is quite blind but seems healthy...;*

*November 14<sup>th</sup> Went to Burton's, who holds out faint hopes that some of my missing bird skins may yet be there;*

*November 15<sup>th</sup> Went to Burton's, and found the skin of the barbary falcon, about which my mind has been so much exercised;*

*November 23<sup>rd</sup> Paul Mollen called on his way back to Lilford, bringing two ash-coloured shrikes alive for me, which have been used at the huts for catching the hawks;*

*November 26<sup>th</sup> Irby and Edward Acheson called at Den, and I went with the former in a cab to Leadenhall Market. Castang has a male Bonelli's eagle (*Pseudaetus bonelli*, juv), two lanners (*Falco feldeggi*), (ibid pp293 – 295) .*

Whilst on a trip to Neuenahr in Prussia in 1882, Lilford managed some bird watching and a little collecting, and in addition kept up his journal:

*June 18<sup>th</sup> Heard from G. Lascelles that the two young falcons from*



*the Maddalena, which had reached him in wretched condition, were improving. Wrote to Castang, telling him to send down a lanner, hobby, and hawk, which he thinks is a saker, to Lilford;*

*June 23<sup>rd</sup> Letters from G. Hunt announcing the finding of a hobby's nest with three eggs in Geddington Chase, and the fact that the gamekeeper who found this one destroyed the eggs and shot the old birds from another nest last year in Broughton Wood;*

*June 24<sup>th</sup> Heard from Bartlett that he had a hobby for me in good plumage, and from Paul Mollen that the hawks from Castang – viz, lanner, hobby, and supposed saker (which is not what it is supposed to be) had arrived at Lilford, and that one of the African buzzards was dead;*

*June 27<sup>th</sup> Letter from J.H. Gurney telling me that the falcon brought by Leo from Nile is a puzzling specimen, more particularly so as it is not sexed, but he is inclined to consider it *F. punicus*.*

*June 29<sup>th</sup> Letters from G. Hunt telling me that the hobby's nest before mentioned in Geddington Chase 'is in a straight grown oak, an old crows nest about thirty feet from the ground and some two hundred yards from the nearest track or riding;*

*June 30<sup>th</sup> Letters from Paul Mollen ... he thinks that the supposed saker from Castang is a barbary falcon. (ibid pp299 -300))*

## Sport

As his class befitted he had many of the usual leisure concerns to be expected in a gentleman of his time. He had ridden to hounds after fox, although as a young man and later when well enough he accompanied hounds on foot in pursuit of the otter and this remained a particular favourite of his, albeit in memory due to his physical frailties. He was a modest yet keen shot adept at killing outright the birds and animals he shot. 'I fear that I cannot claim ever to have been a really first-class shot at them or anything else; but I did have the knack of killing them stone-dead, which seems to be rare nowadays' (Trevor-Battye op cit pp145). This of course was

a necessary quality for Lilford when he was younger; a shotgun being a Victorian collectors favoured method of collection.

In the last year of his life he was to record:

January 11<sup>th</sup>

1896

*Although as you know, I was a very ardent gunner in my time, I would rather see a real good flight with a good hawk at any feathered quarry than take part in the slaughter of any number of tame-bred pheasants. (letters)*

On his own stretch of the River Nene he fished regularly. He was a fine fly and course fisherman, a pleasure that his illness only denied him towards the very end of his life. And there was falconry, to which this discussion will return after a consideration of Lilford's attitude to the notion of 'sport'.

In his lifetime unpublished, and clearly un-finished notes on the nature of sport<sup>xiii</sup> Lilford proceeds "The word sport is untranslatable, and I must confess that I find it almost equally indefinable, but I wish in the following remarks to show to or what an extent the term is commonly abused or misunderstood." (Trevor-Battye 1903 pp98). He enters into a short discussion beginning with shooting;

*To begin with the form of sport with which I am or rather was most intimately acquainted – shooting, 'good sport' is generally applied to a considerable bag; and certainly, if the number of head slain in a day's shooting in itself satisfies the sporting inclination, the term is legitimately applied. (ibid)*

Here is the recognition of the previously discussed Victorian fondness for 'big bags', obtained through the battue and the practices of game preservation and rearing and release. Shooting was the only field sport to offer such rewards and elevated numbers

of quarry taken were a direct result of the industrialisation of the sport of game shooting. However Lilford continues:

*But I contend that 'sport' may be enjoyed in the highest degree in the pursuit of wild animals by fair means, without the attainment of success in the death of any beast, bird or fish, and that disappointment should only enhance the keenness of the real sportsman. Here I feel sure I shall meet with the assent of hunting men, but I am doubtful if my brother gunners and anglers will entirely go with me. (ibid)*

This is a sentiment that has been echoed elsewhere in this work, and perhaps provides an insight into a way of thinking that is evident in those drawn to certain forms of hunting sports, falconry being one.

*I look upon fox and otter hunting, falconry and fly-fishing, as the highest kinds of sport to be enjoyed in this country, simply because in the first instance science is assisted by horse and hound; in the second the falcon is reclaimed with infinite pains to serve man by its natural instincts; and because in the third you can only rely for success upon your own skill and knowledge of the habits of the creatures to be captured. (ibid pp99)*

He is of course talking of his own interests, the sports that he held very dear. It is not possible to be sure if he was attracted to these activities because they provided the sort of sporting experience that he argues for, or if his logic was driven by the sports he loved, in either case he continued;

*Let me say at once that, with all due respect to the lover of racing and athletic games, I look upon these as more or less excellent forms of amusement that do not legitimately come under what I hold to constitute 'sport' in its true sense. (ibid)*

And;

*I quite admit that to watch a number of thoroughbred horses doing their best, and fairly ridden, is a 'joy for ever'; and a good match at cricket or football, or an evenly contested yacht or boat race are full of charm to the lookers on; but in all these three there is lacking the interest of outwitting wild animals, with the odds against the pursuer, and this latter condition is, in my humble opinion, the one essential constituent of real 'sport'. (ibid)*

From a modern standpoint this seems highly debateable however Lilford, in keeping with the beliefs of a great many of his peers, is articulating a particular etymology of the word. The term 'sport' in English usage was often fundamentally to do with an act of hunting (Holt 1989). That this country gentleman obsessed as he was with nature, could not understand the notion of sport beyond a narrow conception illustrates, it is contended, a world view blinkered by position and privilege, interest and desire rather than any lack of intellect of logical rigour.

Lilford becomes almost lyrical when he goes on;

*A great many gallant followers of foxhounds go out simply for the excitement of a glorious gallop and plenty of jumping, not a few simply to display their horse-manship and cut down other; and these objects are obtainable without hounds or fox. But the joy and pride of hunting is, to those who know the habits of the fox, and delight in cultivating the natural instinct of the hound, in driving on a hot scent, and elaborately picking up a cold one – in fact in the exercise of the full powers of brain and instinct in biped and quadruped. The good or bad run depends almost entirely upon the qualities of fox and hounds. The best huntsman cannot make a bad fox run straight, and with the best of foxes bad hounds are useless.*

*All this is strikingly applicable to otter hunting, in which most delightful sport the object of pursuit has very long odds in his favour.* (Trevor-Battye 1903 pp100)

He was to write to his friend Meade-Waldo that otter hunting was 'the dearest joy of my heart after falconry.' (letters)

### Lilford's falconry

It can be argued that Lilford was not strictly speaking, a falconer, despite at least one serious attempt to become one and a lifetime of interest and support. He always kept falcons and other birds of prey but he, and perhaps understandably, was never one of those driven individuals who practiced the art to the exclusion of much. In 1860, he tried to train a goshawk and this ended any aspirations that Lilford had to actually train and fly birds of prey himself. He corresponded with Salvin about his training attempts and the letters reveal growing frustration on Salvin's part (letters).

Nonetheless Lilford's interest continued and in keeping with his rank and wealth he retained professional falconers, initially Paul Mollen<sup>xiv</sup> and after 1893 Richard Cosgrave. These professionals kept and trained many of the menagerie collection birds of prey to fly loose in the parkland surrounding the hall. This part of the retained falconer's work was not really falconry but using falconry techniques, it was rather an expression of Lilford's wider interests. Exotic eagles, lammergeyers, African buzzards, sakers, lanners, and various vultures as well as some British species such as the hobby were all given strictly controlled periods of 'hack'. Many of these birds were trained to the lure and used to entertain visitors and guests.

To Meade-Waldo, Lilford wrote;

*August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1888*

*My falconer took two very young hobbies yesterday from a big nest in a tall oak tree about 150 yards from that out of which he took three on July 28<sup>th</sup> in 1886 and 1887. ...These two young birds are the largest that I ever saw for their age; they are entirely down-clad, except tips of tail and wing feathers. There was a woodpigeons's nest with two small young, in the same tree as the hobbies. (letters)*

Harting (1898) records, as did Lilford in *The Zoologist* (1886), the experiment to keep hobbies at hack in Lilford Park. They flew well to the lure and were fine until taken up when Harting describes them as beginning to 'droop' (pp110). Lilford had the captives released and they remained in the Park at liberty for a short while but all had departed by mid-September which is when hobbies begin their migration.

The trained falcons of the Old Hawking Club were frequently weathered upon the Hall's terraced lawn that was over-looked by the drawing room windows. Lascelles informs us that they were often sent to Lilford to be managed in periods of idleness, when they were between being flown at grouse in Caithness, partridges in the Eastern Counties, or at rooks on Salisbury Plain (op cit 1915).

His interest in birds of prey extended, as has been seen, beyond the normal species of interest to the falconer and in another letter to Meade-Waldo he engages in a quite lengthy discussion about the kestrel;

*December 17<sup>th</sup>*

**1894**

*...told me of your redwing-killing kestrel. It is only curious to me that a 'raptor' with such comparatively powerful feet as the kestrel does not more often pick up birds from the trees, bushes, and in the air. Of course, we know that he takes a certain number on the ground. I have only twice in my life seen a kestrel go for a bird with*

*apparently murderous intention: in the first instance at a missel thrush, which baffled him entirely in a thick tree, and as I believe, scared him off by chatter; in the second instance, curiously enough very near the same place, I was standing forward under a fence about up to my shoulder for partridges, and a covey rose at perhaps five hundred yards from me on a big pasture field, and were coming skimming the ground towards me, when one of the kestrels that I had noticed circling and hovering in the air, shut its wings and made a really grand stoop at these birds (they were hardly big enough to shoot), and put the whole lot except the old cock (who came on to me and met his fate) into some long grass and rushes. The stoop was so fine that I thought that I must have been deceived as to the stooper, but there was in fact no mistake whatever about it. Do your redwings suffer from the kestrel in the air? (letters)*

#### Protection & persecution

Of protection and peregrines, he wrote to the Reverend Willmott;

*July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1890*

*Your young Cornish squire, as a protector of eagles and falcons, deserves to be known and appreciated far and wide. I rented a forest in Inverness-shire for several years, and looked upon the golden eagles which bred there annually, not only as my good friends on account of their destruction of the blue hares, which are pestilential nuisances in stalking, but also on account of the wholesome dread they inspired in the breasts of the grey crows, which follow and mob the sea eagle, but sneak off the moor directly a golden is in sight.*

*A young falcon was caught alive in October last on the Norfolk coast, in a shore net, and taken uninjured to a friend of mine, who sent her off at once to an ardent falconer friend in Herts; the latter immediately took her in hand and flew her at rooks, which she flew very well. In April last she sailed away and was lost. and mirabile*

*dictum, was shot by Lord Coke in the park at Holkham. not more than a mile from where she was originally taken, within twenty-four hours after she was lost. Lord Coke, curiously enough, sent her body to my friend who had first received her alive. (letters)*

And again to Willmott on the subject of peregrines;

*December 12<sup>th</sup>*

*1895*

*With regard to peregrines about Salisbury cathedral, I can only say that seven is a very unusual number to be seen together, but there is no impossibility about it. ... I am glad to hear of the proposed arrangement on the spire of Salsibury cathedral in favour of our friends, the peregrines. (letters)*

In his previously mentioned Presidential Address to the Northamptonshire Field Club in 1894, Lilford recounts a story of his ravens Sankey & Grip<sup>xv</sup>, who in the previous year had caught upon the lawn, and seriously injured a wild peregrine. A servant was sent out to retrieve the injured bird from the ravens and it was subsequently discovered that it was 'an old wild bird suffering from a sort of asthma known to falconers as the 'croaks', and somewhat poor in flesh.' Lilford continued that 'I would have willingly tried to keep this falcon alive and restored it to liberty, but the ravens had injured it so severely that it was only common mercy to kill it. How or why it allowed itself to be seized and worried by its antagonists we can never know' (Trevor-Battye 1903). Lilford also wrote this tale up for *The Field*, and tells his friend and well known falconer, Reverend Freeman<sup>xvi</sup>, in a letter of November 30<sup>th</sup> 1893.

Willmott in a letter of condolence to the Hon. Mrs Drewitt, after the death of Lilford recalled that "Lord Lilford corresponded with me off and on for some thirty years. I first had the privilege of meeting him when Robert Barr was falconer to the old hawking club, and when he was fairly well and strong, and could ride as well as most of the



party” (letters: July 11<sup>th</sup> 1896)

For all of Lilford’s fondness for the peregrine, he was still fundamentally a collector of the Victorian era and Trevor-Battye (1903) provides evidence that falcons were regularly shot to this end. During one of Lilford’s Mediterranean trips he notes shooting a peregrine falcon and a kestrel amongst many other birds. This might strike the modern observer as something bordering on schizophrenia; on one hand the care and attention that a falconer lavished on his falcons through training, hunting, health and sickness, and on the other a willingness to shoot a member of the very same species in the name of the pursuit of science, decrying the slaughter of raptors in one instance and doing just that the next. However in the context of the time this was not remarkable, indeed Lodge, one of Lilford’s chosen artists and a lifelong falconer himself, did the same and had a fair collection of peregrines, most of which he shot himself, these are discussed later in this work (1946)<sup>xvii</sup>.

In terms of the context of the collections being amassed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is considerable evidence of how closely the spheres of sport and natural history existed. Numerous entries in Lilford’s collections record ‘sent by keeper’ or similar, illustrating that once the shotgun was turned against raptors as being enemies of game, some of those who destroyed hawks and falcons recognised their worth in scientific terms and either sold or donated the cadavers to collectors or taxidermists. Another entry is described as being “shot by friend of Parson Messon when fighting duck ...”, and another at Fritton Decoy in Norfolk, or when ‘out shooting plover’. These illustrate that it was shooting men as well as collectors who harvested the peregrine, although the former doubtless had as their primary motive the removal of the raptor from the environment due to the ideology of game protectionism.

Not only were falcons collected by shooting; Lilford had a man hired

as a climber, take 2 eyasses, one male and the other female, from a nest on a cliff at the South West of an island he calls Maddalena (Trevor-Battye 1903). Lilford being on a Mediterranean trip at the time, these young falcons were destined to be sent to Lascelles and to be trained however, most specimens collected were to further the ornithologists quest for knowledge through skin or taxidermy.

#### A vicarious pleasure revisited

The Lilford estate in typical Northamptonshire countryside, was too enclosed and wooded to fly peregrines with much success and rook hawking was impossible, but a little game hawking was undertaken hunting reared and released grey partridges. It would seem that this was undertaken in the late winter and early spring, prior to much crop growth (letters). At one point Lilford also obtained two white gyrfalcons, by then quite a rarity in British hands, and some time later a single Iceland falcon with a damaged wing but there are no records of any success with these falcons. Illustrating the on-going process of the accumulation of scientific ornithological knowledge, he details a traditional species attribution with an observational accuracy that would ultimately lead to re-classification of numerous species, in this case of a falcon;

*I have a very fine specimen of Falco norvegicus alive; he was brought from Norway last year, and has moulted out very clean and fine; it is the first of its species that I ever saw alive, and is most decidedly a very different bird from either islandus or candicans. The falcon has much more of the peregrine about him in make and appearance.<sup>xviii</sup> (letters)*

Other exotic falcons also came his way. In August 1889 he recorded;

*I am sorry to say that my black shahin (F. peregrinator) died a few*

*days ago from a tumour on the breast-bone. She was moulting when I received her, and going on satisfactorily in that way. We never put her on the wing, as our country is so enclosed and full of high trees that if she raked off in pursuit of quarry she would hardly have found her way back, at all events in this summer-time. She was just a very small, very dark peregrinoid falcon. very docile and as tame and as playful as a kitten. (letters)*

If effective hunting with falcons was not possible hawking with a goshawk certainly was. Lilford, by then invalid, in a letter to his falconer friend Reverend Freeman wrote;

*November 30<sup>th</sup>*

*1893*

*I have not been able to hold a gun, to stand, or to walk a yard since January 1886, but I do, or did, with my young goshawk fly often during September and October last. She bagged well over three hundred rabbits since August, when first on the wing. (letters)*

The hawking party would have consisted of the wheelchair bound aristocrat, two footmen to push and or carry Lilford through the parkland, Cosgrave who flew and managed the goshawk, and a couple of boys or young men who were beaters and two more who carried the quarry once dispatched. Whilst Lilford writing in the style of the time and of his class claims 'I do, or did, with my young goshawk fly often ...' he is unlikely to have actually have actively done so. It is probable that he remained a keen spectator restricted as he was to his chair. The provision of the sport would however have been entirely in keeping with the traditions of falconry from a previous and much earlier manifestation; it would have been orchestrated to provide the significant, in this case the Lord Lilford, with an opportunity to witness the sport at reasonably close quarters whilst not being actively involved in the actual flushing of the quarry, slipping of the hawk, and retrieval or dispatch of the hawk and kill. Thus rank, wealth and infirmity combined to recreate

an almost medieval reconstruction of an aspect of the sport.

### The benefactor

Some years earlier Lilford's wealth had enabled him to become the benefactor and patron of the newly formed in 1864, Old Hawking Club. He had become acquainted with Clough Newcombe one of the mainstays of the by then defunct, Royal Loo Club in the Low Countries. Clough Newcombe was highly regarded as a falconer and an important sporting figure in the middle years of the century. Indeed, Lascelles writing of him in The Badminton Library volume on falconry says of him 'the ablest and most skilful amateur falconer of the present century' (pp339). Newcombe's enthusiasm had captivated Lilford and falconry became one of his passions.

Lord Lilford was in contact with the Hon. Cecil Duncombe, one of the founding members of the Old Hawking Club as is illustrated by the following extract from an 1865 letter:

*Hyde Park Barracks SW. (Life Guards) Feb28th,  
1865.*

*Dear Lilford,*

*When I mentioned to you last summer that it was proposed to form a Hawking Association, you expressed a willingness to join it, and I now write a few lines to give you an account of the proceedings. The members of the Club in addition to ourselves, are Newcombe, Salvin and Brooksbank. We have Robert Barr in our employ, and have taken some young falcons, besides three passage hawks I got, this season past from Holland, We each advanced him £20 last year, but we are again indebted to him, and it is proposed to pay another sum of £20 each. To avoid further trouble we have opened an account for the Hawking Club with Scott and Company, 1 Cavendish Square, to whom I paid the second instalments of £20 the other day*

*The hawks are all well and flying to the lure. They will be moved to the Bustard Inn on Salisbury Plain in about ten days. It has you will find very fair bachelor accommodation and splendid country. It is advisable to be provided with a horse, as there are none to be procured there. The Post Town for the Bustard is Devizes, and it is twelve miles distant from that station, and eleven from Salisbury.*

*Yours very truly,*

*Cecil Duncombe (letters)*

It is of note that whilst Major Charles Hawkins Fisher, an early correspondent of Lilford's, had been involved in the planning and early organisation of the Club, including prospecting for suitable ground over which to fly falcons at rooks and crows, he is not included by Duncombe as one of the subscribers.

Lilford, whilst rarely being an active part of the OHC, continued to subscribe and provide financial support whenever needed. As such he became a regular correspondent with Lascelles who managed the Club from it's rebirth in 1871. As has been detailed elsewhere Lascelles relied quite heavily on Lilford both for advice and, of course finance, as one of his letters illustrates;

*Many thanks for your letter and cheque for £100 duly received. I wish everyone was as prompt as you. It would save me a great deal of trouble. I am very sorry that you have had no sport with the tiercel, I thought it would have turned out a good hawk. His brother has done capitally and there was not a pin between them. Frost is in Ireland now and I have as many hawks as I can well look after.*

*(letters)*

The role Lilford adopted amongst falconers is an interesting one: due to his keeping many birds of prey he was rightly considered something of an authority on the husbandry of raptors. He was frequently consulted, asked for advice, and generally included in the

discourse within the sport. Harting (1898) records during a discussion on how to keep tethered falcons, that Lilford's method was to weather them on block perches during the day but at night keep them on a low pole or screen perch. In such a manner should they leave the perch during the hours of darkness when untended, they would find themselves upon the floor and be able to re-gain the perch without any difficulty. This was quite an innovative compromise given that the received wisdom of the day was to place all falcons on a screen perch that was some 5 or 6 feet off the ground. A falcon restrained by its jesses on a screen was quite restricted in movement being able to travel between 5 and 10 inches either side of the point of attachment. For periods of rest such as after feeding or at night this restriction was not problematic, however if the falcon was disturbed or unwell it might leave the perch and find itself unable to regain it. Thus the unfortunate creature would hang by the jesses, head downward and perish, the falconer would find it dead when he entered the mews in the morning.

Lilford always took an interest in the OHC's affairs as has been evidenced in the correspondence with Lascelles. A particularly strong interest was always shown concerning the trapping of falcons. In December of 1889 he records in a note to Meade-Waldo, that Lascelles had reported a 'great catch of hawks at Valkenswaard' but that all were of a small size (letters). He was also a keen correspondent with a number of falconers, many of whom were also avid orithologists and naturalists like himself (Drewitt 1900).

On one occasion he wrote to W.H. St Quintin, an enthusiastic falconer, member of the OHC, a collector of waterfowl and successful breeder of rarities like Lilford himself, with regards to an incident in 1808, when 11 great bustards were shot, literally, from behind a 'stalking horse' by a gamekeeper in the employ of one of

St Quintin's relatives. How Lilford came by such a tale is unknown.

Lilford was very knowledgeable and comparatively well travelled and was often used by those seeking sport, either shooting or falconry, abroad. He informed his regular correspondent and friend Meade-Waldo after a request from the latter for information in 1891:

*I should think that you will enjoy your months in Morocco greatly, but I fear that you will have to go for a long distance from Tangier to get any good shooting. Our Vice-Consul at Saffi knows something about falconry, and has many Arab falconer friends. From what he tells me, it seems that Arabs only train two species of falcon – 'Nebli,' which I take to be the typical peregrine, and 'Buhari,' which must, I think, be *F. punicus*, not *F. barbarus*. I cannot make out that he is acquainted either with *barbarus* or the lanner (*F. feldeggii*), both of which are common and breed in Morocco.*

The correspondence interestingly, reveals Lilford was not one to let an opportunity to add to his collection slip by, and continues;

*My own chief requirements in Morocco are the marsh owl (*Phasmoptynx capensis*) and the great horned owl (*Bubo ascalaphus*) and, above all, the francolin (*bicalcaratus*), in any numbers, alive. (Trevor-Battye op cit pp81)*

### Status

Lord Lilford was a central figure in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century falconry for a number of reasons that extended well beyond his practical involvement with the sport. He was an aristocrat, and as such was accorded much respect and carried a good deal of authority by the very rank he was born to. The sport had comparatively few adherents of such elevated position, being by then a pastime predominantly undertaken by those occupying what might be

thought of as the upper or professional middle classes. Most field sportsmen of title either hunted or shot, or indeed both, few automatically passed into the ranks of falconers as they would certainly have done some three hundred years earlier.

With Lilford's rank came wealth, something that did not always accompany inherited titles; Lascelles for example, whilst from a more exalted family of rather greater means, being a younger brother was not likely to inherit either his father's title or indeed the family capital. Lilford was able to finance his life's interests in birds<sup>xx</sup> and particularly birds of prey, his family fortune enabled him to amass, through purchase, one of the most remarkable collections seen in Victorian England. Through this; his taxidermy, museum skins, eggs, live aviary collection, commissioned art-work, and his falconry birds he had access to a vast source of reference. This enabled him to become an authority of high standing, in the truly amateur sense of his day.

With regards to falconry his wealth allowed him to provide generous subscription to the Old Hawking Club. From the letters written by Lascelles, some of which have been cited previously, it is clear that Lilford habitually paid far more than other members. This might seem strange given that he is only recorded as attending the rook hawking on Salisbury Plain in the very early days of the Club, and sporadically at that. There is no evidence that he attended any Club hawking after 1875 although his surviving son did ride with the OHC after rooks in the late 1880's or the early 1890's, yet this was not regular. Lascelles registers at least one payment from Lilford of £100, and from the somewhat fragmented collection of his letters and the 'Yellow book', his OHC journal, the impression is certainly given that this was a regular annual subscription, one that the Club came to depend upon. Given that the general subscription for a full member in the late 1880's was in the order of £20 per annum, and some members paid a good deal less<sup>xx</sup>; Lilford's generosity shows



considerable commitment to the sport.

### Science & the Victorian

Being classically educated at Barkswell and Harrow, although making no claims to high academic talent, Lilford had been schooled sufficiently to both understand and meet the needs demanded by Victorian natural science. Thus he was able to publish on his chosen interest and this coupled with, the formerly mentioned, wealth that enabled him to commission high quality art-work and illustration to accompany his work. Here he achieved success both in terms of recognition from his ornithological and falconry peers, but also with a wider audience who were becoming more interested in and aware of nature and of birds in particular. The educated classes in Victorian Britain had developed an appetite for natural history, or as Lilford referred to it 'the science of nature' (letters), He was not the first of the 19th Century's naturalists to publish to an increasingly interested audience but he was one of the finest of the Victorian authorities who were driven by the demands of science in the context of the natural world. For falconry to have a figure of such reputation within its midst enabled the minority sport to achieve a profile out of keeping with the numerical support it could boast<sup>xxi</sup>.

From a modern perspective, the methods and extent of the Victorian peers' collection of specimens might be considered to have been both unnecessary and at variance with his obvious inclination towards what we would now term 'conservation'. This is however, inappropriate and disguises both a contemporary arrogance and an ill-informed understanding of the context of the times. Collections were fundamental to the knowledge that we now take for granted; they were the building blocks upon which modern natural history was built. Furthermore, classification demanded, as Darwin was most aware, the sacrifice of the individual for a far more

profound good - that of knowledge. That knowledge would ultimately save all creation by explaining how it was interlinked and how it worked (Keynes 2003).

Lord Lilford is an exemplar of that complex and sometimes contradictory set of dimensions engaged and informed the 19<sup>th</sup> century search for knowledge in natural history. Scientific endeavour legitimised a type of hunting with the shotgun that, whilst not as extensive as the destruction of the pheasant at the battue, was profound indeed. The shooting and collecting, it might be argued, was a 'sport' in itself, undertaken largely by the same class and many of the same individuals who shot game; it was an expression of a technical proficiency cloaked in the legitimacy of a scientific quest for knowledge. The enmity that the game preservationists exhibited towards birds of prey was replaced by an avaricious quest for specimens, understandable to a degree given the limitations on recording and identification that was faced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the manicured shooting estate replaced by often remote and hazardous environments; however the philosophy of ever greater numbers was endemic to both spheres. As discussed with regards to shooting in chapter 3, 'more' became to be understood as 'better', the bag had to be in thousands for an estate and landowner to be heralded as a great sporting shot; whilst in natural history collections of birds – and not just those of birds of prey – in collections of all species and of birds eggs, indeed throughout the project of collection, the assemblage of specimens in high numbers became essential to the Victorian quest itself. Lilford as has been discussed previously, was both aware of and troubled by this, but was imbued in the project irrevocably.

Lord Lilford brought much to the falconry of his day: social status, financial assistance, intellectual and practical authority, experienced husbandry expertise, enthusiastic support and, tireless curiosity. He was a central figure despite his never having written in detail on the

sport, nor indeed ever having been a very skilled practitioner himself. His strengths lay elsewhere and they elevate him beyond what might otherwise be considered major short-comings in falconry history. In the matrix of interests that both surrounded and supported falconry throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Thomas Little Powys, the fourth Baron Lilford, was highly significant.

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<sup>i</sup> The bear was quite blind by the time it was sent to London.

<sup>ii</sup> *Larus audouini* was the gull that Lilford re-discovered at the Western edge of it's range in Sardinia where it was thought to have become extinct.

<sup>iii</sup> The lack of clear identification and physical certainty was an acknowledged difficulty for egg collectors (oologists) (Jourdain 1948).

<sup>iv</sup> This is not to suggest that the process was not already underway prior to Darwin's publication, nor that the process would not have occurred without that seminal text. Darwin is considered here the initial assault on orthodoxy, a representative for a train of thought that was gathering pace and support. The very momentum of natural scientific inquiry made the clash of ideologies inevitable.

<sup>v</sup> Both titles are used without distinction by many sources.

<sup>vi</sup> In **The Ibis**

*Under the name of the Hon, Thomas L. Powys.*

1860. Notes on birds observed in the Ionian Islands, and the provinces of Albania proper, Epirus, Acarnania, and Montenegro. Pages 1 - 10, 133 - 140, 228 - 239

*Under the name of Lord Lilford.*

1862. On the extinction in Europe of the common francolin (*Francolinus vulgaris*, Steph.). 352 - 356.

1865. Notes on the ornithology of Spain, 166 - 177, pl. V. (*Aquila nlljvioides*). Ditto 1866, 173 - 187, 377 - 392. pl. X. (eggs of *Aquila pennata* and *Cyanopica cooki*).

1873. Letter on *Calandrel/a brachydactyla* and *Numenius hudsonicus*. 98.

1880. Letter on *Larus audouini* and other Spanish birds. 480 - 483.

1883. Letter on *Otis tarda* and other Spanish birds. 233.

1884. Rare birds in Andalusia. 124.

1887. Notes on Mediterranean ornithology, 261 - 283, pl. VIII. (*Falco pum'cus*).

1888. Preface to Dr. F. H. H. Guillemard's " Ornithological notes of a tour in Cyprus," 1887. 94.

1889. A list of the birds of Cyprus. 305 - 350.

1892. Letter on *Turnix nigrt'collis*. 466.

In **The Zoologist**.

*Under the name of the Hon. T. L. Powys.*

1850. Occurrence of the smew (*Mergus albel/us*) in Northamptonshire. 2775.

1850. Nest and eggs of the rose-coloured pastor (*Pastor roseus*). 2968.

1851. Occurrence of the Caspian tern near Lausanne. 3209, 3210.

1851. Note on birds entrapped at a magpie's nest. 3275.

1851. Occurrence of black grouse and quails in Northamptonshire. 3278.

1852. Note on the kite and buzzard trapped at Blenheim. 3388.

1852. Occurrence of the black redstart near Oxford. 3476.

1852. Occurrence of the ring dotterel (*Charadrius hiaticula*) near Oxford. 3476.

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1852. Occurrence of the glossy ibis in Ireland. 3477.  
 1852. The shore lark (*Alauda alpestris*) breeding in Devonshire. 3707.  
 1852. Occurrence of the blue-throated warbler (*Sylvia suecica*) in South Devon. 3709.  
 1852. Occurrence of the pratincole (*Glareola torquata*) in Devonshire. 3710.  
 1854. Occurrence of various birds in Oxfordshire. 4165.  
 1854. Note on the late abundance of the spotted crake (*Crex porzana*). 4165.  
 1855. Occurrence of the bittern and goosander in Northamptonshire, and of the red-throated diver in Plymouth Sound. 4762.  
 1855. Occurrence of Buonaparte's gull (*Larus Buonapartiz*') on the Irish coast. 4762, 4809.  
 1861. Note on the alpine chough as observed in the Ionian Islands. 7352. (In *ibis* II. 136.)  
*Under the name of Lord Lilford.*  
 1877. Purple gallinule in Northamptonshire. 252.  
 1879. Green shag in Northamptonshire. 426.  
 1879. Manx shearwater in Northamptonshire. 426.  
 1880. White-fronted *goose* in Northamptonshire. 66.  
 1880. Solitary snipe in Northamptonshire. 444.  
 1881. Ornithological notes from North Northamptonshire. 24, 61.  
 1881. Roseate tern on the Norfolk coast. 26.  
 1882. Ornithological notes from Northamptonshire. 16, 392.  
 1883. " " " 26.  
 1883. Note on the ornithology of Northamptonshire. 425-429, 466 - 468, 502.  
 1883. Common scoter inland. 495.  
 1884. Notes on the ornithology of Northamptonshire. 450 - 455.  
 1885. Notes on the ornithology of Northamptonshire. 181 - 183.  
 1885. Hoopoe in Northamptonshire. 259.  
 1886. Notes on the ornithology of Northamptonshire and neighbourhood. 465 - 471.  
 1887. Notes on the ornithology of Northamptonshire and neighbourhood. 249 - 254, 452 - 457.  
 1887. A puffin in London. 263.  
 1888. Magpies attacking a weakly donkey. 184.  
 1888. Pallas's sand grouse in Spain. 301.  
 1888. Notes on the ornithology of Northamptonshire and neighbourhood. 456 - 466.  
 1889. Hawks devouring their prey on the wing. 185.  
 1889. Notes on the ornithology of Northamptonshire and neighbourhood. 422 - 430.  
 1890. Large race of great grey shrike. 108.  
 1891. Notes on the ornithology of Northamptonshire. 41- 53.  
 1892. " " " " 201-210.  
 1892. Variety of *Grus cinerea* in Spain. 265.  
 1893. Notes on the ornithology of Northamptonshire and neighbourhood for 1892. 89 - 97.  
 1893. Purple gallinules in Norfolk and Sussex. 147.  
 1894. Notes on the ornithology of Northamptonshire and neighbourhood for 1893. 210 - 221.  
 1894. Pheasant nesting in a tree. 266. *Proc. Zool. Soc.*, London, 1881-1890.  
 1882. Exhibition of, and remarks upon, a skin of *Emberiza rustica*, caught at Elstree reservoir. 721.  
 1888. Exhibition of a specimen of *Aquila rapax* from Southern Spain. 248.  
*Mammalia. In The Zoologist.*  
 1884. Notes on Mammalia of Northamptonshire. 428.  
 1885. *Dormouse* in Northamptonshire. 257.  
 1886. Albino badgers. 363.  
 1887. A few words on European bats. 61- 67.  
 1887. The bank vole in Northamptonshire. 463.  
 1890. Hedgehog v. rat. 453.  
 1891. The polecat in Northamptonshire. 342.  
 1892. The polecat in Northamptonshire. 20, 224.  
 1894. Barbastelle in Northamptonshire.  
 1894. Barbastelle in Huntingdonshire. 187, 395  
 After Dr. Paul Leverkiihn, C.M.Z.S., of the Scientific Library and Institution of H.R.H. The Prince of Bulgaria, Sophia. The compilation of Lilford's papers was published in the *Ornith. Monatsschrift des Deutschen Vereins z. Schutze der Vogelwelt*, XXI 1896, No. 9, pp. 262-264.  
 " The Ibis records in 1873, that Lilford had apartments on the ground floor of a property, 6 Tenterden

Street. Hanover Square, owned by Henry Eeles Dresser an notable collector. The apartments were mostly used as a repository for some of Lilford's collection and the property itself was to become the first head-quarters of the British Ornithologists Union.

<sup>viii</sup> The process of preparing the skin demanded recording such details as were to be destroyed by the process itself; sex; crop contents; and any other internal features; then it progressed to removing the bulk of the carcass and then treating the skin and remaining parts of the body with preservative to ensure it would not decay. The skin was then laid flat, sometimes with a small piece of card inserted in the body cavity that protruded and sat flush with the tail. In a bird of prey the museum skins appear as slightly flattened coffin shaped feathered shadows of their former being. The process was generally undertaken on the day of collection or shooting, in order to avoid the rapid degeneration in the quality of the bird<sup>viii</sup>. The specimen would then be labelled and packed for transport.

<sup>ix</sup> Cous (1890) details some twelve requirements that should accompany the specimen: 1) Title of survey or voyage 2) Leader 3) Institution or collection 4) Collector 5) Collectors no. 6) Locality 7) Date 8) Sex & age 9) Measurement of length, wing, etc. 10) Colour of bare parts – eyes, bill, feet 11) Other information 12) Scientific name. The labels were to be on card or stiff paper approximately 3" by ¼" and secured by a string loop to the left leg of the specimen. Both sides of the label were intended to be used. As is to be expected there is considerable variation from the standard.

<sup>x</sup> To Reverend Matthew, Lilford wrote on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1889: *I have turned down about forty little owls, about the house here and over a radius of some three or four miles in the neighbourhood, early in July last. Several were too young to feed themselves or, rather, to find their own food, and we recaptured more than half of those originally put out. A very few were found dead. Several were constantly seen about; during the summer and autumn of 1888 many disappeared entirely, but three or four were seen, and often heard, throughout the winter. On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1889, one of my keepers discovered a nest in the hollow bough of a high ash tree in the deer-park. The old bird would not move, but on being gently pushed with a stick, two eggs were visible. On May 10<sup>th</sup> two young birds about a week old could be made out, and on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, four or five all of different sizes. The keepers tell me that it is impossible to see anything from the open end of the bough, but there is a cleft near the nest from which, in certain lights, the old bird and her produce can be partially seen. Her mate haunts a crab tree, at a short distance from the nest. This is encouraging, and I shall invest largely in little owls this summer, and adopt somewhat different treatment. Similar experiments have been tried, to my knowledge, in Hants, Sussex, Norfolk and Yorkshire, but I do not know of a brood having been reared in a genuinely free condition in this country, till this lot of mine. The little owl will nest freely in captivity, but generally the parents devour their young.* (letters)

<sup>xi</sup> Frounce a fungal infection of the mouth and throat that was fatal in falcons during this period. It is caught through eating pigeons, the Victorian falconers staple hawk food.

<sup>xii</sup> His apartments in Tenterden Street.

<sup>xiii</sup> In the possession and subsequently published by A. Trevor-Battye, one of Lilford's correspondants, these sketches are referred to as 'A contemplated article' (1903).

<sup>xiv</sup> Paul was the brother of Adrian Mollen, the famous falcon trainer and trapper from Valkenswaard in the Low Countries.

<sup>xv</sup> Both these ravens were pinioned but lived at liberty around Lilford Hall.

<sup>xvi</sup> It was Freeman who wrote the section on falcons and falconry for Trevor-Battye's 1903 text *Lord Lilford on Birds* much used herein. At the end of his piece Freeman concludes: *My task is over. It has been a pleasant one indeed. I am delighted at having had the pleasure and the privilege of contributing to this book, for Lord Lilford was, through a great number of years, my constant and most kind friend.* (pp139)

<sup>xvii</sup> Indeed, this author when undertaking the cataloguing of the peregrine collection in the British Museum (Natural History) at Tring (see elsewhere in this work), found an Anatum skin (a North American race of peregrine) shot by Professor Tom Cade, one of the most influential raptor biologists and conservationists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

<sup>xviii</sup> There is confusion as to whether Lilford is discussing the differing forms of gyrfalcon that were considered distinct until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, or if he is referring to sub-species of the peregrine. Without further detail it is not possible to be certain but in the balance of probabilities, and given that the peregrine and many of its forms were so well known to him, it can be presumed that the falcon in question was the Norwegian race of the gyrfalcon.

<sup>xix</sup> Lilford paid £300 for an egg of the Great Auk, a rarity by then extinct, even so it was a very large sum to pay for any natural specimen.

<sup>xx</sup> For example Salvin, who could only be retained as a member by an agreement to accept a much reduced occasional payment.

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<sup>xxi</sup> Harting was another of falconry's '*intellectuals*' and scientific ornithologists and was better published, yet his public profile did not compare with Lord Lilfords, doubtless due to some of the factors discussed in the text.

# Chapter 7

The following chapter examines the manner in which falconry was represented throughout the period. In artistic depiction and its use as subject material in written work, the sport maintained a profile despite practical falconry's almost complete exclusion from influential society in England, and to a slightly lesser extent in Scotland. By considering some of the ways that the sport was portrayed it is possible to illuminate a context for falconry that has not hitherto been examined. Appropriate examples of some of the popular literature of the time are made use of to show the manner and purpose of this portrayal and an assessment made of the accuracy of the writing. The common conception of falconry was perhaps understandably, quite far removed from the reality of the sport as practiced during the period. Some artwork has been reproduced herein and used as examples of the pictorial record to further inform on the manner of the depiction. The notable artists who took falconry as a subject and whose work was both popular and influential in the British context are discussed.

### An intangible sport

The growth of a popular scientific consideration of natural history further fuelled the production of volumes on natural history and encyclopaedia of birds that often contained references to falconry. The manner and style of some of these is examined and inferences drawn. This material was oriented towards the falconer or interested field sportsman and reflects the position of the sport in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the maintenance of the activity throughout those years and the subsequent revival and limited increase in popularity throughout the Victorian period. Written by many of those discussed previously in this work and who were predominantly practicing falconers it gives an important insight into their perceptions of the sport and the country in which they practiced it.



Falconry held a place in art and literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century that was out of proportion with the popularity of the activity. This in part can be explained by the current of medievalism seen throughout the hunting sports that fascinated many of the non-hunting population. Even sport shooting and stalking that were comparatively recent and developing activities, claimed archery as their antecedent and thus engaged in the same appeal to a pre-modern sensibility. It was not merely the field sports that looked back to some notion of a pre-industrial rural idyll or 'Old England' (Holt 1989), many aspects of popular culture perhaps understandably denied the reality of a forward looking, urban industrialising society for the fantasy of 'Merrie England' (Birley 1993). Of course this exhibition of popular longing was and remained just that, a longing or dream. British society was in many respects unrecognisable to that of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and it is the contention herein, that much of the development and adaptation of field sports after the Industrial Revolution in or around 1760 was driven by a need to maintain a tangible link with the past in rapidly changing times. However none of the hunting sports; riding to hounds, shooting, coursing or angling, were so closely tied to the popular view of the medieval as was falconry.

This was of course partly due to the decline and near extinction of the sport after the social upheavals in British society during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Falconry's demise mirrored closely the loss of traditional society, the recognisable structure of order and conventions of deference. Popular perception coupled the passing of hawking mistakenly, with the passing of the chivalric code of knightly conduct. As is often seen in both literature and artistic representation, falconry was depicted as a late medieval activity<sup>1</sup>. Close association with royalty and hereditary privilege, the very antithesis of the growing Puritanism, had seen falconry largely

abandoned in England around the time of the Commonwealth, although not by official dictate: Oliver Cromwell himself was very fond of hawking.

Whilst falconry never ceased entirely it was at an extremely low ebb throughout most of the 1700's. As has been charted in this work, the revival of falconry began in the latter years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, as a subject for sporting artists and to a lesser, extent writers both popular and scholarly, falconry maintained a significant position. Indeed it benefited from the increasing involvement and interest of the middle classes in the hunting sports particularly during the middle and latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A growing interest in natural history and the predilection for collecting specimens also enabled a popular representation. Reports from various parts of the Empire such as India and eastern Afghanistan where falconry was still practiced by those of high status, and tales of British travellers from China to the middle east also gave falconry a profile in British popular publications such as '*The Penny Gazette*' and '*The Illustrated London News*', together with more specialist outlets like '*The Sporting Magazine*' and '*The Field*'.

#### Literature for popular consumption

In the popular written word much of the treatment was romantic and historically poorly informed, and contemporary reporting from abroad tended to focus on the often regal nature and scale of falconry witnessed. There are a few notable exceptions to this, namely Hutchens account of hawking with sparrow hawks in Turkey in 1836 that was published in '*The Penny Gazette*' in the following year (*The Penny Gazette* 1837). Some other articles are purely descriptive and appear to have been written either from other sources or after witnessing first hand the hunting with hawks as in the unattributed passage in '*The Illustrated London News*' of October 4<sup>th</sup> 1856 entitled 'Magpie Hawking'.

The contrast between the two pieces is interesting, Hutchens in detailing the trapping, training, hunting with and ultimate release of the sparrow hawks, for they were only used to hunt migrating quail in the autumn, does so in great detail. He claimed no prior knowledge of falconry and had heard of it only in schoolboy tales of his youth, however displays considerable insight into the demands and intricacies of the practice. An extract illustrates the insight that this novice was able to record;

*In seeking to hold the small and excitable hawk in tameness and health was at once the entire challenge facing us. Two or three were let off being thought poor in manner but kept were the sharp and defiant amongst the catch. Darkness and food being the path to reclaiming such creatures in days they strained upon their bonds to reach us at feeding. Some of the mulats<sup>ii</sup> were hunting in the second week whereas my small and darkly insolent charge was slow in going on. But instruction and placing myself between all that upset the hawk she loved me sooner than ever I thought. (pp37)*

In contrast the description of hawking magpies is whilst accurate, constructed with a far more perfunctory hand<sup>iii</sup>. It shows knowledge but little insight into hawking. Accompanied however by the reproduction of an engraving taken from an original sketch by an unattributed artist, shows a large and predominantly mounted field following a cast of tiercels pursuing a magpie. The field containing two or three women amongst the riders, are detailed in the dress of the early to mid 1800's and is thus contemporary. A cadgeman is present carrying a further cast of hawks, hooded upon the cadge. 'The Illustrated London News' October 4<sup>th</sup> 1856, devotes a full page to the engraving that is clearly the focus with the supporting article receiving half a column.

See Appendix III Figure I

In the following year the same publication; *The Illustrated London News Supplement* June 13<sup>th</sup>, ran a short article on hawking in India (1857). This in conjunction with a more detailed description of hunting antelope with cheetah, both accompanied by engravings that are examples of popular exotica. Elephants carry the dignitaries and the hunting occurs amongst palm trees. Neither form of hunting would have been practiced in such habitat but it was evidently necessary to conform to a stereotypical perception of the orient. The article opens with “HAWKING is a sport much in vogue in Northern and Central India among the nobles and zemindars. In the Madras presidency it is comparatively seldom pursued. Hawks of the best description are not easily procured, and their training is a tedious and difficult process.” (pp576)<sup>iv</sup>

See Appendix III Figure II

Rather later on December 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1871 ‘*The Illustrated London News*’ returned to the subject and published ‘Hawking at Hendon’, an article describing a commercial display of flying falcons. In keeping with the publications’ usual format as described previously, the text is accompanied by a full page set of engravings of the display. The falconer was John Barr a highly respected professional of the day<sup>v</sup>. A team of eight falcons is shown being transported on a cadge, and blocked out in front of the crowd. The falcons were evidently flown to both the lure and to bagged pigeons and they are shown being recalled and being picked up. The article describes falconry as a “right merrie pastime” (pp526) and that the new club was in the processes of reviving the sport. The reader being further informed;

*The hawks employed may be Icelanders, Greenlanders, peregrines, goshawks, or merlins; but the peregrine is generally preferred, as*

*being most readily procured, most easily trained, and most useful in flying all kinds of game. Of this species are the birds which Barr is now flying at Hendon. (ibid)*

The display is an afternoon pigeon hawking, and the description accurate from the portrayal of the hawk furniture, the methods employed and the enthusiastic recounting of field falconry, which the reader is ensured is the higher form of the sport. Pigeons thrown from the hand and flying to the lure, being considered fine enough for display giving and exercising trained falcons. Familiar modes of description are used of the falcons,

*“The wonderful speed of these birds (the peregrine) on the wing, and the grace and beauty which they display at every turn, must be seen to be thoroughly appreciated.” and “This ‘flying to the lure’ is a wonderfully pretty sight, displaying as it does the activity and speed, and withal the docility and obedience, of one of the noblest of birds.” (pp526)*

It concludes;

*“None who have witnessed the sport in any of its branches can fail to rejoice at the prospect of its modern revival, and wish success to the promoters of the new Hawking Club” (ibid).*

See Appendix III Figure III

### Representation

An exemplar of popular illustration was Johann-Elias Ridinger (1698-1767) a German black-line etcher, whose work was much copied in British sporting publications in the one hundred years after his death. A copy of a Ridinger engraving of a mounted falconer flying a goshawk at duck, in an early issue of *'The Sporting*

*Magazine*' (Date uncertain 1793 or 1796) is typical of the popular output of the time in that it was taken from a European source, falconry having retained a higher profile on the European mainland (Baillie-Grohman 1925). Ridinger's work was still being reproduced as "... depictions taken from life." in publications of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (*The London Illustrated News* 1855 June 9<sup>th</sup>).

There are some interesting aspects or errors that are common to much of the popular pictorial representation of falconry here, Ridinger repeatedly depicts falcons seizing their prey with their beaks whilst in the air. Whilst falcons do indeed kill their quarry with a bite to the neck, they do this once on the ground with all but the smallest prey items. Raptors catch their prey with their feet with few exceptions. The 19<sup>th</sup> century British sporting artist, R.G. Reeve repeats this error of depiction in his numerous pictures of heron hawking. It is clear that accuracy was only one aspect of the depiction of the sport, conveying the drama of the flight and the romance of the mounted followers was as if not more important. It is reasonable to suppose that most artists or engravers would not have had the opportunity of witnessing hawking first hand and probably took images from others earlier work or oral re-telling by a third party. If fortunate enough to have accompanied the hawks in the field it is likely that they would as novice followers, failed have been well placed to see 'the kill'<sup>vi</sup>.

See Appendix III Figure IV

A portrait of Malcolm Fleming of Barochan Tower and proprietor of the Refrewshire Subscription Hawks was reproduced through engraving in approximately 1816. It is of Fleming mounted and his falconers, Anderson and Harvey, shown with hawks and dogs<sup>vii</sup>. As is discussed elsewhere, the subjects have frequently been misidentified, but the work does provide further evidence of the contended assertion of the periods' conventional representation of

the person or persons, rather than of the sport or falcons themselves. They are little more than context and details remain incidental at this time.

Evidently the popular portrayal of falconry was about much more than a description of the activity. Few of the potential audience would be in any way knowledgeable about the sport, fewer still would be practitioners, and whilst the written word might have a duty to accuracy wherever possible, traditional artistic representation had a much wider remit. It was not until the likes of Joseph Wolf, to a lesser extent Brodrick, but certainly Thorburn, and ultimately George Lodge that falconry and the birds of prey themselves were depicted in an accurate manner. These artists are of course closer to the scientific illustrator tradition rather than the slightly earlier, illustrator of popular publications. The understanding and expectations of those for whom they painted and drew was evolving.

Edwin Henry Landseer (1802 – 1873) the English animal painter, was notable in that he produced numerous sketches of falconers with their hawks. These feature as a distinct aspect of his work for whilst his usual subjects were the animals, his falconry work all focus on the falconer. This is in keeping with the tradition of representation that he was part of. He does not seem to be concerned with the society of falconry as was Sonderland, but rather the interplay between the hawk and the falconer. He did not translate many of his falconry sketches into fully finished works, although his brother Thomas Landseer did produce a number of etchings of this body of his work. It would appear that most of his falconry subjects were drawn in Scotland where of course he produced his most famous work '*The Monarch of the Glen*' painted in the late 1840's. In Landseer's work the subject was often subservient to other ideas or notions and this is seen by the historical context often given in his falconry work. His '*Scottish*

*Falconer* is dressed in the costume of the mid 1600's as is his oil painting *'The Chieftain's Friends'*. This confirms the current of medievalism to which falconry was consistently married. Landseer was a close friend of Walter Scott who also used falconry in the historical context in some of his writing,

See Appendix III Figures V & VI

The changing times however, were leading to a demand for art that reflected life as it occurred not as it might have been thought to occur, or had been represented traditionally. Thus we see a change of focus in the mid 1800's, depictions of hawking moved away from scenes in which the field or falconer are the object, to scenes in which the hawk or the hawk and quarry are the object. In much the same way as the portraits of significant people some 200 years earlier, frequently showed them holding a hawk or falcon<sup>viii</sup> yet the portrait was of them and the falcon was incidental in all but metaphor, the popular depictions were of those participating in the sport. The series of engravings by Johann-Baptist Sonderland of the Loo Hawking Club in the Netherlands and reproduced in Schlegel and Wulvorhorst (1853) is an exemplar of that tradition. Sonderland's series identifies each significant member of the field from the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Leeds through to the professional falconers.

Apparently sketched at the hawking grounds on the heaths surrounding the royal chateau at Loo during June or July of 1843, the first of the engravings, *Le vol du Heron 1.* shows the field about to follow a flight. Obviously part way through an afternoon's hawking – the bodies of two heron are featured in the foreground – and with a large team of hawks either having been flown or awaiting their turn, the traditional cry of 'a la vol' signals the start. The flight is occurring over and behind the right shoulder of the pictures' audience thus the fleeing heron and pursuing falcons are not



depicted. The second of these, *Le vol du Heron 2*, represents the moment when the field, and namely the Prince his adjutant Baron van Tuyll van Serooskerken, Newcombe and the falconer Jan Bots arrive at the point where the falcon has brought the heron to the ground. The second falcon is being called down to a pigeon on a line.

See Appendix III Figures VII & VIII

These are choreographed or constructed works that do little in terms of honest portrayal of heron hawking, although many of the components are correct, they are records of the society surrounding the Prince during the 1840's. Thus they can be understood as a social record or as some might consider, a vanity, rather than a purely sporting picture. It is suggested that while these are the end of one tradition of sporting representation, another was beginning.

A practising falconer, William Brodrick (1814-1888) illustrated and it is suggested co-authored, Salvin's *Falconry in the British Isles* (1855). He is credited in that work by name, but it is known that Salvin made some objections to this in his later years despite their apparently close friendship. The plates in the first edition of the text were damaged and could not be re-used for the second edition in 1873 and Brodrick had to re-draft them. He was past his best work by the time he undertook this re-working and thus the popular perceptions of his work, the second edition of the work being far more readily available, are of his lesser efforts. He also published to a very limited market, a set of six life-sized prints entitled *Falconer's Favourites* in 1865. In the language of traditional falconry, these subjects were a tiercel, a musket, a tiercel goshawk, a robin, a falcon that bears more than a little similarity to a Norwegian race gyrfalcon – this observation first made by Harting (1891) is most astute, and finally a jack merlin<sup>ix</sup>.

Despite training in medicine at Edinburgh and a short stay in Australia considering sheep farming, Brodrick was a gentleman of leisure and devoted much of his time to catching and training various birds, not just birds of prey. Being a nephew of the wealthy and landed Northumbrian ornithologist Prideaux John Selby, Brodrick had access to the moors around Belford over which to fly his falcons. It was this and painting that occupied him. Later in his life Brodrick moved and ultimately settled in Devon, in country unsuitable for the flying of longwings. He gave up flying falcons but retained several as 'pets' and subjects for his art.

Salvin wrote to Lilford concerning a Barbary falcon;

*I am very anxious to possess a falcon of this species for partridge hawking. Brodrick, my partner in the work on falconry, got one in bad plumage a year or two ago, which is now a beautiful bird, but he does nothing with it and keeps it to paint from. I know no one but Wolf who can paint a hawk so well, but it is just the 'bird' he can do, no more. Not even the rock it may sit on. (Lilford letters)*

Brodrick had a series of early photographs, or more accurately 'ambrotypes' which is the correct name for the wet-plate process on glass, produced in the 1850's. These plates some of which show him holding hooded falcons, in one he is holding a shotgun, and in the others there are an assortment of trained falcons, some hooded others not. These are the earliest known photographs of a falconer and his hawks<sup>x</sup>. There is no evidence that these were intended for anything more than Brodrick's own collection, they were not reproduced or used in any publications of the time (Devers pers con).

A contemporary of Brodrick but an artist whose reputation far outstripped the Englishman was Joseph Wolf (1820-1898) born and raised in Morz, near to Koblenz. He was an apprentice lithographer

and keen taxidermist prior to undertaking training in painting. Wolf was commissioned to provide 12 life size plates for Schlegel and Wulverhorst's *Traite de Fauconnerie*, that was published initially in 1844 and then again when fully complete in 1853. Wolf travelled to the Low Countries to use the hawks of the Royal Loo Club for his sketches. His method of working was to study the hawks and sketch them, he would then compose his picture and use appropriate skins to support his treatment of the plumage (Lodge letters). It was at Loo that Wolf painted one of the most famous and often reproduced, falconry paintings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that of a white Greenland falcon hooded on the fist.

He continued his work by taking the post of staff illustrator at the British Museum in 1858. He provided accurate illustrations to support the increasingly important scientific papers that charted the specimens mostly in skin form, that were being returned from the growing Empire. He kept many live birds in his studio in central London including the occasional raptor, but captivity in a major city was not ideal for these creatures, and they did not survive for long. Wolf illustrated a wide variety of books including Elliot's *Monograph of Pheasants* (1857) and Dressler's *Birds of Europe* (1905), although not as has often been asserted Freeman & Salvin's *Falconry: Its Claims, History, and Practice* (1855)<sup>xi</sup>. Whilst he was never a falconer and there are no records of his having accompanied falconers after his trip to the Low Countries, he produced another iconic work; *Kite-Hawking with Gerfalcons*, this is a picture of a cast of trained gyrfalcons binding to a kite. Once the property of Lord Lilford and hung over the stairs in the house at Lilford, Harting reproduced this picture in his 1898 publication '*Hints on the Management of Hawks and Practical Falconry*' (pp167).

Another wildlife specialist whose early subjects were often falconry birds was the Scottish artist Archibald Thorburn (1860-1935). He owed much of his early success to Lord Lilford through being

commissioned to illustrate large sections of Lilford's '*Coloured Figures of the Birds of the British Isles*' in 1887. It was through Thorburn's contact with Lilford that he was able to paint many birds of prey, there being a large menagerie at Lilford Hall in Northamptonshire and in addition Lilford kept some falconry birds. In a letter of July 31<sup>st</sup> 1890, Lord Lilford wrote:

*To Archibald Thorburn*

*The drawings and plates arrived this morning. I have nothing but admiration to bestow upon them, and Mr Lodge, who is at least as good a judge of birds as I am, and an infinitely superior critic of Art, is entirely of my opinion.* (letters)

Thorburn was a taciturn and temperamental artist, a water-colourist not much given to talk or letter writing. He had a considerable output of wildlife subjects which earned him a comfortable income, much of it from the Lord Lilford, as is discussed elsewhere. Publishing what was to become a definitive ornithological text, the four volume *British Birds* (1915-16), Thorburn's success was based on his fine compositions in which he placed his subjects providing enough detail without becoming a slave to the illustrator's skill.

In the tradition of Wolf, George Lodge (1860–1954) was a painter who specialised in birds but retained a particular interest in raptors. He had been much influenced by the work of Wolf and considered like him, that attention to detail in terms of plumage and light to be the key to successful bird art (Lodge letters). A contemporary and sometime rival of Thorburn, where Lodge differed from many other artists, was that he was an avid field sportsman and indulged himself in falconry, shooting and stalking throughout his life. Brodrick had combined art with falconry in the middle years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but despite being highly regarded and illustrating Salvin's work '*Falconry in the British Isles*' (1855), his work did not show the flair of Lodge (Blaine diary extract 1911).

Whilst a good deal of Lodge's work namely the later output, falls outside the remit of this work, he holds an important position in British falconry history. He was active in pursuit of his sport and a member of the OHC, he was a close friend of many of the significant falconers in the later years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the opening years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Treleaven (in Robinson 2003) states that one of the reasons Lodge was held in such esteem was that he painted specific hawks or falcons that were recognisable by their owners. His concern for accuracy extended to all that he painted including hawking furniture, shadows, the grass and plants or rocks upon which the raptor stood. He believed that natural history art and illustrations should be artistic and not mere representations of the subject<sup>xii</sup>. His work extended beyond falconry subjects and included a special interest in game birds. He undertook the illustrations for '*British Game Birds and Wildfowl*', edited by W.R.Ogilvie Grant in 1912, and much later '*A History of British Birds*' by D.Bannerman (1958) to be published after Lodge's death, these were accompanied by work on deer and some exotic species of predators such as tigers.

#### Literature as indicator

If one ignores for the moment, the output of writers whose work was primarily directed towards falconers for this is undertaken shortly, and considers further that work that was for a popular market, an further understanding can be gained about the place that falconry held in the consciousness of British society in the years after 1750 and prior to 1927. In the research undertaken for this thesis, little popular writing was found that dated from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Extensive examination of '*The Caledonian Mercury*' between 1725 – 1815 failed to reveal more than the most cursory mention, and whilst hunting, shooting, angling and indeed coursing were regular subjects, falconry was largely absent. The very

occasional advertisement seeking the recovery of a lost falcon (detailed elsewhere) was as much attention as the sport received. A handbill detailing Colonel Thornton's sporting exploits during the early 1770's in the Yorkshire Wolds is doubtless populist in nature differing markedly from handbills that advertise the meetings of the Confederate Hawks. This is a rarity and it is not known exactly when it was printed, although it is surmised that it was produced in 1774 or 1775, or indeed to whom it was distributed. This was held in the Kotsiopoulos collection until 2001. 'The London Times' in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century featured far more in the way of falconry related content; be it through Court Circular, obituary, features on significant foreign visits, or advertisements (discussed elsewhere).

### Fiction & poetry

Fiction did however maintain reference to the sport. Walter Scott (1771-1832) the Scottish novelist and poet, makes use of the sport in several of his Waverley novels. These historical fictions often woven round established histories or stories, fell into two distinct groups; the first characterises the clash between the English and the Scots and within the Scottish dimension, the highlands and the lowlands. They are heavily influenced by religious matters and are predominantly medieval; the second section of the work are situated in the England of the Reformation. Freeman (Freeman & Salvin 1859 pp139) writes;

*To Walter Scott, or at least to his readers, Falconry was but one ideal being in a long and sparkling pageant. She took her place only in the past; by the arrow that split the willow-wand at one hundred paces – by the plumed helmet with a lady's glove clasped in it – and by the tall lance; with a ringing of beakers at the feast, with the 'St. George for Merrie England,' and the solitary Christian warrior who met the lonely Saracen on the plains of Palestine.*

It is doubtful if Scott had any first hand experience of falconry or if he had it was very superficial, for many of his details are inaccurate. In *'The Betrothed'* (Scott 1818) a description of heron hawking has the hard pressed quarry turning onto its back whilst in the air presenting its long and sharp bill in defence as the falcon stoops towards it. There is no credible support that this is a strategy used by the heron. Whilst the bill is certainly a formidable weapon when the bird is on the ground, it is unlikely that it can use it whilst in the air. Harting (1891) certainly dismisses it out of hand and there is no mention of heron behaving in this way in any of the reports published by those who undertook this branch of hawking. Thornton (1804), Sebright (1826), Schlegel & Wolverhorst (1853) Freeman & Salvin (1859)<sup>xiii</sup> and Salvin & Brodrick (1855), all record the flight in considerable detail but fail to recount such spectacular behaviour. Indeed heron hawking had become unsustainable in the Scotland of Scott's adulthood with Sir John Maxwell, Baronet, of Pollock and Flemings of Barochan Tower and the Renfrewshire Subscription Hawks all turning their attentions to game. Nonetheless from the point of view of a dramatic novelist this fiction of the large and cumbersome, heavily armed heron defending itself in the face of attack from a smaller dashing adversary in the form of a 'noble' falcon, contributes well to the narrative.

In 1776 an anonymous book of poetry was published in Reading, under the title *Hawking Moralised*. Some of these were used in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of October 1812 and as songs in the *Sportsman's Vocal Cabinet* (Armiger) published in 1830. Of little relevance to the practice of falconry these poems were merely popular frippery.

Similar is true when it comes to popular pictorial representation of falconry in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

See Appendix III Figure IX

On decorated pottery and porcelain where falconry was depicted it was shown as a medieval pastime and whilst never one of the most popular decorations it was regularly reproduced. Birds of prey did feature on British made table ware. Peter Bell a prolific potter of the period is castigated by Freeman (1859 pp36) for colouring all raptors 'blue': *"Mr. Peter Bell, the potter, was not an amiable individual; neither was he intellectual; neither was he, as Wordsworth expressly informs us, a very close or enthusiastic observer of Nature,"*<sup>xiv</sup>.

### Display

The 19<sup>th</sup> century had a growing fascination with natural history facilitated by a number of factors; the advances in science; the dislocation from nature brought about by industrialisation and urbanisation; the commodification of nature and the accessibility of natural specimens. This led to a fashion for displays of mounted birds that made quite marked demands on the taxidermy of the day (Batty 1880) Many of these demonstrations of 'natures art' featured birds of prey catching or pursuing quarry, or perched with a prey species in foot being mobbed by a host of other small birds (Day & Urbino 1884). A taxidermist and naturalist, John Hancock whose work dates from the 1820's to the 1860's, was also a falconer. He produced a mounted gyrfalcon wearing a hood, jesses and bells and standing on an ornate glove, it was at one time exhibited in the Hancock Museum in Newcastle (The Falconer 1966). There are not many examples of this type of work still in existence but it is known that falconers' birds that died whilst in captivity were often passed onto taxidermists for mounting, some for their own collections and some to be sold on (Lilford letters). Edward Clough Newcome once of Feltwell Hall near Brandon, had a favourite falcon 'Sultan'<sup>xv</sup> mounted after its death and was displayed in a case wearing



jesses, bells and with a hood (Harting, 1891). The artist falconer, Lodge had several of his own falcons mounted and two of these now reside in the Valkenswaard Falconry Museum. Harting also had a large collection of skins many of which were mounted and sold together with his library on his death in 1928<sup>xvi</sup>.

### Ornithological texts

The desire to be able to identify and classify species of birds, animals, fishes and plants also gave rise to a growing publication of books to aid the literate yet not necessarily scientific reader to do just that. The style of representation seen in these early texts is far from naturalistic.

See Appendix III Figures X & XI

It was not uncommon for the descriptions given in these texts to accompany the plates, to make reference to the social history of the birds. In the case of birds of prey that social history was of falconry. Thomas Bewick was a wood engraver whose work narrowed to bird subjects. He was amongst the highest regarded of the artists who illustrated the popular avian texts of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Charlotte Bronte advised Ellen Nussey to obtain and read such '*For natural history, read Bewick and Audubon, and Goldsmith, and White's History of Selborne*' (letter: July 4<sup>th</sup> 1834). With Bewick's *History of British Birds* (1826 Vols 1 & 2, Edward Walker, London), which was reprinted seven times in his lifetime, he was to ensure his reputation. In describing the goshawk it is written;

*They are said to be used by the emperor of China in his sporting excursions, when he is usually attended by his grand falconer, and a thousand of inferior rank. Every bird has a silver plate fastened to its foot, with the name of the falconer who has charge of it, that in case it should be lost, it may be restored to the proper person: but if*

*he should not be found, the bird is delivered to another officer called the guardian of lost birds, who, to make his situation be known, erects his standard in a conspicuous place among the army of hunters.* (Bewick 1826 manuscript bears no page numbering)

He continued at some length to detail the status of those who could undertake falconry in Britain in former times and concludes:

*Such was the delight our ancestors took in this royal sport, and such were the means by which they endeavoured to secure it. Beside the bird just described, there were many other kinds which were formerly in high estimation for the sports of the field; these were principally the Falcon, the Jer-Falcon, the Lanner, the Sacre, the Hobby, the Kestrel, and the Merlin: these are called Long-winged Hawks, and are distinguished from the Goshawk, the Sparrowhawk, the Kite and the Buzzard, which are of shorter wing, slower in motions, more indolent, and less courageous than the others.* (ibid manuscript bears no page numbering)

The above is contained in the text devoted to the description of the goshawk, it is notable that the actual description takes a single paragraph a good deal less than was devoted to the social significance of the hawk in China and in British history. That this is evidently taken from other secondary sources and incorrect in much detail does not detract from the tendency to record the falconry uses of the species.

In the section devoted to 'The Falcon Tribe' a well worn hierarchy of nature is retold with the eagle equated to the lion, the king of beasts. *"Buffon, speaking of the Eagle, compares it with the Lion, and ascribes to it the magnanimity, the strength, and the forbearance of that noble quadruped"* (ibid manuscript bears no page numbering) and after further eulogy, *"Such is the resemblance which that ingenious and fanciful writer has pictured of these two*

*noble animals; the characters of both are striking and prominent, and hence the Eagle is said to extend his domination over the birds, as the Lion over the quadrupeds.”* (ibid manuscript bears no page numbering)<sup>xvii</sup>

Where the text is not drawing on the sentiments of a French aristocrat of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as in the above, the treatment of birds of prey lacks the hierarchical romanticism or royal symbolism of falconry, it is far more reflective of the contemporary view held in Britain of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. “... *their dispositions are fierce, and their nature is untractable; cruel and unsociable, they avoid the haunts of civilization, and retire to the most melancholy and wild recesses, where they can enjoy, in gloomy solitude, the fruits of their depredations.*” (ibid manuscript bears no page numbering)<sup>xviii</sup>

George Shaw wrote and published the fourteen volume *General Zoology or Systematic Natural History* between 1800 and 1826. Volume VII contained instructions as to the training of hawks. Harting (1891) stated these directions were taken from the French *Abbe' la Pluche*. In eight or ten volume *The General History of Birds* printed in Winchester from 1821 to 1824, John Latham makes numerous references to hawks and hawking in Volume I. In 1835 Stanley published the first edition of his *A Familiar History of Birds* that contained a designated section entitled ‘*Hawks and Hawking*’. The Reverend Richard Lubbock, Rector of Beccles wrote *Observations of the Fauna of Norfolk, and more particularly on the District of the Broads*, in which he devotes a short chapter to falconry entitled ‘*On the Remains of Falconry in Norfolk*’. In the second edition in 1879 there is in addition, an appendix regarding Norfolk’s falconry history contributed by a Professor Newton.

In the *Royal Natural History* (Lydekker) printed in 1895 and illustrated by Wolf and Lodge amongst others, the Chapter XII that is committed to diurnal birds of prey contains a section devoted to

hawking as well as a plate of a cast of Peregrines jessed and leashed on a pole perch, one of which is hooded, another plate is of a merlin ringing up after a lark which is another falconry subject. Determining that the peregrine is "... *the one most commonly employed in the modern revival of the sport.*" (pp184) However the text then proceeds to describe heron hawking, something that had become impractical in Britain more than half a century before and had ceased to be available for British falconers with the end of the Royal Loo Club in the early 1850's. In support of the assertion made previously, the text continues "*In striking, the falcon attacks only with its claws, and not, as is often represented, with its beak.*" (pp184)

In the 1909 text *British Birds in their Haunts* a similar vein is followed with, in the case of the sparrow hawk a section given over to detailing its use in falconry. It begins "*Since the introduction of firearms, the Goshawk and Sparrow-Hawk have lost much of their reputation, every effort being now made to exterminate them, for carrying on, on their own account, the same practices which in bygone days they were enlisted to pursue on behalf of others.*" (Johns 1909 pp156). Typifying the small hawk as a procurer of food for the table, Johns proceeds to describe some of its use on the continent.<sup>xix</sup>

Later falconry is described as "*the gentle science*" (pp159), with the peregrine considered the foremost of all those raptors used "*It is a bird of haughty aspect and rich colouring, sagacious, powerful and daring; a type of the chivalry of the Middle Ages, a veritable knight-errant, always armed, and ready to do battle in any cause against all comers.*" (pp159-160) Here another description of heron hawking is given, this one quite technical, illustrating again the hold that what previous generations of falconers had known as 'the great flight', being the highest aspect of their art, had over the imagination of writers and as has been seen previously, artists as well.

The inclusion of falconry in books on ornithology and natural history whilst unsurprising, was after years of assuming all falconers were good naturalists, followed by with the falconry fraternity becoming increasingly aware of the need for intimate knowledge of the biology of hawks and falcons themselves. As such texts like Heatherley's *The Peregrine Falcon at the Eyrie*, published by Country Life in 1913, became considered essential reading for the aspiring falconer (Lascelles letters). *A Synopsis of the Accipitres* by Kirke Swann published in 1920 and in the form of a second edition, in 1922, provided a comprehensive and systematic guide to the diurnal birds of prey throughout the world and became the definitive handbook of the day.

### Writing by falconers

Consideration is now given to the publication of texts specifically on falconry or containing dedicated sections on the sport. These were directed towards falconers, field sportsmen, or in the case of the earlier publications towards gentlemen or those who aspired to such, to a lesser extent some were directed at those with an interest in history. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century there was also a limited publication of books on falconry in exotic locations. Taken as a whole the English language publications from 1575 to 1927 fall in specific categories, many were instructions as to how the sport could be pursued, others were descriptions of manners and etiquette, some historical in orientation, whilst a few were remembrances of famous flights or personal recollections, and a very few are in the form of verse. Texts from 1575 until 1766 have been overviewed in Chapter 1.

It is through a consideration of the writing that an assessment can be made of the way falconers saw themselves and their sport, and how they were seen by others. Initially beginning slightly prior to the

period of focus it is hoped, if the measure of popularity can be assessed by numbers of publications and reprints in the years before 1750, to illustrate the extent to which falconry had fallen into abeyance. The level of interest can also be assessed by the type of publication despite not reflecting participation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Later publications chart the somewhat staccato recovery through to the Victorian period and thence into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Thomas Pennant wrote *British Zoology* in 1766. The folio published in London was followed by editions in 1768, 1770, 1776 prior to further reprints in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to this he wrote *Artic Zoology* and published it in two volumes between 1784 and 1787. Both contain sections on falconry but particularly *British Zoology*, the former of the two (Harting 1891).

In the one hundred and twenty five years between Turberville's work in 1575 and 1700, there were twenty nine or more major falconry works published in the English language by nineteen different authors, and thirty-five reprints of those or earlier texts produced. The vast majority of these books were instructions as how to practice falconry although some were historical works, one was poetry and another devoted to the trapping of animals. However between 1700 and 1770, five authors produced six texts, none solely devoted to falconry but with substantial content relating to the sport, three remained anonymous and it is likely two of these borrowed large sections of the text from writers in the previous century, Somerville's poem and Pennant's proto-scientific observations in the context of ornithological study remain. This period also saw fourteen reprints of which five were of Aubrey's historical *Miscellanies Collected*, the series of anecdotes many relating to the Stuarts and printed originally in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and four were Pennant's work. Markham's diminutive book the novelty *The Young Sportsman's Instructor* was reprinted twice whilst Cox's *The Gentleman's Recreation* reprinted in 1706 and

1721 was the only text that may conceivably have been of use to the falconer. But even this fell far short of the quality of work of Turberville, Bert, or Latham.

Whilst the numbers of individual books actually printed is not ascertainable, it is reasonable to assume from the above, that there was a ready market for falconry texts throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst this can only be considered a crude indicator of the popularity of the sport it certainly points to an interest at a time when the printed word was expensive and much of the British population illiterate. This supports the assertion that falconry was a predilection of the elite, both in terms of education and wealth<sup>xx</sup>. There is a marked drop off in publication and reprint of books with falconry content after 1700 and particularly it is suggested, in the type of instructional text seen so commonly in the previous century. This would evidence a quite sudden discontinuation of the sport, as has been discussed elsewhere. The literature consistently places the cause for this decline in falconry's popularity to the advent of the firearm and the enclosure of much the rural landscape. As is the contention of this work, this is unlikely to be the complete picture and whilst the two, perhaps obvious causes, certainly made practising falconry more difficult it was other more fundamental changes that rendered it largely obsolete.

The situation with regards to credible falconry texts seemed likely to have changed in 1773 were it not for a grave misfortune, when Campbell the falconer to the Earl of Eglinton, produced a major section of *A Treatise of Modern Falconry*. Harting (1891) retells how Campbell being a practical man with no classical education submitted the work to a certain Reverend Gillies for inspection. Gillies was not a falconer but professed acute knowledge of the sport's history. He persuaded Campbell to preface the text with his own work on the subject. This was a major error and "*This bantering of the wit produced the worst effect for the author, who*

*instead of securing a rapid sale, found himself possessed of a mass of waste paper.*<sup>xxi</sup> (ibid pp34) It was privately published. Campbell's own work is both authoritative and might be seen as an indication that some limited regeneration of the sport was underway.

Some further publications of little import in terms of practical falconry appeared such as Osbaldiston's 1792 *The British Sportsman*, featuring a single plate of heron hawking; the anonymous *Essays by a Society of Gentlemen at Exeter* printed in 1796, which has an essay on falconry history; Beckmann's *A History of Inventions and Discoveries*, a translation from German by William Johnston in 1797, featuring another historical overview (Harting 1891).

Whilst directed toward field sport aficionados, Samuel Howitt's collection of plates with no accompanying text *The British Sportsman* published firstly in 1800, contained four apparently contemporary engravings of various aspects of falconry. This was followed by Strutt's 1801 publication of *The Sports and Pastimes of the English People* that devotes Chapter 2 to hawking. It was not written by a practitioner and contained many errors and misunderstandings. Where Strutt is important however, is that it was circulated widely and frequently reprinted. Whilst claiming to be nothing other than an overview of activities and many of those purely historical in nature, it was a 19<sup>th</sup> century text that was readily available to many. Falconry doubtless benefited from its inclusion in this work.

This was followed by Colonel Thornton's *A Sporting Tour through the Northern parts of England and great part of the Highlands of Scotland: including remarks on English and Scottish Landscape and general observations on the state of Society and Manners*. published by Vernon and Hood in London 1804. The 'tour' undertaken in 1786 was an expansive outing. He describes much



falconry both husbandry and sport but has the inclination to make serious exaggerations. This text was the first by a practising falconer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, despite describing the sport on a tour that took place nearly twenty years earlier. In 1806 Thornton repeated the process of having an account of another tour printed. *A Sporting Tour through various parts of France in the year 1802*, a slighter text than the former, it describes pheasant hawking and details the mews at Thornton's then home Thornville Royal in Yorkshire, which had reputedly housed in the latter years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the finest collection of trained hawks and falcons in Britain.

In 1816 Chafin published *Anecdotes and History of Cranbourn Chase*. A section is given over to the falconry that took place over a tract of land in the Chase known as the Hawking Downs. Harting (1891) maintains that this text was reviewed in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1818, although it has not been possible to verify such. However and as asserted by Harting, *The Field* (1854) did publish a portrait of W. Tregonwell Frampton who is subject of a portion of the text and was "*the most active pursuer of this diversion in the West of England*" (Chafin cited in Harting 1891, pp38).

Sir John Saunders Sebright produced the first instructive text of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; *Observations upon Hawking*, printed in London in 1826 and reprinted in 1828 and once again undated but quite shortly afterwards.. A highly considered if comparatively brief manual, Harting (1891) believed that Sebright consulted Mr Downes, Lord Orford, Colonel Thornton, Colonel Wilson – later Lord Berners, Mr Hall, and E.C. Newcome. This might have been the case but Lord Orford died in 1792 and Col. Thornton had left England for France in 1819 and died there in 1823. Given that Sebright was a much published man working on diverse subjects, there is no evidence to suggest his *Observations upon Hawking* were so long in gestation.

In the manner of the times and the developing taste for books of reference, two texts followed; in 1835 Harewood produced the *Dictionary of Sports: or companion to the field, the forest, and the riverside*, providing explanations for each expression used in the field sports as well as racing, whilst D.P. Blaine published in 1800 and again in 1840, *An Encyclopaedia of Rural Sports* that featured a lengthy section of Part VI to falconry. Maxwell edited *The Field Book of Sports & Pastimes* in 1833, it features a short section on hawking written by Montagu, Sebright, and Strutt. A unattributed history text *The Old Sports of England*, published in 1835 by Bracebridge Hall, provides an account of hawking that is apparently contemporary. The 1850 publication *Gamebirds & Wildfowl: their friends & foes*, by Knox and discusses the falcons belonging to O'Keefe of Curragh, Kildare, and Colonel Bonham of the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars at Scardroy Lodge, numerous other stories and details.

*A Treatise upon Falconry* privately printed for the author, Belany in 1841 was a text dedicated to the sport. Whilst it is of very mixed quality and is written in an awkward style, apparently Belany was a practitioner albeit one of whom little is known<sup>xxii</sup>. It has a lengthy opening section making appeals on behalf of falconry and claims about its antiquity and history. Lascelles (1892) considered it a useful addition to the literature.

### Falconry abroad

For the time a distinctly novel publication was Lieutenant Richard Burton's 1852 *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus*. This description of falconry as witnessed in the Sindh, whilst serving a commission with the British East India Company Bombay Army. Published by John Van Voorst this text tapped into the growing market for exotic writing from the Empire and beyond. Whilst making no pretence at being of any use to a British falconer as anything other than a curiosity, this became an important text and is discussed

elsewhere. In the same vein, Colonel Delme'- Radcliffe published together, the three articles that he had written for *The Field* in 1870, under the title *Notes on the Falconidae used in India in Falconry*. Printed in Southsea in 1871, the text illustrates Delme'- Radcliffe's considerable personal experience.

See Appendix III Figure XIII

Continuing this practice, Lieutenant-Colonel Phillott privately published under the title *Some Persian Riddles*, articles he had written for *The Journal and Proceeding of the Asiatic Society* (Vol. II, No.4 1906). Whilst not exclusively about the sport the majority of it does contain various observations on falconry in India including the manufacture of bells and hoods. In 1910 Phillott repeated the process by privately publishing another of his submissions to the *The Journal and Proceeding of the Asiatic Society* (Vol. VI, No.7 1910), this time entitled *Vocabulary of technical Falconry Terms in Urdu, Persian and Arabic*. It is believed that these were never offered for sale but a small number were presented to friends of the author as gifts. However, the *Baz-Nama-Yi-Nasiri*, a Persian work on falconry was translated by Phillott and published by Quaritch in 1908 with an issue of five hundred copies. Phillot, Delme'- Radcliffe and Burton's work is discussed in more detail later in this work.

### The major works

To return to the domestic context; Salvin & Brodrick's *Falconry in the British Isles* that was first published by John Van Voorst in 1855 and reprinted in 1873 was widely acclaimed as the best and most comprehensive text on modern falconry produced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Harting (1891) considered the text of the second edition to be superior to that of the first printing, but as is confirmed elsewhere, the illustrations in the first are markedly better than

Brodrick's re-drafting of them for the 1873 edition. Freeman & Salvin's work *Falconry: Its Claims, History and Practice*, was published against Salvin's wishes. It was however, a credible text by long practiced falconers. It contains a section on heron hawking contributed by Edward Clough Newcome the last British falconer to have specialised in that flight. Gage Earl Freeman, also known as 'Peregrine' who wrote regularly for *The Field* in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, published *Practical Falconry; to which is added, How I became a Falconer* in 1869. This widely regarded and much sought after text was rather strangely not given a second edition in the period. The above mentioned author; Delme'- Radcliffe wrote the entry for falconry for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 1879.

In the falconry mainstream, J.E.Harting, whose *Bibliotheca Accipitraria* (1891) has been used extensively as a check-list throughout this section, was prolific, publishing *The Ornithology of Shakespeare* in 1871, 'Falconry' in *Rural Sports* 1880, *Essays on Sport and Natural History* in 1883, and *Hints on the Management of Hawks* in 1884 to which was added *Practical Falconry* in 1898, and the re-drafting of the 1575 anonymous manuscript *A Perfect Booke for Keping of Sparhawkes or Goshawkes*. Harting wrote the falconry article for the Chambers' "Encyclopaedia" in 1889 and for the *Fur, Feather and Fin* Series he wrote the volume on the rabbit in 1898, this was illustrated by Thorburn and Lodge amongst others. *Recreations of a Naturalist*, published by Unwin in 1906 was Harting's final authorship, he was to die during the following year. Chapter I commends falconry to the uninitiated reader and the text as a whole shows the breadth of his scholarship from the history of the sport, Barnes *Boke of St Albans*, through to observations on some of the various flights in the tradition. It encompasses considerable diversity in the realm of natural history well beyond the realm of falconry<sup>xxiii</sup>.

In the context of *The Badminton Library*, the volume published in

1892 *Coursing and Falconry*, was highly significant. The falconry section of the text was written by the Hon. Gerald Lascelles and published in 1892. Lascelles is discussed elsewhere and as the manager of the Old Hawking Club was influential in the sport in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the opening years of the new century. His reputation was much enhanced by this publication which became quickly established as a major contribution to falconry literature. Lascelles also contributed to *The Hare for the Fur and Feather Series* in 1896, discussing the hunting of hares with gyrfalcons, goshawks, peregrines and the Bonelli's eagle. His memoirs; *Thirty-Five Years in the New Forest*, published in 1915 and predominantly about his time as Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest concludes with a chapter on falconry revealing the central role he played in the continuation of the sport. *Shakespeare's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of his Age*, published by the Clarendon Press in 1916, featured a chapter by Lascelles and two plates taken from Turbeville.

E.B. Michell's *The Art and Practice of Falconry*, published by Methuen in 1900, was a comprehensive practical thesis containing considerable detail. Michell was a fine falconer who had much experience with hawks and the merlin in particular. His writing took the instructional text to a new level at the start of the new century, more detailed and exact than Salvin & Brodrick in 1855 and more focussed than Lascelles in 1892, it set the standard that later 20<sup>th</sup> century texts needed to aspire to.

Major Charles Hawkins Fisher wrote *Reminiscences of a Falconer*, published by Nimmo in 1901. It contained the Barnet Committee prize essay, discussed elsewhere, and Fisher's own hawking stories. These are both historically important and illustrative of the practice of the time, yet this is not an instructive text. In 1903 the publishers Hutchinson produced a collection of Lord Lilford's previously unpublished writing. These were edited by Aubyn Trevor-

Battye, Lilford having died in 1896. A treatise on falconry is included that may actually have been written by Gage Earl Freeman, however this cannot be confirmed. Barber (1943) recommended it as the finest introduction to the sport written to that date. Much of the text shows Lilford's wider interests and his work as a one time President of the British Ornithologists' Union.

### Others

Of minor interest was Colonel Hamilton's 1860 *Reminiscences of an Old Sportsman*, a two volume work that devotes four chapters to falconry, although Hamilton betrays little understanding of the sport. Whilst purporting to be from first hand experience the descriptive section is lacking insight and the history is quite superficial. Likewise the *Ornithological Miscellany* by Rowley, published in 1875 reproduces some details from earlier texts and copies of Turberville's woodcuts. Lacroix's *Manners, Customs, and Dress during the Middle Ages*, published in London in 1877, is a translation of a French text, with a section given over to falconry history. Stonehenge edited *British Rural Sports* in 1856, it contains nothing remarkable in terms of the falconry entry other than a list of existing heronries and who owns them. The 1881 edition provided a listing of practising falconers and the counties of their residence<sup>xxiv</sup>.

*Forty Five Years of Sport* written by Corballis and edited by A.T. Fisher, the falconry section is taken from the work of Salvin. An interesting aspect is the advice that advertising for falcons in the likes of *The Northern Chronical*, *The Inverness Chronical*, and *The Scotsman* is likely to be beneficial. Oswald Crawford edited *A Year of Sport and Natural History, Shooting, Hunting, Coursing, Falconry and Fishing*, that was published by Chapman & Hall in 1895. This text was much advertised in *The Times* (1895) Harting contributed the short chapters on rabbit and partridge hawking and Lodge illustrated such. The text also contained details on the identification

of birds of prey.

*British Sports, Past and Present* by Cuming was published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1909. It contained an entry on falconry that consists predominantly of text taken from Sebright, Salvin and Fisher.

It can be seen from the regular advertising in the Times (1892 April, 1892 December, 1895 March, 1897 February, 1898 March), of newly published books on falconry, or of magazines such as 'Macmillan's magazine', 'The Gentleman's magazine', Cassell's magazine and 'The English Illustrated', containing articles or features on the sport (1886) that there was certainly a market for or an interest in falconry. Another quite regular feature was the disposal of book collections that contained falconry texts; 1818, 1887, 1888, 1892, 1897 (The Times). That falconry was deemed worth mentioning specifically illustrates something of its public image, one that doubtless outstripped the popularity of the practice itself.

### Optimism

Something that can be seen from the literature published in the second half of the 1800's, is a perception among those falconers who wrote, and amongst those non-falconers who wrote about it, that they were taking part in an activity as part of an ongoing tradition that was not moribund. Lascelles (1892 pp348) articulates this:

*Very rarely does a sportsman who has once taken it up abandon it during his life, and though from the nature of the sport, and of the country requisite for it, it can never become generally popular, we believe that as it is already the most ancient, so it will continue to be one of the most enduring of the field sports in which mankind takes*

*delight.*

Somewhat earlier Gage Earl Freeman (Freeman & Salvin 1859 pp33), asserts *"That falconry will always exist in the world ..."* and that *"... the sportsmen of these islands shall write, not with their pens but in their practice, another page of its history."* And finally *"I don't know whether we shall ever return to the long waistcoats and the powdered hair; but I am sure that a reaction of feeling has commenced, which is in favour of the leash and the hood."*

Major Fisher, in his winning entry for the Alexandra Park Prize Essay competition, for the Barnet Committee (1871 pp9) says *"The project of "a Revival of Falconry" would seem to indicate a belief that the old sport has become extinct and obsolete in this country; and such undoubtedly is the conviction of ninety-nine out of every hundred who have now considered the subject."* He continues emphatically: *"No, it is not extinct!"*

These examples could be supplemented with many more from the literature examined, however the sentiment is quite unmistakable. Falconers from about 1850 onwards were optimistic about their sport despite the difficulties of hawking in modern Britain. These sentiments were not shared by earlier authors such as Scott in the 1818 *British Field Sports*, who considered falconry cruel and was pessimistic about any possibility of its survival. In *The Sporting Dictionary* in 1803, Taplin wrote that hawking had completely fallen into dissolution with no hope of recovery. Belany (1841 pp9) said:

*It would appear ... that falconry has been abolished with many other cruel practices of by-gone days, through a refinement in the taste of modern sportsmen; and likewise, that shooting has been adopted on being more suitable to the present state of society, and more effective in the field.*



The changes that might have underpinned the transformation from pessimistic to optimistic are discussed elsewhere, they are complex but the outcome is evident in the literature.

The profile that falconry developed in the popular media of 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain including the sporting press, was impressive given the small number of practitioners of the sport and the increasing difficulties that they faced. Whilst falconry publications and the accompanying illustrations or artwork catered well for the falconers and some sportsmen ornithologists, their audience was too small to contribute much to the popular perception of falconry. The medievalist appeal and nostalgia for the rural idyll of 'merrie England' in the face of rampant industrialisation and social dislocation brought about by the increasingly rapid urbanisation explains some of the interest in an activity that seemed to the casual observer, beyond the reaches of modernity.

In assessing the volume and type of publication considered herein it can be seen that there were numerous texts that addressed falconry printed prior to 1700, at a time when the production of books was laborious and very expensive. After this period the popularity of the subject fell away markedly, although it did not disappear completely. By the 1770's falconry was experiencing something of a reorganisation although still being practised on a very limited in scale, with the Renfrew Subscription Hawks and the Confederate Hawks of Great Britain. One might consider that this was reflected by the production of Campbell's book. With the exception of Thornton's work and the 1810 reprint of Barnes' *Boke of St Albans* featuring here as something of an historical oddity, Sebright's 1826 instructional text is the next, although this also stands somewhat isolated in a period of little literary interest. Belamy in 1841, signals the start of an upsurge in falconry related publications that continued until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It must be remembered that the publication of the written word was

when compared with the 1600's, much quicker and relatively cheaper. The numbers of literate members of British society had also increased and the development of the middle classes had provided an expanded market for sporting books.

The number of falconry related texts as a proportion of all book publication in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, remains insignificant however. Whilst tempting, to cite the writing both of important instructional falconry texts and more peripheral publications as indicating a revival in the sport during this period, is simplistic and unsupported. It is contended here that it actually represents little more than a maintenance of the activity. It is believed that even given the occasional use of falconry as a focus for the artist; as subject material in more widely circulating and popular publications such as '*The Penny Gazette*' and '*The Illustrated London News*'; more regular coverage or treatment seen in the sporting magazines such as '*The Field*'; and its place in the mainstream literature and even sporting literature of the day, falconry's revival was very limited, so much so that the very term revival is probably inappropriate. The sport had been adapted by its practitioners to accommodate the conditions in which it had to exist.

### The Field 1894

An illustration of this publication profile is seen in *The Field* in 1894. That year there were nineteen reports or letters on falconry printed. As a proportion of the total coverage given to field sports in the publication, it is insignificant. However if compared to the paucity of falconry material seen in the popular press a decade or two earlier, or indeed a decade later, it is remarkable.

Starting in the February 24<sup>th</sup> publication, an article '*Reminiscences of an Old Falconer*' under the nom de plume *Auceps*, the need to curtail flying a goshawk because of the displeasure it was causing

some shooting neighbours is reported. On March 24<sup>th</sup> *Experiences with a Goshawk* by F.D.B. details how permission was granted to fly on land owned by a relative. A third on goshawking in the April 28<sup>th</sup> edition *'A Goshawks Records'*, this time by Henry S. Boynton details quarry taken over the previous two seasons (1892-93 totalled 374 head; 1893-94 totalled 180 head. Predominantly rabbits in both years).

Mr Ernest Anne of Blenkinsopp Castle in Northumberland, wrote of *'Hawking in the North of England'* in the April 14<sup>th</sup> publication. He describes both goshawking and flying peregrines, and records the death of a favoured falcon 'White Lady' on a screen perch in his mews. *The Field* falconry correspondent, Gage Earl Freeman, nom de plume *Peregrine*, responded on May 26<sup>th</sup> with words on the management of hawks. He asserted that falcons do better with little hooding and being kept on low block perches rather than the traditional high screen (on which Ernest Anne's falcon had died). He also enjoined the discussion about the great difficulty of the flight at peewit (the lapwing).

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, C. Hawkins Fisher had started the correspondence on flying falcons at peewit. Reporting that the celebrated Edward Clough Newton, who had died some years earlier, maintained that in his opinion even the best captive hawk was far exceeded in ability by the worst wild one – explaining why wild peregrines can catch the peewit whilst their trained cousins cannot.

A story was told by Hawkins Fisher of an interesting occurrence at 'the Curragh', the professional falconer John Pells wished to take the twelfth block perch off the lawn after losing a favourite falcon when out flying. His employer Mr Yelverton O'Keeffe would not let him demanding that the block remained where it had been before the falcon had been lost. On the 28<sup>th</sup> day after the loss, O'Keeffe looking out of the window at breakfast, saw that all of the blocks

were occupied. Pells was called and he went out and picked up the hitherto absent peregrine that had returned of her own volition. A memoir to the late Pells had been published during the previous year (March 31<sup>st</sup> 1883). Hawkins Fisher had contributed previously on May 5<sup>th</sup> the recounting of a flight at a carrion crow with a peregrine, but he continued the peewit saga on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. He discussed obtaining a pair of peewit from Leadenhall Market to use as 'bagged' game, and unusually talked of hunting kestrels, sparrow hawks and a flight at a merlin with his peregrines. Furthermore he bemoaned that wild peregrines spoiled his grouse hawking by their presence on his moor.

Also on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, W.H. St Quintin reported on his previous season hawking in Yorkshire and detailing a fair 'bag' with both peregrine and goshawk, despite difficult circumstances.

A descriptive piece about Arab falconry in Palestine was published on September 15<sup>th</sup>. It described but in scant detail, flights by a falcon at francoline and desert hare. The field were mounted on camel or horse. A good deal of attention was paid to the formality of the proceedings and the hospitality given.

Closer to home, partridge and lark hawking in Wiltshire were reported by an E.C. Pinckney in the September 29<sup>th</sup> publication; two tiercel peregrine and two merlins were flown. A rat was taken by one of the merlins – this being a very unusual quarry for the diminutive bird-catching falcon. The aesthetics of such a flight would not have been worth recording, merely the novelty.

Harting had written an instructional article on training the sparrow hawk that had been published on August 25<sup>th</sup>. His objective was to persuade would-be falconers not to attempt a sparrow hawk until they were quite experienced.

Following this theme in the November 17<sup>th</sup> edition, C. Garnett discussed training the sparrow hawk and in the face of usual practice asserted that haggards were preferable over eyasses. Also in this publication a report of the Valkenswaard trapped passage peregrines, that arrived in London on the 9<sup>th</sup> November in the charge of professional George Oxter. Most of them were destined for the O.H.C.

Thence started an exchange of letters about the technicalities of correct terminology in falconry. Lascelles described the correct usage of the term 'intermewed' (a hawk that has moulted once in captivity) in the December 1<sup>st</sup> edition, this in response to Garnett. Who, in turn, wrote to the editor on 8<sup>th</sup> December to continue the discussion. Lascelles replied on December 15<sup>th</sup> and the publication came to a close after the edition of December 29<sup>th</sup> when Garnett, Boyes, Lascelles and Harting all contributed letters. What to the outsider must have seemed to have been a trifling matter evidently meant a good deal to those traditionalists involved.

This final publication of the year, December 29<sup>th</sup>, also saw St Quintin back in print reporting on a flight at a herring gull by his peregrine tiercel. The disparity in size is the remarkable aspect here – the tiercel being much smaller than the gull.

Taking the falconry material seen in the Field during 1894 as a whole, the sport appears quite buoyant. Another aspect is the predominance of communication and reports on shortwings; sparrow hawks and goshawks. This is in clear contrast to the more formal falconry literature in which the falcons and particularly the peregrine dominates. It might be that there was something of a revival of interest in the shortwing hawks in the latter years of the century (as discussed elsewhere) or the literature is unrepresentative of the sport as it was being practised. Either way, further research is necessary in this area.

### An appearance of popularity

The apparent increase in falconry texts in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century illustrates little more than a growing tendency of the educated middle and upper classes to attempt publication together with an increasing market for the printed word. The construction of the medieval image of falconry that was persistently recreated in both popular depiction and historical treatment helped to maintain the sport in print to an extent that was out of keeping with the actuality of the practice. The sport benefited from this to an extent in that it was this very image that attracted some people to it, allowed others namely landowners and shoot proprietors to accommodate it by allowing it to occur over their land, and gave it a certain gravitas in the realms of field sports.

However it remained an unusual and very peripheral activity as can be evidenced by aspiring falconers having to write letters as the only way to contact established practitioners. Something that would not have been necessary in either shooting or hunting, nor fishing or coursing. Two replies to such enquiries are provided below. Initially from Gerald Lascelles sent during the Great War;

*To Captain Knight*

*I am always glad to help anyone in Hawking matters but I am afraid nothing is going on at present. Our Club is shut down during the war; our falconer is doing other work and most of our members are on active service of one kind or another. I am afraid there is nothing to do but wait for happier times when I hope our old sports may revive and go on as may be in former days.*

*You ask about peregrines. Haggards are of no use except in the hands of very experienced falconers, and that when they have been properly caught at the right time of year. You should begin with eyasses, a good old falcon or tiercel trained to partridges is what*

*you might have to learn from. I know of no such thing at present.  
If you will get the Badminton library volume on Coursing and  
Falconry you will find, if you read it carefully, pretty well all I can tell  
you about hawking and save yourself asking questions.  
Dwyer could probably catch a passage peregrine for you in October  
in his plover nets, but I hope you will not be offended if I tell you  
straight out that you will no more train it than buy a fiddle and play a  
concerto on it. And I doubt if Gibbs could do much better.  
Yours sincerely  
Gerald Lascelles  
(Lascelles letter)*

Another reply to a request for advice from J.L Newman<sup>xxv</sup>, this  
describing how to keep a goshawk and written upon a telegram  
card from Lakenheath Station and embossed 'Under Lodge,  
Lakenheath, Suffolk.' The very practice of distilling the husbandry  
involved in the maintenance of a difficult and highly strung species  
like a goshawk, into a few lines is most questionable. However it is  
only the rank beginner who would request such;

*... for a couple of weeks feed once a day on fresh rabbit, as much  
as she can eat. Carry her on the fist amongst people as much as  
possible.  
Give a full crop every five days, (on Sat night?) with casting.  
Give washed meat (cut up 1/2lb shin, of beef, soak in two changes  
of water for 12 hours) twice a week when getting into flying  
condition. Always give quite fresh rabbit (full crop) or live pigeon  
every five days.  
Leave out in all weather, rain etc. but provide shelter from wind.  
Keep jesses well greased.  
J.L.Newman  
(Newman note)*

Falconry had undergone many changes throughout the period from

1750 to 1927 but these did not translate easily into the manner and frequency of the sports representation. Many other factors contributed to the manifestation of the sport as seen through its portrayal. From the naive illustrations of the sporting and natural history texts published in the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was a clear and comparatively swift transition to a 19<sup>th</sup> century naturalism. Portraits featuring hawks and falcons as accoutrements or accessories fell out of favour, with action and movement becoming sought after. This is seen in the work of Landseer and somewhat earlier in the hunting scenes of Ridinger. Falconry remained a subject for popular representation in the magazines and newspapers of the time, but became less popular as the subject for formal artwork. This is evidenced by the tradition of representation seen in Wolf, Thorburn and Lodge. All of whom spent much time in the company of falconers, and the latter actually practiced the sport for much of his life. However whilst the trained hawk had been a focus for them all, they moved to placing the 'subjects', frequently captive falconry birds, in wild settings and with the jesses, bells and hoods absent. This might be understood as meeting the demands of the ever growing market for illustrations and commissions to accompany ornithological and natural history texts, or it may be a simple recognition that the falconry interest was a small and esoteric one.

See Appendix III Figure XIV

Literature on the subject underwent a similar change to meet the expectations of the day. Until Schlegel & Wulvorhorst (1853) and Salvin & Brodrick (1855) produced works that were essentially modern and set a marker for following publications to meet or better, the literature was often lyrical, fanciful and frequently ill-informed. Often reflective of the ego of those who wrote it the literature that was of any practical use to an aspiring falconer was often hard to come by. As a tool for the dissemination of the popular image of the sport, that of a pastime from antiquity, some of it



served fairly well. The popular interest was supported in the regular featuring of the sport as the subject for articles in sporting or general interest publications, certainly in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An aspect of representation has been considered to be the manner in which falconers themselves shared the techniques of their sport. A habit of letter writing does seem to have been a feature of the middle and upper classes of the period, and through that evidence some indication has been given. Falconry has a strong and diverse literary tradition that accompanied the practice and both reflected and at times maintained it. It is considered herein that the literature, particularly during the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, was an essential component that enabled the sport to survive.

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<sup>i</sup> Berghem's 'Landscape & the Hawking Party' reproduced for the Illustrated London News in 1851 (from the Book of St Albans 1436) a mounted gentleman and lady falconer are depicted wearing the dress of the 1650's in a pre-enclosure rural setting; another in this vein is 'A Hawking Party' painted in 1837 by Jock Wilson which shows a group of Scottish falconers out grouse hawking in the dress of the early 15<sup>th</sup> Century; in popular artefacts such as the Silver-Gilt Toilet Box manufactured in 1814 (Private Collection) the spectators and falconers of a much earlier date are worked in repousse'.

<sup>ii</sup> It is not clear whether Hutchins is referring to the tribesman or is using a local name for the sparrow hawk.

<sup>iii</sup> "The hawks to be used in this flight should be a cast of male peregrines called by falconers "tiercels." The day should not be too sunny or windy: a calm, dull day is best; and the country open, with a pretty good sprinkling of magpies upon it. Before the hawks "leave the hand," it is well to explain the part the field should take in the amusement. They should be informed that dogs are not allowable; that upon seeing a magpie they should observe a strict silence until the hawks are cast off. (Illustrated London News October 4<sup>th</sup> 1856 pp337)

<sup>iv</sup> Interestingly the article describes how the falcon is encouraged to mount above the falconer and beaters. It is called off from an assistant to the falconer some distance away by means of a swung lure. Once the falcon is well on the way the falconer hides the lure and the falcon flies in wide circles looking for it and gaining height as she goes. Once at an acceptable pitch the beaters drive the partridge out of the cover and the hunt begins. The method of calling off to a swung lure is used in training only in the European tradition. Once a falcon will make a pitch she is introduced to game and the lure dispensed with.

<sup>v</sup> By the time this article was published Barr had agreed terms with Lascelles and has become the professional for the OHC.

<sup>vi</sup> Both novice falconers and spectators frequently missed out on seeing the end of the flight due to lack of knowledge and practice. The kill was often made some distance from the field and if either running or riding over broken ground it was difficult to keep the hawks and quarry in sight. In addition to this, it is likely that the engraver or sketcher would be of too lowly a status to command a mount and thus would not be able to keep up with the flight.

<sup>vii</sup> An advertisement for the engraving was recently made on an internet art sales site: *Hawking: This elegant engraving, a mezzotint printed both in colors and black & white, depicts Malcolm Fleming*

(1745-1819) of Barochan, Renfrewshire (near Paisley and Glasgow Scotland) mounted on horseback together with his falconers John Anderson (1750-1832) and George Harvey, and their hawks and sporting dogs. This engraving was completed by Charles Turner in 1816 based on an oil painting by James Howe (1780-1836) of Edinburgh completed in 1811. A remarkable instance of a succession of falconers from father to son for many generations occurs in the ancient family of the Flemings of Barochan. The Fleming family name was apparently taken from their country of origin, Flanders, then a part of Holland, after they migrated to Scotland sometime in the 14th or 15th century. Malcolm Fleming was the Hereditary Grand Falconer of Scotland and kept the Renfrewshire Subscription Hawks, flown chiefly at partridge and woodcock, from the commencement of the 19th century until his death in 1819. His grandfather was also a celebrated falconer, as was a more remote ancestor, Peter Fleming. At the end of the fifteenth century, on the occasion of his beating the King's falcon with a tiercel of his own, Peter Fleming received from James IV of Scotland (1488-1513) a jeweled hawk's hood. This is still preserved in the family although the precious stones were stolen in the year 1600. The print depicts Malcolm Fleming astride his hunter, carrying a hooded falcon, and followed by a favorite black poodle. At his horse's head stands John Anderson, a celebrated Scotch falconer, with two hawks on his glove, one hooded the other pulling at a partridge apparently just killed. At Anderson's side, between him and his master's horse, stands a famous pointer; while before him, in characteristic attitudes, are four spaniels, which were always used for woodcock hawking. To the right, an assistant falconer, George Harvey, seated on a felled tree, carries on his glove a cast of spare hawks. John Anderson was so renowned as a professional falconer that a few lines relative to his career are appropriate. He was born about 1750 in the parish of Currie, near Edinburgh, and was at first apprenticed to a currier. His love of hawking becoming known, however, and he was engaged by Malcolm Fleming of Barochan as assistant to John Hainshaw, then head-falconer. He lived to succeed Hainshaw, and then had for his assistant Peter Ballantine who became almost as renowned a falconer as himself. Upon Mr. Fleming's death in 1819 Anderson was engaged by the Earl of Morton at Dalmahoy. On the occasion of the coronation of George IV in 1820 he was selected by the Duke of Athole to present the King with a cast of falcons, that being the feudal fee by which the Dukes of Athole held the tenure of the Isle of Man from the Crown. A now rare engraving of Anderson in his coronation attire was made by Isaac Robert Cruikshank (1789-1856). (This is reproduced by C. F. G.R. Schwerdt as plate 150, opposite page 50, in Volume III of his famous bibliographic catalogue entitled *Hunting, Hawking, Shooting, 1928-1937*.) After spending some time in the service of Sir Alexander Donne of Ochiltree, Anderson retired with a pension in 1832, in the eighty-second year of his age. He passed away the following year. The print bears the following inscription: "To Sir John Maxwell of Pollock Bart. The Plate, taken from a Picture in the possession of Mr Fleming of Barochan, is most respectfully Dedicated, By His, most obliged and humble servant Alexr. Finlay. Published Octr. 24, 1816 by Alexr. Finlay, Carver, Gilder, & Printseller to His Majesty, Glasgow." A Coat of Arms is placed in the Center of the lower margins, and in small print is noted "Painted by J. Howe, Edinburgh. Engraved by C. Turner." Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, Bart., who was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Renfrewshire Subscription Hawks, had in his own service as falconer, William Barr, the father of William, John, and Robert Barr, all of whom became skilled falconers in 19th century Britain and Holland. Sir John Maxwell assumed the management of the Renfrewshire Subscription Hawks upon Malcolm Fleming's death in 1819. He continued his sponsorship until about 1830 when the club apparently came to an end. In doing research on this engraving, it was learned that there were two 19th century editions of this work. There was the 1816 edition as previously described and a re-strike issued in 1834 by other members of the Finlay printing family. The engraved inscription for this issue is identical to the earlier issue with only a date and name change. It reads as follows: "To Sir John Maxwell of Pollock Bart. The Plate taken from a Picture in the possession of Mr Fleming of Barochan, is most respectfully Dedicated, By His, most obliged and humble servant R & J. Finlay. Published Jan. 11, 1834 by R & J. Finlay, Carver, Gilder, & Printseller to His Majesty, Glasgow." Painted by J. Howe, Edinburgh. Engraved by C. Turner." A Coat of Arms is placed in the Center of the lower margins. It was not uncommon to replace the printer's name and date on the original copper plate when re-issuing it, as re-engraving the entire artwork was unnecessary and undesirable. The engraving offered for sale is a modern re-strike made several years ago directly from the original copper engraving by R & J. Finlay bearing the date 1834. The current owner of the original copper plate has only made 12 re-strikes. Each one has been individually hand colored, faithful in every way to the original. However, this makes each one slightly different and therefore unique. They will likely become as rare as the earlier printings (1816 and 1834). There are very few paintings or prints that depict known and prominent 19th century falconers, certainly not three in the same painting or print. This is truly a unique opportunity to own an edition of this highly desirable and extremely rare illustration of

falconry in 19th century Scotland. References are Schwerdt, Vol III page 179 and Vol IV (frontispiece) and page 179. Harting pages 260-262, Upton (O for a Falconer's voice) page 16 and 17. Siltzer p 333. This is an opportunity to own this rare piece of falconry art in a beautiful hand colored form. There is currently only one copy of the 1834 printing for sale on the internet at \$2,700 and the inscription has been trimmed off making it less desirable.

<sup>xiii</sup> Portraits such as those of Robert Cheeseman by Hans Holbein de Jonge; James VI of Scotland, artist unknown; Duke Christian Ludwig von Braunschweig of Luneberg, artist unknown.

<sup>ix</sup> To the lay reader the species are: a male peregrine (partially moulted), a male sparrowhawk (in mature plumage), a male goshawk (in mature plumage), a male hobby (in mature plumage), a female peregrine (in immature plumage), and a male merlin (in immature plumage).

<sup>x</sup> Whilst photography had begun in the late 1830's the original process required a long exposure and was not any use for live animals that rarely sat still long enough. The ambrotype, named after its developer James Ambrose Cutting who started using the method in 1850, was a collodian process that was far more sensitive and required comparatively short exposures and this enabled the photography of animal subjects.

<sup>xi</sup> This text was illustrated by S. C. Pearson.

<sup>xii</sup> In his *Memoirs of an Artist Naturalist* Lodge wrote "For me, it is far more interesting to paint pictures than to illustrate scientific books. But as the latter are numerous and necessary, let us have as much art in them as possible in order to offset some of the extreme crudities of science. This, at least, is my philosophy." (1946 pp94)

<sup>xiii</sup> 'One great element in heron-hawking, however, was omitted; ... whereas the heron is larger than the hawks, has formidable claws, and, above all, a most frightful dagger of a beak. With this he stabs; but the danger is not as generally supposed, and Sir Walter Scott represented, from a thrust in the air, but on the ground, when the hawks, having let go to save themselves from the shock of the fall, 'make in' to kill the quarry.' (pp141)

<sup>xiv</sup> Whilst a number of the birds of prey do show a blue or bluish colouration in their mature plumage, namely the peregrine (a traditional name for this species was the 'blue' falcon), and the males of the merlin, hobby, hen harrier and the sparrow hawk, the majority of hawks are predominantly brown-grey. This oversight by Bell seems to have caused some offence to Freeman.

<sup>xv</sup> 'Sultan' apparently took in 1845, a total of 25 rooks and 3 heron (Lascelles 1892). This hawk was the subject of a painting by Sonderland, being hooded and seated upon a gloved fist.

<sup>xvi</sup> Hodgson & Co. conducted the library sale on April 26<sup>th</sup> 1928. It is not known to whom the mounted specimens went but the unmounted skins (museum skins) went to the prolific collector Walter Rothchild. His collection is now in New York but a few of Hartings specimens remain in the scientific collection of the British Museum of Natural History. Interestingly Walter Rothchild's home is now the site of the BMNH at Tring.

<sup>xvii</sup> Bewick is referring to Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) whose *Historie Naturelle* published first in the 1760's was a 44 volume encyclopaedia of the natural world.

<sup>xviii</sup> In a further illustration of the tendency towards an anthropomorphic analysis reflecting the patriarchal nature of both science and society at the time, the text continues: 'Different from almost all other kinds, the female of birds of prey is larger and stronger than the male: naturalists have puzzled themselves to assign the reason of this extraordinary property, ...' (pp72)

<sup>xix</sup> 'In recent times, even, some idea of the intrinsic value of a good Hawk may be gathered from the fact that, in Lombardy, it was thought nothing extraordinary for a single Sparrow-Hawk to take for his master from seventy to eighty quails a single day. In the Danubian Provinces and in Hungary, the practice of hunting Quails with Sparrow-Hawks is still in vogue; but with us, the agile bird is left to pursue his prey on his own account.' (pp156). Johns had evidently not become acquainted with the albeit limited, revival of the sport.

<sup>xx</sup> It must not be assumed on this evidence that it was not practiced more widely however, this particular aspect is discussed elsewhere.

<sup>xxi</sup> This preface contained the fiction of an account of hawking by an Emperor Arambombamboberus with Trebizonian eagles, apparently taken from a manuscript in a library of a Grand Sultan.

<sup>xxii</sup> Belany was tried and acquitted of the poisoning and murder of his pregnant wife, a trial that caused much interest in London circles in the 1870's. Interestingly the Times repeatedly refers to him as the author of a book on falconry despite this text being published almost 30 years earlier.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Harting published 35 titles between 1866 and 1912 of which 12 have falconry content.

<sup>xxiv</sup> The list is reproduced below:

England

H.H.the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh – Norfolk

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Lord Lilford – Northamptonshire  
Anderson – Yorkshire  
Brodrick – Devonshire  
Capt. Brooksbank – Yorkshire  
Brewster – Essex  
Coxson – Lancashire  
Hon. Duncombe – Yorkshire  
Evans – Cambridgeshire  
Hawkins-Fisher – Gloucestershire  
Rev. Freeman – Cheshire  
Harting – Middlesex  
Hon. Lascelles – Hampshire  
Mitchell – Middlesex  
Newcombe – Norfolk  
Salvin – Surrey  
Sankey – Kent  
St. Quentin – Yorkshire  
Thompson – Essex  
Rev. Wilmot – Cornwall

Ireland

Corbett  
Capt. Cole Hamilton  
Capt. Dugmore  
Langley

Scotland

Oswald of Auchencruive

''' J.L. Newman is mentioned by Upton (1980) as owning a goshawk called 'Shaya' who in the winter of 1896 took over 200 rabbits.

# Chapter 8

The following is a consideration of the importance that the international dimension of falconry had on the British sport. It has been stated previously in this work that the Empire provided some contact with peoples for whom falconry was an important social practice or a valuable hunting method. India, Iran and Afghanistan are the most prominent in this respect and with the works of Burton, Delme' Radcliffe and Phillot are best documented (discussed briefly in the previous chapter). However British interests in the middle-east also provided an insight into falconry as practiced by the desert Arabs, then predominantly nomadic. Whilst not part of the Empire, what we now know of as northern Turkey, had a tradition of trapping, training and once the hunting season was over, releasing sparrow hawks. This not as display of social significance or status but as an important method to catch the migratory quail which were a vital food source for the poor tribesmen of the region<sup>i</sup>.

#### Solace from abroad

The knowledge that falconry was practiced in other parts of the world was important for the British sportsmen struggling to revive and maintain the sport in the UK during the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The possibility of importing hawks and falcons taken from nests or captured overseas appealed to the notion of the exotic which the sport of falconry had long maintained. Despite the practicalities involved and the knowledge that most of these exotic hawks and falcons would die during the long transport, or fairly quickly once subjected to the British climate. Delme-Radcliffe writing in 1871, records "Even at the present day, with our rapid means of communication, it is difficult enough to transport hawks in such a condition as not to impair their efficiency"<sup>ii</sup>. If these exotic hawks and falcons survived in captivity long enough to train and hunt they would be less suitable than the indigenous raptors of western Europe<sup>iii</sup>. Nonetheless, importation of raptors for falconry

had been a feature of the sport since the earliest records; gyrfalcons from Scandinavia, Iceland and Greenland<sup>iv</sup>, goshawks from the Germanic states or Sweden, sakers from eastern Europe and north eastern Africa, lanners from north Africa and occasionally southern Europe<sup>v</sup> and, barbary falcons from north Africa and the middle east. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century species such as the luggar were imported from India. With the exception of the latter, all are mentioned in falconry texts of the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> century such as Blome and Latham.

Whilst it has been suggested in ornithological works such as Coues *Handbook of Field and General Ornithology. A manual of the Structure and Classification of Birds with Instructions for Collecting and Preserving Specimens* (1890) and later in *Falcons by Village* (1992), that this was a case of mis-identification by those earlier writers. In contrast to this Salvin & Brodrick (1855) present the argument that of all authorities, falconers are the most likely to be able to correctly identify differing species.

As has been discussed previously, the sport's links with ornithology and natural history, made collectors of some falconers. The sport was for them, a part of a much broader interest in birds of prey or even birds and animals in general. Whilst some of this collecting was live trapping for zoological display much was undertaken in the form of collecting shot specimens (Trevor-Battye 1903, Meinertzhagen 1959). Important scientific knowledge was gained from many of the sometimes vast collections of prepared museum skins (discussed in Chapter 8).

#### Importation: hoods, bells & hawks

Another important aspect for the sport was the exchange of equipment or falconry furniture, although most seems to have been imported into Britain rather than manufactured within the UK and

exported abroad. Bells for example were imported from the Dutch professionals but the best quality ones came from India. These were constantly in short supply however as letters from Lascelles to Lilford express regularly “Did you get any bells?” (Lilford letters), and again:

*We get ordinary bells from Mollen to carry on with when we cannot get proper Indian ones, of which I have a few. The good ones are those of this shape - drawing - , but I find them very hard to get. The Maharajah has boxes of them, he gave me some once, but it is hard to get them out of him. I have just got a box from a friend in India, but alas they are state or show bells of silver, highly ornamented but of wretched tone. Would you like a few? There are one or two good ones, but too large for anything but a goshawk. The proper Indian bells will wear for years and never crack. Dutch bells crack like fun. (ibid)*

It has been stated earlier in this work that there are conflicting tales of how the hood, a device that restricts the sight of the visually dominant raptors used in falconry, was introduced into Britain. Falconry literature in the early modern period claimed, and much related literature from the later period restated, that hoods were introduced into western Europe and Britain as a result of the contact with eastern falconers during the Crusades. Turberville and Latham assert this in the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, whilst Salvin & Broderick (1855) and Fisher (1871). However Frederick II claims the hood was brought into Europe by eastern falconers gathered at his court (trans. Wood & Fyfe 1943). The romance of the former seems more lyrical but the latter more probable.

The hood is in effect a management tool in a similar way as a bridle is for a horse: it enables a level of control to be exerted. The hood, by encasing the head of the bird in a light-tight leather construction, effectively places the hawk or falcon in darkness, thus they are not



disturbed or frightened nor indeed, do they wish to chase quarry when it is not appropriate for them to do so. In early training restricting the hawk's sight enables the falconer to tame the creature without confronting or terrifying it into submission<sup>vi</sup>. In the east hawks and falcons were 'seeled' in early training to achieve much the same outcome as the hood provides. 'Seeling' however requires the lower eyelid of the raptor to be pierced with a needle and some waxed thread passed through it and tied on the top of the bird's head, thus drawing up the eyelid to obscure its sight. The thread is gradually loosened allowing the hawk to see more of the world of man as it becomes tamer. Whilst the technique was evidently known to the Victorian falconers (Michell 1900, Salvin & Broderick 1855), it was not one that seems much used. The British and the Dutch certainly preferred to make use of the hood.

In the Medieval and early modern representations of falconry that show hoods rarely is there enough detail to enable any reasonable assessment of the type or pattern used. However the woodcuts in Blome's *Hawking or Faulconry* (1686) show hoods that are certainly similar to those subsequently known as the Dutch pattern, but Ferrara's Baldassare Etense 'Family with Falcon'<sup>vii</sup>, depicts a hood of a quite different style. Pero Lopez de Ayala (Trans. Cummins 1986) discusses differing types of leather suitable for hood making. During the reign of James IV of Scotland hoods were obtained from some shoemakers, the King paying differing prices for leather to be used for hoods<sup>viii</sup>. D'arcussia a nobleman from Provence, whose text was published first in 1643 (Trans. Loft 2003), talks of hoods obtained in Paris, as much later does Harting writing in 1894. Indeed the latter goes as far as to publish an address from where hoods could be ordered.

Hoods utilised in British falconry of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century were predominantly those of Dutch pattern and manufacture<sup>ix</sup>. The Mollen family, renown trappers and suppliers of passage peregrines

(mentioned elsewhere), made hoods of the traditional Dutch pattern. Salvin & Broderick (1855) call this the 'common hood'. Landseer's undated drawing entitled 'Hooded Falcon' depicts the Dutch hood in some detail. This style of hood was a comparatively heavy and stiff construction consisting of a main body into which was cut an opening for the falcon's beak. For the eye-pieces slightly lighter leather was used and covered with felt. Traditionally red felt was used for game hawks whilst green was used for hawks that took other quarry. The hood was sewn with stitching through the ends of the leather allowing for the joints to be butt-ended and not overlapping. Once the hood was sewn and light tight, it was soaked and blocked onto a specifically carved 'hood-block' to shape it. Braces that closed and opened the hood and kept it securely on the head of the falcon, were threaded through slits in the back and the hood topped with a short feather plume often bound at the base with appropriately coloured wool. The popular use of the Dutch hood may be linked to the pre-eminence of professionals from the Low Countries. From Thornton's era until the demise of the Old Hawking Club, numerous Dutch professionals were engaged in Britain, they brought with them the traditions of using falcons trapped during the passage and the methods to best use them. It is reasonable to suggest that they also made use of the hawk furniture and equipment that they were familiar with, rather than adopting any distinctly British patterns.

A lighter hood, less elaborate and far easier to fashion, is described by Salvin & Broderick (*ibid*). They attribute the pattern to Newcombe and describe the manufacture in detail. It features the same bracing system as that used on the Dutch or common hood (see above). This hood is not featured to any extent in the art of the period, and where hoods are represented they are almost without exception those of the Dutch type. In Van De Wall's much illustrated work on the Loo Hawking Club (2004), a club that Newcombe was instrumental in initiating, the hoods depicted are all the traditional

Dutch type.

Hoods of a very different pattern were imported from India.

Described firstly in British literature in *The Field* in 1890, these were of a much lighter construction made from a single piece of leather. These hoods had a single lace that tightened the hood slightly, but never very securely on the head of falcon. In the Indian tradition trained hawks and falcons were always in the company of the falconer or his assistants, therefore it was not necessary to have a hood that was completely secure; was the bird to remove it by scratching or shaking its head, the hood was simply replaced by the attendant. In Europe hawks and falcons were not always in the company of their keepers therefore it was important to have a hood that the bird could not remove on it's own, thus the bracing system on the Dutch pattern described briefly in the previous paragraph.

Lascelles describes the Indian hood in the 1992 Badminton Library volume on Coursing and Falconry. He asserts it is light and easy to make, however there is no evidence that this pattern of hood was ever in common usage at this time. Certainly the O.H.C. was still purchasing hoods from Mollen, and all the art work and the very few photographs available show falcons wearing the Dutch style hood.

In the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Vol. IV 1908), Lieut-Colonel D.C. Phillott provides a detailed description and reproduces patterns for what he calls 'the Eastern hoods'. They are predominantly what has been previously described as Indian style hoods, but with the addition of a style used in Persia and another from Hyderabad, Deccan. The Indian or Panjab hood is described as weighing less than half that of a Dutch hood. Phillott proceeds to claim that they have several advantages over the traditional hood used in Britain, however he does not articulate what these are. He does acknowledge the complaints, previously mentioned, that the hawks or falcons can remove the Indian hoods from their heads, but

he believes that this 'vice' is as a consequence of poor hood training.

Phillott (ibid) provides some discussion on the particular style of Eastern hood, best suited to specific species. Peregrines are best served by the pattern deriving from Karpurthala and another used by the Mir Ali Murad from the Sindh. The 'Mughli' or three cornered pattern is claimed to be appropriate for Lagar falcons although Phillott says he has no personal knowledge of this suitability. He describes some of the nuances in using the patterns by cutting either inside the lines to suit a slightly small falcon or outside certain lines should the recipient have a large beak, and also the method of sewing. However it is unlikely, given the evident status of a British military officer serving in the Indian sub-continent, that he would ever have actually made a hood himself. Whilst not stated he is certainly describing how the hoods were constructed by the Indian leather workers who produced them<sup>x</sup>.

Phillott (ibid) proceeds to describe an intermediate form of hood that was found in the Middle East. Known as a Persian or Bahrayni hood, this was also fashioned from a single piece of light and quite soft leather but it featured braces that tightened securely. Phillott states that these braces work in an identical manner to those braces that open and close a Dutch hood. In the Arab tradition of falconry, the trained falcons were accompanied at all times, as in the Indian manifestation, yet for reasons as yet not understood, the hood developed by the Arabs featured these secure braces.

Other styles of hoods have various adaptations; those from Northern Afghanistan, did not feature braces or lacing at all. They were made of stiff leather and did not tighten, but stayed on the hawks head due to the tailored fit. These were rarely seen in Britain.

British falconers were pragmatic in the use of hawk furniture, and the hood is an example of such. Hoods were important where flying falcons was concerned, however they were a consumable product and were often lost, dropped and stepped on, or gnawed by mice during the close season storage when not in use (Fisher 1901). Once out of shape or worn, hoods were useless, thus regular replacements were required. Professional falconers employed by either Club or individual, may have been required to manufacture hoods as and when they were needed but there is no available evidence that this was the case. As mentioned previously hoods were available from the Low Countries and trapped passage hawks were supplied with hoods to the British market, specifically the Old Hawking Club. The surviving invoices (Upton 1980) detail charges for the hoods in addition to those for the trapping and manning of the hawks.

The import into Britain of bells and some hawks and falcons provided an avenue for some Indian hoods to be brought in. As mentioned previously, with the details of patterns, sizes and instructions for the making of Indian hoods published in *The Field* (1890), some utility in the traditional Indian hood was demonstrated. Eventually in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century some falconers experimented and adaptations were made to enable this type of hood to be of more use in the British tradition. Because the Indian hood did not require 'blocking', this produced a hood simpler to make than the traditional Dutch one that was lighter and thus accepted more readily by the hawk or falcon. Its major drawback was that Europeans required it to be secured on the head of the bird. Despite what seems to have been a discernable step forward for hoods in manufacture, cost and availability, the strength of the 'tradition' ensured that many falconers continued to purchase and use the Dutch style hood. Indeed it became the orthodoxy that the Dutch hood fitted falcons best, whilst the adapted Indian hood that became known as the Anglo-Indian hood, was considered

appropriate for the shortwings or true hawks. It was not until the 1930s that Dutch style braces were added<sup>xi</sup>. Once trapping passage falcons had ceased at Valkenswaard in the years following the Great War, Mollen ceased to make hoods and the supply of the Dutch type of hoods made there stopped<sup>xii</sup>. The home manufactured Anglo-Indian hood became the obvious choice for British falconers, thus ending an extended period of Dutch influence in British falconry.

### The imperial imagination

The imagery that accompanied reports of the sport in exotic parts of the Empire was highly significant for both practicing falconers and for a wider audience. During the mid to late part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and closely linked to the growth of Empire, there was a growing demand for literature on the hunting sports abroad. Whilst Ritvo's (1990) analysis does not encompass falconry specifically, it demonstrates the centrality of power in the discourses of the imperialist project. As Said (1993) demonstrated in a broader context, British dominion was to embrace all aspects of conquered lands from the social, cultural and economic through to the existent nature. All would be subjugated to the cult of imperialism that demanded clear evidence to support the prevalent belief that British society and indeed, British humanity, was superior and occupied the zenith of all human endeavour.

Falconry stood as evidence of these demands in a manner far deeper than the import of a species of raptor to be flown by an aspiring falconer, it represented a fundamental imperialism with regard to man and nature. The very act of taking, training, and then hunting with a hawk or falcon, some might express it as subjugation, illustrated man's dominion extremely clearly. A creature of the most solitary, wild, and intractable nature, was taken into the society of man and conditioned in such a way that it

became docile, tolerant to the proximity of people, and then it was released to the elements in order to hunt, and then to all intents and purposes returned of its own will. That this was achieved without force or beating, and that the hawk or falcon still exhibited enough of its 'red in tooth and claw' nature to kill was surely a triumph, and a symbolic one at that. This wonder is expressed repeatedly in Campbell (1773), Wilton (1864) and Freeman (1871), amongst others.

This expression of man's dominion over nature reinforced the notion of an inherent hierarchy which in turn was extended to support the need for British expansion. The world required Britain for its civilization as much as Britain required the world for its material wealth: a justification indeed.

Thus it has been asserted that falconry itself was an illustration of a fundamental imperialism, it is important now to address the manner in which the falconry experienced outside the British Isles was related to the domestic manifestation. Burton (1852) tells of an instance when out hawking in Sindh with an Ameer<sup>xiii</sup>. The party were flying Shikra<sup>xiv</sup>, an accipiter not found in western Europe but comparatively common in the East. It was similar to the European sparrow hawk but neither as fast nor as nervous. Spotting pigeons in a tree the Ameer took a Shikra from one of his nephews and cast it off at them. Unfortunately the small hawk had not been conditioned correctly, thus it was not interested in hunting and merely followed the pigeons as they made their escape. The hawk then flew to a tree and took stand on a branch, ignoring the subsequently offered lure<sup>xv</sup>. The Ameer was very displeased with his nephew whose responsibility the hawk had been, and as an expression of this anger demanded a bow and shot it. "So it happened that the Shikrah, who was quietly 'mantling' upon a clear branch in a nice sunny place, had the life summarily knocked out of her by the Ameer's tako<sup>xvi</sup>." (ibid pp21) This exhibition of the power

of rank had no equal in the British context of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, where such action would have been considered quite irrational<sup>xvii</sup>. Furthermore the cultural rebuke and symbolism of having had one's hawk shot by a social superior was as foreign to the 19<sup>th</sup> century falconer in Britain as was the context of the Sindh.

Burton experienced and wrote about falconry in the east, not as an active participant but as an interested spectator. His knowledge of falconry was largely confined to the east but supplemented by a reading of Sebright (1826). He had attempted to train a kestrel as a boy and had managed through poor husbandry and ignorance, to kill the small falcon. This memory was to prevent him from becoming a practitioner of the sport in his later life (Burton 1852). The recipient of a commission in the 18<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, Bombay Infantry purchased for him by his father, Richard Francis Burton served initially in the Sindh. He was not typical of his fellow officers in the Indian army becoming a serious and committed orientalist<sup>xviii</sup>. He had a gift for languages and became proficient in many languages and dialects, this in turn enabled him to experience some of the cultural practices denied to his fellow officers. Indeed so proficient was he that Burton was able to pass himself off as a native and travel amongst them unrecognised.

Burton was highly attentive to his subject, as well as being very well read. Indeed he reports the searching out and reading of falconry works whilst studying at University. He was able to make keen observation on the natural history of species encountered in his falconry expeditions in the Valley of the Indus. He identified and described the hawks and falcons utilised there with clarity and a familiarity born of understanding many of their characteristics both in the falconry setting and indeed the wild. Their relationship with the prey species is also articulated. His work is however, fundamentally predicated upon the native articulation of the sport and of course the European accompanying them. Quoting the



Ameer after he had looked carefully at the guests headware, Burton retells "... nothing a hawk hates so much as a mullah's head-gear, except, perhaps – except – except the great things like ladles that you Sahibs wear on your heads" (pp15). The observation is germane given they were to go hawking with a Shahbaz, a type of Goshawk typically with highly nervous and suspicious nature. Such a hawk, faced with a European with comparatively pale skin, dressed distinctly and riding in a different style to its Indian trainers, would doubtless be a liability to fly and more than likely to fly off and sulk in a tree or worse still fly 'clean out of the County' to use an expression borrowed from Lascelles.

Burton describes the process of taking, rearing until fledged, hacking, recapturing and training in brief but pertinent detail, and asserts that "The eyess or nestling is treated much the same way here as in Europe." (pp28) The passage hawk is similarly treated but utilising the technique of 'seeling', as discussed earlier. He continues "Then comes the operation of reclaiming the bird – one of the difficult parts of falconry. For the hawk must be tamed, and not cowed" (pp30). This an observation from an, albeit learned, British Officer with the advantages of a University education and a analytical mind, about an esoteric hunting sport in the east. It is remarkable because it could have been made about the preparation of hawks and falcons for hawking with Thornton or Berners and the Falconers Club in the 1780s, or Newcome and the Royal Loo Club in the Low Countries during the 1840s, or somewhat later about the Old Hawking Club under the guidance of Lascelles at the turn of the century. It is clear that Burton did not learn the nuances of falconry in either Britain or during his childhood in Europe, he observed them for the most part in the Sindh, in India. An illustration of a cultural practice that for all the separation in geographical terms, shows clear convergent evolution: the raw materials of the sport were constant; the social setting distinct, yet the pursuit of the same objective resulted in a shared culture. As Frederick II (trans. Wood

& Fyfe 1943) maintained over six hundred years earlier, falconers share a common language.

Observations made in India on the form and structure of hunting with hawks and falcons, is remarkable in its similarity to those made in Britain and Europe at that time. The retelling by Burton (1852), of a days hawking starting with breakfast, and proceeding with the preparations and thence to the field in search of quarry, can be compared with the Loo hawking club diaries (discussed previously) and the similarity is remarkable. Whilst obvious distinctions such as the times of day most auspicious for flying at a chosen quarry do exist, the context, process and celebration of the activity is unmistakable.

What is articulated by Burton is also interesting in terms of a sporting ethos. He decries shooting as being "... very uninteresting to any but those endowed with an undue development of Destructiveness." (ibid ppxxii). Furthermore he asks his readers not to think of his descriptions of the quarry being killed, and particularly of the death of an antelope, given a detailed description, an illustration in the text (pp56), and the subject for Wolf's painting of 'Goshawk and Gazelle', as "marvellously entertaining and incredible" (ppxxiv). His point of view was a very modern one, echoed almost half a century later by Lascelles (1892). Burton's writing on eastern falconry culture, despite an undoubtedly limited readership at the time was important to falconers, interested field sportsmen, and orientalists.

### Exotic influences

A quite different import from the east with strong falconry interests was Duleep Singh, the Maharaja of Lahore. Declared Maharaja at five years of age, his reign was as short as his childhood was privileged. The Punjab of his day was an unstable state with a

powerful, if often unpaid, regular army. Considerable British agitation along the Punjab's southern border, ultimately lead to the first Anglo-Sikh war in 1846. This resulted in the British annexation of half of the Maharaja's province. A resulting revolt lead to the second Anglo-Sikh war three years later and the British deposed Singh, demanding he resign his title to the sovereignty of the Punjab, give up claims on the priceless Koh-i-noor diamond<sup>xix</sup>. Duleep Singh was granted a pension by the British government<sup>xx</sup> and moved to Britain. The settlement provided £40,000 per annum, a considerable sum and after a good deal of moving from location to location<sup>xxi</sup>, he was granted the tenancy of Elveden Estate in Norfolk.

Lascelles (1892) records that Duleep Singh engaged the professional falconer John Barr<sup>xxii</sup>, and set about gathering a collection or 'stud' of hawks or falcons to match his aspirations. His ambition was to match his Mogul ancestors in their hawking exploits. This entailed an extended tour of the Mediterranean where with sparrowhawks trapped in Syria, trained and flown in Italy he and Barr hunted migrating quail. In 1869 Barr was dispatched to Valkenswaard to be taught the techniques of hawk trapping, and thence sent to Iceland in search of the gyrfalcon. It is reported that Barr returned with thirty three of this species.

Singh's vanity outstripped his, and indeed Barr's ability to manage such a collection that when seen by the visiting Lascelles and Clough Newcome the collection numbered the above mentioned gyrfalcons, a number of peregrines, a saker, two goshawks and some other species. Lascelles (ibid pp 314) recorded that "Alas, even at this stage, the asthma was rife amongst these noble hawks and by the close of the year, almost the whole team were defunct or useless with hardly a record to their name of wild quarry taken."

In his early days in Britain Duleep Singh was mentioned regularly in

the Court Circulars, published in (1858, 1863) and was made a Knight of the 'Most Exalted Order of the Star of India' (*The Times* 1861). He seems to have become a favourite of Queen Victoria's, however this was not to last. However he attended the Royal garden parties (*The Times* 1878) even after falling from favour, illustrating that he was clearly considered nobility, if both foreign and indeed deposed.

Whilst he was a fine shot he exhibited an ineptitude and lack of judgement in falconry matters that was matched only by his ambition. There was a schism between the Maharaja's reputation and the reality of his falconry. In a heated letter complaining to Colonel Delme Radcliffe about his article praising Duleep Singh and published in *The Zoologist* (1878). Harting wrote;

*'One of the two most successful falconers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.'* Why, everybody who knows anything whatsoever in the matter will know that the very OPPOSITE is the fact. Namely, the Maharaja was unsuccessful to the last degree and that after wasting a great deal of time and money, he gave it up, on no other account than want of success, as he often told me.

And he continued;

*I have good reason to know that the Maharaja's proceedings choked the Royal Family off hawking and impressed them very badly regarding the sport. Very lately I have had a conversation with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Connaught on the subject, in which the former spoke particularly of the Maharaj's utter failure.*

(Harting letters)

Duleep Singh found that his pension from the British Government was not sufficient to meet his rather extravagant needs, and was in financial difficulties by the late 1870s. There were two significant

'Sales of Goods' advertised in The Times<sup>xxiii</sup>. The first in 1883, disposed of much of the Maharaja and his wife's jewellery, whilst this was followed in 1886 by a sale of their furniture. He initiated an effort to have the British annexation of the Punjab declared illegal and ultimately became involved in a failed plot together with Russian and Irish revolutionaries to take back his throne from the British. He became domiciled in Paris being exiled from both his British home and the place of his birth.

Singh, in failing health, sought a reconciliation with his Queen and Empress, Victoria, who granted a full pardon on August 1<sup>st</sup> 1890. However the Maharaja's health deteriorated and he died in a Paris hotel in 1893<sup>xxiv</sup>. The disloyalty of his last years were wiped from the slate, and his Anglicised children were accepted as minor, if financially constrained, aristocracy (Cannadine 1980). The sons were educated at Eton and Cambridge and took commissions in the British Army<sup>xxv</sup>. His daughters educated at Magdalene, Cambridge, with the exception of his eldest who returned to India and settled in Lahore.

Thus ended the saga of Duleep Singh, falconry's last direct link with, and high status conduit to, the elevated echelons of British society. The Maharaja's exotic nobility of birth and by all accounts considerable charm, had given him access to the British Royal family, something no falconer had been able to achieve in any measure for more than a hundred and fifty years. To him fell the opportunity to both interest and educate the Court about modern falconry. It is ironic that this chance often wished for and seen as a desired component of the survival of the sport (Salvin & Freeman 1859) should become available to a man whose limited ability and lack of success in the field actually 'choked them off' and 'impressed them very badly' (Harting letters).

## An intellectual project

To return to Phillott; an advertisement in *The Times* (1909) details *A Persian Treatise on Falconry* (Baz-Nama-Yi Nasiri) translated by the aforementioned Lieut-Colonel. The work is described “this interesting book, with its curious admixture of Oriental fatalism and shrewd bird-craft, forms one of the most ‘interesting’ contributions to the literature of Falconry. It should be read by every English falconer.” It retailed at £1.1s. net. and was published in the preceeding year to the advert. Phillott wrote throughout his adult life whilst a serving officer in India, his work is varied but predominantly focused upon language and culture he experienced in the East particularly in India and Persia. The Baz-Nama-Yi Nasiri was part of a body of work devoted to falconry and written between 1906 & 1910, with most of this published in the Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal<sup>xxvi</sup>.

Whilst there is no evidence that Phillott practiced falconry in Britain after his return from India on retirement in 1912, he was evidently both well read in terms of the English literature on the subject; “Freeman in his *Practical Falconry* states that in England it kills mice, and also cockchafers on the wing.” (*Note on the common English merlin*. Asiatic Society Publications Journal Vol. III 1907) and a practical falconer; “I have had a series of excellent flights with a wild merlin ...” (ibid). His ‘Notes on ...’ articles in the Asiatic Society’s journals frequently refer to falcons he had in his possession and that he had trained. He was a respected academic, lecturing in Hindustani at Cambridge from 1912 until his death in 1930, and was considered a most practical and sensible man by his contemporaries including Henry Savage-Landor, who writes about him in *Across Coveted Lands* (1902).

Phillott’s falconry work falls into two categories and together with the allied ornithological observations and miscellaneous hunting

show a comprehensive engagement with Indian and Persian culture. Whilst it is difficult to assess, the likelihood is that this insightful and intelligent body of work never reached British falconers in any numbers. There are no details of the print run of the Baz-Nama-Yi Nasiri, but given the scarcity of this book in its original form, it must have had a very limited circulation. Furthermore the publications of the Asiatic Society of Bengal were not widely available in Britain and certainly not outside academic circles.

### Expertise abroad

Another military officer serving in India, but one that pre-dates Phillott, was Lieut-Colonel E. Delme-Radcliffe of the 88<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers. He was more directly significant than the aforementioned, partly due to an active falconry career in Britain and a popular, if somewhat limited, publication record. Delme-Radcliffe wrote the falconry entry for the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1879). On leaving the army he returned to Britain but was soon again abroad engaged as an agent to a Prussian Grand Duke at Darmstadt<sup>xxvii</sup>. An ornithologist, taxidermist, and collector of some note he maintained a long correspondence with the similarly interested Lord Lilford. In 1871 he justified his writing of a pamphlet on the hawks and falcons utilised in Indian falconry, by way of a response to the enquiries on the subject. He had received these after the publication of a letter he had written to the editor of *The Field* on June 10<sup>th</sup> of the previous year.

Delme-Radcliffe was referred to by Lascelles (1892 pp242) as “a falconer second to none” but while widely experienced he became particularly noted for his expertise with goshawks. He states in *Notes on Falconidae* ... however “I never had much liking (as compared with long-winged hawks) for the goshawks, or any of the short-winged lot; and if I had never been in India I should probably

quite agree with Sir J. Sebright, ...<sup>xxviii</sup>. The goshawk was highly prized in Indian falconry and Delme-Radcliffe and Burton refer to it at length. Again from Notes on Falconidae ... "The GOSHAWK (*A. palumbarius*) is generally throughout India the most valued of all hawks by native falconers, and still commands a regular market price." (ibid *capitaisation as original*)

Delme-Radcliffe understood the large shortwing and in the Indian context appreciated the breadth of quarry it could be used to take: "The goshawk is flown in India at hares, cranes, geese, ducks, teal, hubara, florikin, peafowl, jungle fowl, partridges, crows, kites, neophrons, mynas, and a great variety of other birds, and sometimes ravine deer" (1871). He recounts tales of the hawks intelligence and reliability. He makes particular reference to them being "exceedingly quick of hearing" (ibid) and responding to the voice or footfall of the falconer. Delme-Radcliffe's observations are however, those of a British falconer about his own falconry, with few references to how the sport was conducted by the natives themselves. His insights, whilst keenly judged, could have been made on the moors of Caithness or on Salisbury plain.

Where his attention is turned to Indian falconry, he describes a technique for throwing a sparrowhawk in the manner of throwing a dart. This involved clasping the hawk in the palm of the left hand, in the orient hawks being carried on the right hand, transferring it to the right from whence it is launched at quarry. In this way the Indian falconer could be very selective about the specific quarry the hawk was directed towards, and it was believed, provide a impetus to the flight (ibid). The halsband is also described by Delme-Radcliffe, this was "... a sort of collar, made of light leather or plaited silk, worn on the hawk's neck, a cord attached to the collar being held between the finger and thumb ... These halsbands were very often handsomely jewelled, and of fine workmanship" (ibid). This device was used to help propel the hawk into the air at the appropriate



moment, keeping the head and shoulders horizontal as the hand was thrown forward vigorously.

Delme-Radcliffe exhibited the usual set of conflicted values and habits seen in many of his contemporaries; he sent Lilford a pair of honey buzzards that he had shot and mounted together with collecting their eggs; is recorded as shooting eagle owls, a species he was very fond of, because they were pre-dating a peregrine eyrie; he developed a passionate interest in the hobby and watched them at length, he also shot numbers of them without compunction; he wrote his observations in a rational and ordered manner and the ornithological section of his *Notes on Falconidae* ... (ibid), is free from the common errors that were often seen in natural history literature of the time. He concludes the aforementioned pamphlet with a section on the "... wanton and wasteful destruction of game in the Himalayas." (ibid). The appeal decries shooting habits of both the British officers and natives and demands the introduction of a 'shooting season' to safeguard the wild species. Whilst he recognises and doubtless enjoined the shooting whilst there he concludes;

*As it is, it is sad to hear, by the accounts of English officers who shot in the Himalayas some fifteen or twenty years ago, as well as from natives, of the sweeping destruction that has come upon the game birds – birds too, that exists nowhere else in the world, except in caged specimens in menageries – and many of the species are not even so represented. (ibid - there are no page numbers in 'Notes on Falconidae...')*

Again a very modern sentiment articulated by a falconer immersed in the culture of Victorian ornithology, taxidermy and collection, but one that was born out of his extensive shooting experiences. Delme-Radcliffe was certainly the doyen of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century falconry desire for exotic sporting tales and affirmation that the sport

was flourishing abroad.

### Witnessing the sport

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century falconry was still demonstrated to dignitaries when they visited parts of the Empire in which it was practiced. Major Archer toured 'upper' India in 1834, where he "... joined in their falconry, followed their chivalry" (The Times ). In 1876 the Prince of Wales visited Lahore during a stay in India, and was entertained with hunting activities. Whilst some of the sport on offer was reported as quite poor, the falconry was judged as being of good quality (The Times 1876). During an Indian tour by the Duke of Connaught, that was to be filmed, an exhibition of falconry together with hunting with trained cheetah was arranged (The Times 1921). Beyond the confines of British interest there was still the established currency in falconry as a sport of the social elite: during a trip through Russian Central Asia, a British delegation was treated to some falconry near the Oasis of Khiva (The Times 1885). But increasingly the sport was being articulated as part of the wonders of nature: In *The Times* (1921) article entitled 'Indian Wild Life. Beasts of Prey. Monkeys, Deer, Birds and Snakes.' by E. Kay Robinson, it was explained that "... with the abundance of native birds of prey it is only natural that falconry should flourish."

Exotic falconry was regularly reported in *The Times*, and to a lesser extent *The Field*, *The Illustrated London News* and *The Sporting Gazette*, this is in part due to the romantic nature of the popular vision of the sport and was not directly related to the British manifestation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and part of course due to the attraction of and interest in the Empire. Indeed, save advertisements detailing the sale of falconry books both antiquarian and contemporary, exotic references to falconry outstripped those relating to British falconry in *The Times* from 1850 until the end of

the period investigated by this study, 1927.

The British career of Maharaja Duleep Singh and his falconry aspirations have been overviewed. His position of rank allowed him access to the inner circles of the British hierarchy, indeed he was close to Queen Victoria for a period. However it has been expressed that falconry did not benefit from this access to the Royal Family due to Singh's lack of ability in the very sport that he devoted so much time and available resources to. Ultimately this exotic Indian Prince was no more important in the British context than was the sport he professed to champion.

In this chapter the three major literary sources on exotic or Eastern falconry have been examined in both nature and influence. Burton and Phillott have been seen to be both academic and culturally oriented, whilst Delme-Radcliffe is considered somewhat more imperialist in nature, essentially reporting on British falconry abroad rather than oriental falconry itself. Of the three, Phillott's work received the least exposure being far from populist in nature and published predominantly in an academic journal of limited interest to British sportsmen. The translation of the Baz-Nama-Yi Nasiri entitled '*A Persian Treatise on Falconry*' (1908) was publicly available but did not receive a wide circulation. Burton's single work '*Falconry in the Valley of the Indus*' (1852), was more available and apparently quite widely read amongst falconers, however it was Delme-Radcliffe who was the most widely recognised of those who had witnessed eastern falconry. This, as stated earlier, was predicated on his reputation as a falconer established in Britain and his connections that arose out of that. His writing was not extensive although the falconry entry in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* popularised his name beyond the restrictions of the sport. His pamphlet, *Notes on the Falconidae used in India in Falconry* (1871), was often used as an authoritative source on the subject.

The vision of a falconry unencumbered by its peripheral position in the sporting culture at home, was a solace to British falconers. It helped to maintain them in the knowledge that the continuation of the sport was possible. Whilst to those outside the sport, the regular yet infrequent reporting of exotic falconry, often in the context of the elite, and from distant lands confirmed the sport in the romantic and pseudo historical context. This conformed to the stereotype of falconry often portrayed by the non-specialist popular reporting in Britain.

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<sup>i</sup> In years where the quail had not migrated in significant numbers, the sparrow hawks were not released but killed and eaten, such was the necessity to provide food for the tribes (Hutchens: The Penny Gazette 1837).

<sup>ii</sup> Lieut-Colonel Delme-Radcliffe's pamphlet publication of *'Notes on the Falconidae used in India in Falconry'* (1871) does not contain page numbers.

<sup>iii</sup> Non-European species often failed to adapt well to the climate: some were ill-matched to the available quarry for trained raptors; the European traditions of training and husbandry was oriented towards familiar species, exotics frequently asked questions of the falconers that they were not equipped to answer.

<sup>iv</sup> The naturalist and ornithologist John Hancock confirmed the existence of distinct species within the gyrfalcon group in *Annals of Natural History* (Feb 1854). Salvin & Brodrick point out however that both Icelandic and Greenland falcons were "... *precisely alike in size and comparative proportions, which is perhaps more than can be said of any other two distinct species known, and would go far to incline us to the belief that they are merely varieties of the same bird*" (1855 pp 87).

<sup>v</sup> The Lanner much mentioned in medieval texts, may well have had a range that encompassed most of western Europe until the climatic changes that occurred in the 1300s. There is documentary evidence claiming that it was trapped for falconry purposes in Ireland (Oggins 2004). Frederick II (Wood & Fyfe 1943) claimed that it bred in what is now known as Germany, Norway, France & Spain.

<sup>vi</sup> Hawks and falcons are very prone to stress therefore any technique that assisted in avoiding stress was highly regarded.

<sup>vii</sup> This painting is an interesting study of a late 15<sup>th</sup> century Italian family with mother and child grouped together with the husband and father who is holding a hooded hawk, probably a male goshawk. The hawk is an indicator of social rank.

<sup>viii</sup> Portuguese leather was most sought after, costing nine shillings per skin; two shillings was paid for tanned sheep skin from Scotland. The shoe maker who made the hoods was paid two shillings per item: *'til a sowtar that sewyt halk hudis to the King'* Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland. Further on in the manuscript a payment of fifty six shillings is detailed to a *'Richard Justice, Inglishman (sic) for the making of halk hudis'* In its day this was a considerable sum.

<sup>ix</sup> Landseer's 1837 sketch of a falconer carrying a peregrine owned by illustrates a Dutch pattern hood (see Appendix iii).

<sup>x</sup> That the patterns were reproduced in both the *Asiatic Journal* and previously in *The Field* does suggest however, that their may have been an interest in the British manufacture of these hoods.

<sup>xi</sup> Mavrogordato & Rutledge published the patterns and instructions for the 'Anglo-Indian' hood braced in the Dutch style, in *The Falconer*, *The Journal of the British Falconers Club* No. 2 1937

<sup>xii</sup> Karl Mollen kept a number of notebooks two of which survive. The first is an address book started in the 1880s that contains nearly 500 names and addresses, 40 of which are prominent British falconers of the period. The second notebook contains details of payment due and orders for the period 1912 – 1925, when he ceased work as a hawk catcher and manufacturer of hawking furniture & hoods. The cost of a hood in his final year of operation was four shillings.

- <sup>xiii</sup> A local ruler. An Ameer was a powerful hereditary position and member of the Indian elite.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Burton (1852) spells this 'Shikrah'
- <sup>xv</sup> All hawks and falcons were trained to return to a lure, a method of recall that guaranteed the hawk a reward, and was very useful if anything was to go wrong in the field.
- <sup>xvi</sup> A *tako* was a blunt arrow shod with a piece of horn (Burton *ibid*).
- <sup>xvii</sup> Trained hawks and falcons in British culture had been what Thomas (1983) considered 'privileged species', until the advent of game preservation.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Burton is remembered for his life spent travelling in the east, in Africa, and to a lesser extent in North America. He wrote prodigiously with the material on falconry remaining a tiny proportion of his work.
- <sup>xix</sup> The Koh-i-noor diamond was the subject of much intrigue, but eventually became the personal property of Queen Victoria when she became the Empress of India. It passed to the British crown on Victoria's death. It is reputed to be unlucky for any male wearer and has, subsequent to its arrival in Britain, only been worn by female members of the Royal family. It is currently set at the front of the crown of the late Queen Elizabeth, Queen mother (*Historic Royal Palaces*).
- <sup>xx</sup> Singh was bound by a legal document to remain a good and loyal servant of the British government.
- <sup>xxi</sup> At one time he took up residence at Mulgrave Castle, Whitty, Yorkshire (*The Times* 1862).
- <sup>xxii</sup> John Barr, from a Scots family of Falconers, was "*probably the cleverest professional falconer of this century*." (Lascelles 1892). He was renowned for his ability to both trap wild hawks and falcons and also to find and recover lost ones.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> In addition to these, and after Singh's death further items of his property were to be sold (*The Times* 1894) including several books and manuscripts: Native Indian Falconry; The Indian System of Hawking; The Goshawk and its Treatment (an English manuscript). In addition "*a collection of curious items, the property of the late Maharaja Duleep Singh*."
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Duleep Singh's body was buried on his former estate at Elveden in St Andrew's & St Patrick's Church despite his rejoining the Sikh faith some 7 years earlier.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Prince Victor Albert, Singh's eldest son was Queen Victoria's godson.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Lieut-Colonel Douglas Craven Phillott's works falconry and related subjects: Asiatic Society's Publications. Journal (New Series) Vol.II 1906  
Note on the common Kestrel  
Notes on the Huma or Lammergeyer  
Notes on the Houbara or Bastard  
Vol.III 1907  
Chapters on hunting dogs and cheetahs, etc.  
Methods of catching wild fowls, herons and other water birds in the Punjab, Sindh, and Kashmir  
Indian hawking-gloves  
Note on the blue or common heron  
Note on Indian hawk-bells  
Note on the common English merlin  
Notes on the lagar falcon  
Note on the Shaugarf falcon  
Note on the red-headed merlin  
Note on the Saker or Cherrug falcon  
Notes on the Shahin falcon  
On hunting dogs, etc.  
Things which the owners of hawks should avoid, etc.  
Vol.IV 1908  
Eastern hoods for hawks  
Note on the Drum in Falconry  
Note on the Peregrine falcon  
Vol.VI 1910  
Vocabulary of technical falconry terms in Urdu, Persian, and Arabic
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Prior to taking up this appointment, Delme-Radcliffe had sought Lilford's assistance in gaining employment as the agent for the Maharaja Duleep Singh.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Sebright (1826) had famously stated that he could not understand anyone using a goshawk for sport.

## Epilogue

## Epilogue

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century history of falconry after 1927, falls outside the remit of this research, however a brief summation of the sport's passage into contemporary Britain seems appropriate. This work effectively ends with the formation of a club that was brought into being after the demise of the *Old Hawking Club*.

### The British Falconers' Club

The new organisation did not aspire to much more than to bring together the like-minded, however *The British Falconers' Club* was to become the major hawking institution for some 50 years. The new club did not wish to own a stud or hawks or falcons, as had the earlier clubs, it did not seek to prescribe the sport in the manner of the OHC, or indeed provide the sport as hitherto had been the purpose of the clubs. No longer was there an expectation of hiring a club professional. *The British Falconers' Club* or BFC as it was to become known, was constituted around the notion that falconry was best organised, maintained and funded by those private individuals who would practice such. Falconers were certainly expected and encouraged to become members but it was not the object of the Club to organise the sport. This was the culmination of the trend towards the individualisation and in a particular sense privatisation of falconry, the trend towards which had been seen for some years previously.

The membership of the BFC was small and still predominantly elitist with the upper & professional middle classes together with a proportion of military officers making up the membership. In keeping with the OHC traditions it was a club for the gentry. The focus for British falconers in the late 1920's and 30's was game hawking with longwings and a certain amount of goshawking. Lark hawking with merlins had been revived and perfected by E.B. Michell. His

celebration of the 'Ladies falcon' had rekindled interest in the diminutive raptor. His book *The Art & Practice of Hawking*, published in 1900, was for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century considered as one of the very finest expositions of the sport. Thus for those who had not travelled north with their peregrines in search of grouse, August and September could be spent out with the merlins in a genteel miniature 'haut vol,' and in October the focus could switch to partridge.

These lowland game hawkers were then joined by the upland falconers returning south after the campaign against the more demanding red grouse. Some spring rook hawking was still attempted but very little in comparison with the latter years of the previous century. Game hawking had superseded the flight at rook as the highest form of the sport.

The 1930's saw some of the British falconry fraternity impressed by the hunting culture and martial organisation of the National Socialist regime in the resurgent Germany. Indeed the BFC exhibited at Field Marshall Hermann Goering's International Hunting Exhibition in Berlin in 1937. The BFC were represented by two senior members, Vice-President Gilbert Blaine and the Hon. Secretary J.G. Mavrogordato. Whilst the Club exhibit was dwarfed by the extensive German one, no doubt due to Goering's interest in falconry, the guests won the Prize of Honour and were awarded a bronze statuette. This object is still in the possession of the Club. However affiliations with Nazi culture were soon forgotten as larger events were to overtake the sport. Come 1939 falconry was once again, as it had been for the Great War, suspended during a major military conflict. Major breaks in the continuity of the sport have always been difficult for falconry to recover from and the two global twentieth century wars were major difficulties.

#### The war years & beyond



In a seeming return to the persecution of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, wild peregrines were extensively shot throughout the British Isles but particularly along the south coast and in East Anglia. The justification being their predilection for pigeons, some of which could be carrier pigeons bringing important news from France or indeed be those released by downed bomber crews (until 1943 many British bombers carried a basket of homing pigeons). In an interesting twist, the RAF recruited and deployed a falconry unit to be used in an attempt to foil any 'outgoing' carrier pigeons sent by agents of the Axis powers operating in the British Isles. The precise effectiveness of this unit has never been fully assessed.

The 1939 - 45 war cost British falconry some of its young practitioners in particular Kim Muir, killed in the retreat to Dunkirk and Bobby Spens, who died whilst being transported as a prisoner of war on an Italian ship that was sunk in the Mediterranean. The war years and the subsequent austerity were difficult for the sport and very few hawks or falcons were in the hands of private falconers in the late 40's.

As standards of living improved in the 1950's and a new generation took up the sport, some concentrating upon game hawking with peregrines and imported longwings whilst others focused on the goshawk. In 1954 the Protection of Birds Act became statute and falconry was subject to direct legislation through the control of access to native wild raptors. Licences to take birds of prey from the wild were available from the Home Office on application. To help safeguard the wild populations falconers had not taken passage or haggard hawks (the breeding stock) for some time, this however became enshrined in the legislation. In addition however many bird species were granted full protection and with the exception of 'pest' and traditional game species they could not be hunted. Falconers adapted to the new legislation that was reasonably benevolent, and

the sport continued.

Just as there seemed to be a growing interest in falconry it was beset by two unexpected and very different challenges. The first was myxomatosis, the highly infectious viral disease introduced into Britain in the same year as the aforementioned Protection of Birds Act. Within 3 years it reduced the rabbit population from an estimated 100 million to less than a million. The staple ground quarry; the rabbit, favoured by those flying goshawks became unavailable and the lack of quarry became an issue. Feathered game was still possible but access to pheasant was often limited by the expense, whereas hunting the humble rabbit had been free and few farmers ever refused permission to hawk such a pest. Whilst the effect was hardly felt by those who flew the true falcons, the growing number of goshawk enthusiasts certainly suffered.

### Pesticides

In what was probably the most profound issue to face the sport of falconry in its 1200 year history in Britain: Many species of bird catching hawks and falcons experienced a sudden and unexplained failure to breed, additionally numbers of adults disappeared completely from their usual haunts. First seen in the late 1950's and reported in the BFC journal by Dick Treleaven (1958, 1960), the disappearance of the British peregrine population threatened falconry in a most profound manner. The very raw material of the sport, the falcon *pas excellence* itself, was under threat.

Ultimately the decline that was seen throughout the Western world, was attributed to the use of organochlorine seed dressings, a group of pesticides that were passed up through the food chain bird to bird. Europe and North America took swift action to stop the use of these chemicals, but considerable damage had been done and the wild populations of bird eating hawks and falcons were decimated

(Treleaven 1975). It has always been the raptors that were bird-hunters, the swiftest and most rapacious species that have provided falconers with their most desirable subjects for the sport; those being peregrines, merlins, goshawks, & sparrow hawks in Britain. It was these raptors that were the most profoundly effected by the pesticides. In a perverse twist it was actually a government sponsored research project instigated by the lobbying of the pigeon racing fraternity (complaining about the predation of domestic/racing pigeons by peregrines), that confirmed what the likes of Treleaven (op cit) amongst others had observed

### Survival under new circumstances

The sport was maintained by the import of falcons, and to a lesser extent hawks. North, West and East Africa, and the Indian sub-continent provided numbers of exotic species, which with the exception of the lanner and the saker were little known in the British context of the sport. In an irony, it was in the third world where this supply of hawks and falcons originated, that the surpluses of the organochlorines now banned in the West, were sold. Visiting upon many of those raptor populations in the late 1960's and 70's the same fate as had been suffered in Europe and North America a decade earlier.

If one can make inferences about the popularity of a cultural activity through the publication of literature relating to it, as has been done already in this work, falconry was indeed a growing sport. In 1960 there were three new publications all written by experienced and highly respected practitioners. Mavrogordato's treatise on the sparrow hawk, *A Hawk for the Bush*; Woodford's comprehensive *A Manual of Falconry*; and ap Evan's populist *Falconry for you*, set the tone for the expanding practice.

British falconers had voluntarily if somewhat reluctantly, stopped

applying for licences to take native raptors from the wild once it had become clear that the populations were in such a perilous condition. The post pesticide recovery being slow and patchy resulted in the sport becoming wholly reliant upon imported birds of prey. Whilst comparatively easily obtainable early in the decade, demand and a gradual tightening of legislation both national and international, restricted the availability of hawks and falcons and restricted the growth in the sport.

### Husbandry, breeding & technology

For post-war falconers it had become routine to use weighing scales to assess condition. This was a major step forward in practical husbandry terms. Veterinary science started to address the needs of 'exotics', into which category the raptors fell. However despite seeming mundane, a very major advance was the growing availability of the home deep-freeze. Food for hawks no longer had to be obtained daily and the danger of feeding tainted or 'off' food diminished greatly.

Sporadic attempts to breed captive birds of prey were made during the 1960's, however it was in the 70's that real advances were made. The Peregrine Fund at Cornell University under the auspices of Professor Tom Cade, began to produce significant numbers of captive bred peregrines. This was undertaken in order to aid the species re-populate North America. Pesticides had wiped out the native sub-species; *Falco peregrinus anatum*. Falconers had been instrumental in the breeding success at Cornell, providing funds, expertise and, donating the specimens that became the breeding stock.

The moment that the protocols and requirements were written up and published, the way was open for falconers to pursue the project of producing their own hawks and falcons. British falconry already

divorced from native wild populations, initially voluntarily but increasingly legislatively, began to produce its own birds of prey to supply the needs of the sport.

Hybridisation amongst falcon species proved to be readily attainable and the sport saw the arrival of the tailor-made domestic falcon – one that had only tenuous links with the wild and that would never naturally occur. Hybrid falcons helped to prove the case of captive/domestic breeding to sceptical protectionists who had maintained that falconer's claims of captive breeding was a lie to cover theft from the wild. They did not however provide what some naive falconers had hoped for – a super falcon.

The early 1970's saw another major advance in the practice, that of radio telemetry. In the United States radio transmitters were developed that were small enough to be carried on the leg or tail of the trained raptor and portable receivers enabled falconers to track their birds. Once commercially available this technology not only enabled the recovery of a lost falcon, one that hitherto might never have been seen again, but allowed falconers to become far more ambitious. Hawks and falcons could be flown in higher condition and in more marginal circumstances, thereby developing in a manner that had not been seen since the days of flying passage or haggard birds<sup>i</sup>.

### Restrictions

In Britain further legislation was introduced in the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act. This was a major landmark in the British approach to wildlife law. Falconers were required to register all birds of prey with the Government. Despite the purported rationale for this being to protect native wild populations and meet international CITES (Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species) agreements, falconers felt the hand of disapproval in the legislation.

A growing interest in conservation and a trend towards protectionism coupled with an intolerance towards hunting sports in Britain was being reflected in the legal framework in which falconers had to function. The scope of the registration scheme was reduced in the 1990's in an attempt to lessen Government bureaucracy

Despite increased legislation falconry continued to attract a growing following. The traditional somewhat narrow and elitist social group that had been the involved in the sport were supplemented by a wider cross section of society including the working classes, town and city dwellers and women. Hawks and falcons were now commercially bred together with all the paraphernalia necessary for the 20<sup>th</sup> Century falconer. In addition two new species both from North America, had been added to those available for the sport; the redtail hawk, a larger and more rapacious cousin of the common buzzard; and most significant, the Harris hawk. The latter is an unusual raptor, it is a social creature that in the wild, lives and hunts in an extended family. In captivity, the Harris bonds with the falconer in a manner not seen in other raptor species used in falconry. Its tameness and social nature enabled many who might hitherto have struggled to keep, train and hunt with a raptor, so to do.

Since the 1950's clubs have proliferated, whilst the British Falconers' Club is still the largest single falconry organisation, there are numerous small and often local clubs through which modern British falconers express their interest. This fragmentation from a single, overarching club, is entirely in keeping with the times. A body known as the Hawk Board, that grew out of the Advisory Panel set up by the Home Office at the time of the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act, acts as a conduit for falconers in their relations with the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs.

A sport with a future?

Opposition to hunting sports eventually saw the hunting of foxes with hounds banned by Parliament in 2005. It seems inevitable that other field sports will come under the scrutiny of politicians keen to reflect the character of a largely urban modern Britain. The Hawk Board (2001) estimated that something in excess of 15,000 people keep birds of prey in the British Isles and of those some 7,000 are practicing falconers. Thus at a time when there are more people involved in the sport than there have ever been; when standards of husbandry and attainment have never been higher; where the impact of falconry on the native populations of wild raptors has never been lower; and the contribution made by falconers to the knowledge, understanding, and conservation of birds of prey is at its most pronounced, the future of this time-honoured hunting sport is at its most precarious.

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<sup>i</sup> Passage and haggard birds of prey, those taken as experienced and effective hunters from the wild, exhibit a far greater proficiency or style when hunting than do the eyasses. Captive bred hawks and falcons are the equivalent of wild taken eyasses in that they have no experience of hunting and the hunger associated with a failure to kill. Lascelles (1891) always considered eyass falcons a poor substitute for passagers. Radio telemetry provided the opportunity for the modern falconer to recover a falcon that would hitherto have been lost, effectively enabling the raptor to be flown in a wider range of environmental conditions than had hitherto been prudent so to do. Thus the trained captive bred eyass could through wide and varied experience, develop more of the hunting finesse of its brethren taken from the wild in previous centuries.

## Conclusion



## Conclusions

Falconry as has been described herein, is a social practice, an example of animal husbandry, a dominion over fowls of the air. It is something that is primarily undertaken prior to being spoken of or ultimately written about. That the sport, for that is what it is in anything but the most narrow of terms, has been so frequently written about by those over whom it cast its spell, is fortunate indeed. The very interaction with these wild creatures has stirred men to wax lyrically about falconry often referring to it as an 'art'. Indeed nature writing regarding birds of prey reflects this very tendency, but for the most part ornithologists do not have the benefit of the physical proximity that the falconer shares with his hawk or falcon.

### Falconry recorded

The research proceeded from a lengthy examination of an almost complete collection of *The Caledonian Mercury* from 1725 – 1815. A footnote in a text on Scottish social history<sup>i</sup> had asserted that around 1750, advertisements in the aforementioned newspaper were commonplace, either announcing the loss of valued falcons, or reporting the recovery of hitherto lost ones. It was this information that helped to determine the start date of the research, however on investigation the footnote was found to be inaccurate; there were few mentions of falconry and indeed only one that announced the loss of a falcon and appealed for its return if found.

It is true that many falconers did not commit their impressions of the sport to paper and thus these, in many cases skilled practitioners, did not leave a legacy that can be accessed. Some were written about by their peers and colleagues and their reputations survive even today. E.C.Newcome is one of this select band, much was recorded of his skill and ability as a falconer and all was

complimentary. This has to be tempered however, with the knowledge that some falconer-writers also compiled glowing reports of the Maharaja of Lahore; Duleep Singh and his falconry proficiency. It is only through surviving letters from Harting that it can be appreciated that not all the literature can be trusted to record information impartially<sup>ii</sup>. Singh was by Harting's estimation little short of a disaster for the sport<sup>iii</sup>.

The professional falconers of the period, those artisans in the employ of the clubs or private individuals, were the ones with whom the real skill and expertise lay. These men often trapped, transported, trained, managed and ultimately selected the quarry that the falcons were to be slipped at; their employers and social superiors were little more than interested spectators occasionally carrying a falcon and slipping it when invited so to do. Of course these professionals left little in the way of a written record and what we know about them is largely the writing of their employers. John 'Jack' Frost did leave a diary covering some of his time with the *Old Hawking Club*, whilst the last of the Mollen's, the hawk trapping and falconry family from Valkenswaard, kept notebooks, two of which survive<sup>iv</sup>. On the whole however, these professionals were not literate but practical men, specialists but akin to kennel men in hunting. They worked with the hawks and falcons rather than wrote about them. Whilst their perspective on the falconry of their day would no doubt have been interesting to consider, it is questionable if it might have contributed very much of value. Frost's diary is perfunctory and often banally descriptive, a primary source indeed but one that is of limited use.

The material considered herein is unashamedly the written word left by the privileged. It is the work of the educated, professional or military, often titled, frequently independently wealthy, sportsman. Indeed given the predominance of sources from the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is the work of the Victorian field sportsman.

Women are almost wholly absent from the literature either as subject or author, indeed the only gendering in evidence is that concerning the hawks and falcons.

As has been asserted earlier many falconers had literary ambitions. Ironically much of the most enthusiastic and poetic writing of the time has been discarded in favour of the more mundane in this thesis, for this endeavour was not a study in to the form or quality of any particular literature. Rather, the research was focused on the context in which falconry existed between 1750 and 1927, and how the sport adapted, or more accurately how the sport was adapted, to meet the challenges that Britain in the modern period lay before it.

The bricks and mortar of this research are the practical texts, the descriptive, work-a-day writing that came from those who undertook the activity during those times of change. This is stated in the knowledge that this author has previously dismissed the descriptive writing of the professional falconer as that which would contribute little to the analysis, there is however a gulf in quality between that written by the employer and the employee. This is fundamentally an investigation into an elite sport undertaken through examination of the written word penned by the elite themselves. Considerable use has been made of the words that they chose to publish, albeit, that these were for a public consumption and as such are one step removed from the true record. To this was added comment about falconry from those who were not themselves falconers, and of course a considerable amount of context; context that reflected the social and cultural changes occurring; context that explained the development of other field sports that were of course adapting to the changing circumstances themselves; and context that fashioned the public perception of the sport of falconry.

Much was made of the essential demands of the activity, the hawks

and falcons themselves, the quarry that was hunted, the requirements in terms of the landscape, and the traditions of the sport that certainly shaped the perceptions and aspirations of the falconers of the day. The history of falconry has most often been written by practitioners themselves, and whilst this in a very tangible sense has positive aspects to it, it also has some serious drawbacks. Falconers can take the nuances from historical texts and art work that might otherwise have been either misconstrued or ignored, and explain them in light of practical experience. The raw materials of the sport have remained constant throughout human history. The nature of the birds of prey, together with the nature of the creatures that they hunt, is no different today than it was at the time of falconry's introduction into the British Isles some thirteen hundred years ago. The cultural and physical environment has altered almost beyond recognition as has our understanding and knowledge about the hawks and falcons, but the essence of falconry has not. An understanding of this has been an aspect that has benefited from the scholarship of falconer – writers. However, very few of these falconers have been immersed in the project of historical scholarship. It is not suggested that the history of falconry has been recorded by the unintelligent or the limited, far from it; rather what is being suggested here is that those who have undertaken the task have not been historians first and foremost.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been some very perceptive historical work done by the likes of Cummins (1988) in *The Hound and the Hawk. The Art of Medieval Hunting* and Oggins (2004) in *The Kings and their Hawks*. Neither of these scholars are to the knowledge of this author, practitioners of falconry. Perhaps the closest that modern falconry has to an appropriately skilled historian, is John Loft who whilst remaining a falconer, has produced a highly commended translation of *D'Arcussia's Falconry* (2003) and instilled it with both a practitioners eye for detail and accuracy but invested in it an intellectual and academic quality rarely seen in

falconry texts. Roger Upton's popular histories of British falconry are extensively researched and mirror some of the falconer-writers work of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Work at the American Archive of Falconry at Boise, Idaho has started to contribute important scholarship and through the Archivist Kent Carnie and his fellows Peter Devers and John Swift, the most important collection of falconry history both in artefact and original literature, will doubtless bridge the divide mentioned herein.

### The social & cultural context

One of the central tenets of this research was to explore the meanings and representation encountered in the material of the period. Whilst the latter years under consideration are less than a century ago, they can still be thought of as distinct; so different to our own was the world for those who lived during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the earlier years there can be no temptation to make assumptions about the cultural context. The industrial society, so much the terrain upon which contemporary British culture is played out, was novel, distrusted and indeed, contested by many of the country sportsmen of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. To continue the sport of falconry was a resistance of sorts for those members of the *Confederate Hawks*; it was to reject the protestant leaning toward puritan values that had become so central in the early industrial society in England. Falconry was a frivolous excess in the tradition of the pre-Commonwealth Royal court, to undertake it was to 'cock a snook' at the new society; 'merrie England' was alive and well. In this respect falconry was no different than some of the other traditions in leisure that were struggling to survive against the flow of cultural change. That it was an activity indulged in by those of noble birth was of no consequence here. Falconry was not a rational recreation in the same way that cudgelling or singlestick, bare knuckle fighting, and the animal baiting activities had failed to meet the canon of the new recreation.

The mounted field, that characterised the terrestrial part of the 'great flight' at heron or kite, was a vehicle to exhibit a similar status associated with hunting to hounds. Whilst the kudos that was related to the hierarchy attributed to birds of prey had long vanished, there was still much to be gained from the cavalier disregard for property or crops that riding across country could bring. However where hunting the fox was part of the countryside and attracted interest from across the classes, falconry could not boast this at any point after the decline in the late seventeenth century. Thus, by the advent of the clubs, it was too rare a sight, too esoteric a taste, and too inconsistent a spectacle to capture the rural imagination in the way that the other mounted hunting sport had done. In addition to these difficulties has to be added the differences that the managed land had on the respective quarry. The reorganisation of the countryside initiated by the enclosure movement positively benefited the fox and thus the hunters and hounds; plentiful quarry ensured good sport. Whereas the very same conditions made following a falcon after a high flying quarry very difficult, and the environment that suited the fox and indeed gamebirds, was not favourable for the heron or kite. Whilst superficially similar, the demands of the two mounted hunting sports were actually very different and falconry was the one that was increasingly unsustainable.

### The ethic

Falconers undoubtedly believed their sport to be both noble and an expression of traditional values. Whilst they did hunt and kill quarry, this was done in a respectfully economic manner. Over-using land would cause the hunted species to become scarce and nervous, flying too often at a single heronry would result in the loss of sport, and later when rooks and crows were the chosen target for the falconers of the *Old Hawking Club*, to fly in the same vicinity too

often would teach the corvids to recognise the falconers and become scarce at the first sight of them. Falcons could only be flown effectively a few times each hunting day, thus the number of head of quarry taken was always modest. The goshawk when flown at rabbits, could amass sizeable scores where the warrens were well spread. However even here, a head count of over twenty in an outing was exceptional, and this a mere fraction of what a single man with a shotgun could achieve after the technological advances of the 19<sup>th</sup> century allowed for the faster burning powder and the breach loader.

Falconry by its very nature could not follow the same path, it was a conservative practice with a mantra that demanded quality and not quantity. Being fundamentally about aesthetics, and a sort of 'hunting' protocol that was not even evident in the mounted hunting to hounds after the fox. Furthermore it was a patient mans' sport, the activity of a leisured individual whose primary concern was not productivity. This is not to suggest that falconers were not seduced by the orientation of the times; they doubtlessly were and the shooting men amongst them followed their shot-gunning colleagues in this respect. Where falconry differed was that the very activity itself could not be reconciled or structured to produced ever greater kill ratios. There could be no battue for the falconer.

#### A contribution to a wider field

The sport did contribute to the search for scientific knowledge in a modest yet it can be claimed, significant manner. Falconers doubtless made some of those hawks or falcons that died in their care, available to collectors. Whilst it cannot be wholly substantiated, this author surmises that numbers of those raptors will have gone into the taxidermy trade for mounting and display. The artist and falconer G.E. Lodge, mentioned previously, mounted two peregrine 'rook' hawks that had been flown on Salisbury Plain

in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In conversation with Anthony Jack, the late and former President of the British Falconers' Club, he maintained that whilst one of the peregrines died through illness, the other when found surplus to requirements was euthanized in order to provide the raw material of the taxidermy. These specimens are now exhibited in the Valkenswaard museum in Holland.

Falconry was indeed a conservative sport. From a modern stand point it appears that the activity was far more 'rational' or sustainable than the shooting of the period, which inflicted such slaughter on the gamebirds produced and protected for just that fate. What must not be overlooked however, is the overriding expectation of productivity and return on expenditure and effort; an economic ethic that prevailed and orientated the entire culture. In this regard falconry offered a poor return indeed.

### Suitable country

It has been documented in the secondary literature that the increasing tendency towards enclosure of waste or common land was also important, this was land not regularly used for farming prior to its enclosure (Black 1990, Hall 1982, Williamson 2002). The process of enclosure and increasing, regular cultivation has been singled out repeatedly in falconry literature (Campbell 1773, Harting 1889, Lascelles 1892, Salvin & Brodrick 1855, Schlegel & Wulverhorst 1844-1853, Thornton 1804) as one of the major contributing factors in the decline of the sport. The effect of enclosure of this section of the countryside has been investigated and whilst certainly significant, it falls short of being the only reason for falconry's fall from popularity. Whilst it is the case that falconers perceived the alteration in the character of the countryside as a major barrier to their being able to pursue the sport, it is far from the whole story. Mounted falconry, whilst superficially similar to fox



hunting or riding to hounds, is actually dependent upon a quite distinct set of conditions.

A key feature of the sport is the aspiration to high quality (Fisher 1901, Freeman 1903, Lascelles 1892, Mitchell 1900, Sebright 1826). The prerequisites of which were, for the 19<sup>th</sup> Century falconer: open grassland uncluttered by cultivation or too extensive hedges, fences, or ditches that would restrict a good gallop; a landscape that was open enough to provide little cover in the way of woods or bushes that might provide refuge for a hard pressed quarry such as kite or in the case of the heron, lakes, ponds and waterways; reasonably plentiful although not over-abundant quarry populations that were not regularly persecuted. Essentially falconry was an idealised sport. It had the powerful romance of an ancient and elite hunting practice that utilised the most wild and inscrutable of creatures to pursue quarry in an element at that time unconquered by man: air. This idealism was manifest in a blinkered and it might be argued, rather self destructive over-reliance or obsession with the notion of tradition. Changes in the social context and the natural environment were often resisted and lamented, and in turn this hindered the practitioners when it came to making adaptations in the manner, form, and often locations where they indulged in their sport (Trevor-Battye 1903).

It is beyond question that the character and nature of use of much of the English countryside was undergoing marked change between 1500 & 1750. Leading authorities such as Kerridge (1976), Thirsk (1984, 1987), and Slicher van Bath (1963) all confirm such and address to an extent the nature of those changes. The range and complexity of these specific agrarian changes, falls outside the scope of this particular thesis, nonetheless the depth of their scholarship informs the fortunes of the sport of falconry more profoundly than has hitherto been appreciated.

Kite populations had been protected by Royal decree in medieval England in order to preserve them to provide quarry for the 'Great flight'. Whilst there is no evidence that capital punishment was actually carried out for kite persecution it was on the statute. They were prescribed for the elite to pursue in the formalised form that flying the large falcons had developed into. However the protection lapsed for both the kite and indeed the falcons as falconry fell from popularity.

Game preservation for shooting was also increasing and this significantly reduced the population of kites (Carter 2001, Wootton 2002). Likewise the heron population was also effected by persecution arising from both game and fishery preservation (Lowe 1954, Voisin 1991). Is it possible to say that quarry numbers were being affected by a multitude of changes not exclusively or even primarily those resulting from the enclosure movement.

It is tempting to focus upon changes such as that which Kerridge (1976) calls 'up and down farming', also known as ley farming. This was alternate or field-grass husbandry, whereby pastures are ploughed and crops grown for a time then allowed to revert to pasture. Up and down farming may well have altered quarry populations of kite and heron, although this is extremely hard to discern. In the secondary literature it is worth noting that during this period there are no specific details of bird population numbers and the effects of agrarian changes were not documented as they would be today. As such there was scope for considerable speculation in what was happening to their numbers and also why changes were taking place. There was also scope for considerable misunderstanding.

The process of agrarian change did have an impact upon regular hunting areas; furthermore it certainly increased the total amount of human activity in the countryside. However these changes in

themselves are unlikely to have made falconry so difficult that it was driven close to extinction. That contemporary falconers do practice the sport over much of the ground hitherto thought too broken up and enclosed to be worth considering, is an indication that alterations in the countryside is not a single defining feature (Fox 1995). This is asserted with the appreciation that in the modern era the recovery of lost falcons is easier due to telemetry radio tracking, and that the species of quarry hunted have changed.

A more important factor in many districts was probably the improvements in drainage, during this period in the form of open channels, drains and gulleys. In terms of fenlands and low lying districts, drainage is likely to have been profoundly significant in the effect upon quarry numbers; herons more so than kites.

Furthermore the changes that drainage brought about in land use were profound, however as both Kerridge (1976) and Thirsk (1987) point out the drainage was undertaken over a comparatively long period and was slow to transform the nature of that environment. Fenland had always posed falconers problems in the respect that it was difficult to ride over uninterrupted. What it had in abundance prior to the drainage, however was wild quarry and particularly heron. Systematic drainage did pose different challenges for the mounted falconer, but the major effect was in the numbers of available traditional quarry in particular. Together with persecution from those charged with fishery protection and to a lesser extent from game preservationists, the changes resulted in concentrations of heron were broken up and scattered. The traditional heronries, so important that they were marked on maps of the period and recorded in sporting encyclopaedia and ornithological texts (Harewood 1835, Lydekker 1895), were depleted in number and size.

Even the perception of an ever increasing rural population is far from one that can be supported unequivocally. Thirsk (1984) shows

that the rising trend in population was not common across all rural districts nor indeed consistent throughout the period 1500 to 1750. However the population of England doubled during this period and whilst the major growth was in urban centres, population expansion was a feature that inevitably had an impact upon the rural environment (Hall 1982).

What these observations illustrate is that the perception of enclosure or the identified changes in the countryside being a major cause of the decline in falconry during the period, is far from a conclusive one. It is beyond doubt that falconers and commentators on the sport from the 1750's onward believed that the nature of the English countryside effectively constrained their sport and rendered it unsustainable (Belany 1841, Campbell 1773, Harting 1883, Lascelles 1894, Salvin & Brodrick 1855) It is the case that whilst predicting the end of the British manifestation of falconry, these writer/practitioners continued flying falcons. In their literature they lamented the demise of the sport and as is outlined elsewhere, most were convinced that they were likely to be the last British falconers.

As Thirsk's analysis shows (1984) there are other explanations which merit consideration. In particular the pastoral economy, rural industry, agriculture and social change. The social structure of the rural family and the difficulties faced by younger sons from the gentry and the nobility in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, provide indications that social changes might be as profound an influence on falconry's demise, as those physical and practical changes identified in the rural environment. Thirsk's insights while they do not address the sport directly, but show how the lives of the gentry and nobility were fundamentally changed and their possibilities altered from the period during which falconry flourished. In addition to this, the pattern of land ownership had been transformed during and after the Interregnum. Extensive areas of royalist land was

appropriated and sold during the Commonwealth and this was followed by the almost as profound upheaval of the land settlement during the Restoration. It is clear from observations on falconry history on mainland Europe (Van de Wall 2004) that stable land ownership is important for a sport that demanded so much freedom to ride over unbroken countryside.

Throughout the period 1500 – 1750, that immediately prior to the focus of this thesis, the breeding, rearing and marketing of horses was increasing (Thirsk 1984). Horses required open grassland and were not traditionally kept in fenced fields prior to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century. It is reported that they were herded in open grass areas by boys or farm workers, often with the oldest or dominant mare tethered thereby 'holding' the herd.

Open grassland was a prime requirement for mounted falconry and many districts where it could be found are detailed by Salvin & Brodrick (1855). This further supports the notion discussed above, that more was involved in the decline of falconry than those difficulties articulated by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century falconer writers. It is likely that they identified the highly visible changes that they witnessed in the countryside, and other developments such as sporting firearms, and focussed on these rather than understanding some more profound underlying social changes that were effecting the practice.

What is clear from the forgoing consideration is that the perception of agricultural and land use change as a major cause of the sports decline, has been exaggerated. The enclosures, drainage, permanent farming techniques and other alterations doubtless compromised falconry but it is not likely that they made it impossible to practice (ap Evans 1960, Upton 1987). Like the effect that the advent of the firearm as a sporting tool had on the sport, falconry did not benefit but neither was it rendered completely obsolete by

the environmental changes. Restricted and difficult in many areas but not impossible in practical terms.

### Difficulties & adaptation

With the 'great flight' becoming more difficult to 'set up', falconers turned to the corvids and gravitated towards Salisbury plain, the South Downs, and Thetford in the eastern counties. The flight at rooks and crows was still followed on horse, but the ground over which it was possible was a contracting acreage, declining year on year. Falconers were attracted to what became known as gamehawking. Whilst pheasant and partridge had long been a legitimate quarry and a valued addition to the table, this branch of the sport practised from horseback up until the early years of the 1800s, took on a more important role. Where the passage hawk in the Dutch tradition excelled in the 'out of the hood' flight at heron, rook or crow, it was the eyass in the Scottish tradition that was to be most suited to the 'waiting on' flight at game.

It was their common quarry that drew gamehawking into the sphere of shooting. This was a marriage of unequal partners, and one in which both tolerance and contempt grew. Shooting was the dominant activity and it defined the context that this branch of falconry existed in. Falconers typically struggled with the wanton destruction that was the currency of shooting in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, whilst shooters considered falconry as hopelessly unproductive.

The clubs that were the adaptive mechanism that facilitated the sports continuation into the 19<sup>th</sup> century were a vital yet limited utility. The ability to spread the cost of hawking was important given the lack of Royal patronage, yet the falconry that the major clubs strove to provide was rooted firmly in the sport's previous early

modern manifestation. With perhaps the exception of the *Renfrewshire Subscription Hawks*, of which very little is known, and the latter years of the *Old Hawking Club*, the clubs attempted to mirror the grand falconry establishments of earlier days. They retained ambitious 'studs' of hawks and falcons, or in more accurate falconry terminology; a club would maintain an ambitious cadge of hawks. Thornton's *Confederate Hawks of Great Britain* continued under the name of the *Falconer's Club*, and ultimately the *High Ash Club*, which closed once the heronry at Diddlington was decimated by the drainage of the surrounding countryside. In search of continued heron hawking a number of British falconers moved to the Low Countries for their falconry. The formation of the *Loo Hawking Club* that was to become for a brief time subject to Royal support, and was thus re-named *The Royal Loo Club* continued in the same tradition; professional falconers, large numbers of falcons, and a quarry that demanded the field to be mounted were *de rigueur*.

This aspect of the research concluded that these types of subscription clubs were ultimately to fail due to the continued articulation of unrealistic ambition. The inability to see beyond the tradition of the stereotypical form of the sport, that itself was on borrowed time due to environmental and cultural changes, ensured that these organisations would cease to be viable. It would be the British Falconers' Club, established in 1927 that would become the first modern falconry club to proceed in a manner that expected its members to own their own falcons and provide their own ground, leased or otherwise, over which to hawk. In fairness, the growth in popularity of gamehawking lent itself to this type of organisation; the era of private falconry had begun. Small scale limited gatherings flying readily available quarry in a manner that did not entail long distance linear flights that might start on ones own 'manor', but would end up miles away. The partridge and pheasant flew fast and strongly but not so very far, they would put in at the first available

cover, thus the flight at them was temporally and spatially limited. Far more suited to hawking in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Lilford

By widening the analysis and considering the aristocrat Lord Lilford, a patron and supporter of falconry, the research expanded its focus in order to situate the sport in a wider field of interest in raptors in particular and wildlife in general. Lilford was a committed naturalist, collector and ornithologist. Whilst falling short of modern scientific demands for ornithological collections his own certainly characterised his aspirations to systematically record and present both eggs and avian specimens to conform to contemporary standards. His devotion to the sport was remarkable despite his never being a serious practitioner, and becoming incapacitated through illness in early middle age. Lilford linked falconry to a wider sphere of natural history and scientific endeavour. His correspondence illustrated that falconers were indeed skilled ornithologists themselves, as well as being experts in both husbandry and management of their charges. He articulated the oft repeated falconers dissatisfaction with the destruction of wild birds of prey. In the context of this research, an important figure in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the letters and literature left by Lilford provide a unique view of the world that his class and those who shared his passions, inhabited.

### A sport represented

A major section of the thesis is concerned with the representation of falconry, through literature, popular publication both sporting and of general interest, and in those pre-photographic days in the manner that the sport and birds of prey were portrayed in illustration and painting. This research describes and attempts to explain at some



length, the development of the general view of falconry as a curiosity, a romantic and archaic hang-over from the medieval period, a titillating insight into nature 'red in tooth and claw'. Much of this perspective doubtless resulted from the sport's own literature and the self publicity of certain falconers. Some derived from the public display of trained hawks and falcons flown in front of crowds who were charged a small fee for the privilege; pigeons were thrown from the hand in lieu of wild quarry. However, a good deal came directly from the public's preconceptions about falconry, gleaned from romantic literature and popular artwork, much of which was both fanciful and inaccurate. Falconry was condemned to occupy that space in the sphere of general knowledge that was of passing interest but fundamentally irrelevant. Labelled as an oddity, exotic and romantic indeed, but something far from the modern; it could never again occupy a central role in British cultural life as once it had done.

The sport had established international links that facilitated the procurement of falcons from abroad and enabled the importation of equipment, namely hoods and bells. These contacts developed commensurately with the growth of the Empire and the cultural dominance of the British around the globe. Hitherto unknown or little understood falconry traditions were recognised by British falconers and the sporting public at large. Literature about some of these traditions became available, written it ought to be recorded, by the very same class of men who wrote on the sport at home. When falconry was constrained in Britain by the loss of quarry and land over which to ride, tales of falconry in exotic locations with hawks and falcons that British falconers only knew about from the pre-modern literature, was encouragement indeed. Falconers like a great proportion of the British were enthralled by the riches both cultural and material that seemed to derive from the Imperial enterprise, the Empire. In a mirror of the way that the British popular vision of falconry was both superficial and ill-informed, it is evident

that foreign falconry traditions were treated in much the same manner by the majority of British falconers. Delme Radcliffe was an exception to this, practising the sport both at home and on the Indian sub-continent. His understanding of falconry was acute however he provided none of the cultural sensitivity brought to the subject by the non-falconers, Burton and Phillot.

### Limitations

With the benefit of hindsight and the investigation complete, there are certain observations that the author of this thesis regards as important. Firstly and perhaps most profoundly, it is evident that whilst this research was established to examine the sport of falconry from 1750 -1927; most of the investigation has been based around the peregrine falcon. Of course the peregrine has been widely considered as the most important of raptors in a falconry context and particularly in the British Isles, where it was both reasonably readily available being an indigenous breeding species, but also was well suited to the climate and habitat. Fashions are as evident in falconry as in any other cultural activity, but British falconers who have been attracted by the beauty and power of the gyrfalcon or the tenacity of the saker, have invariably returned to the peregrine for its sheer utility and excellence of performance. There can be no apology in respect of the literature however, which like the falconers of the period, exhibits an enduring passion for the 'falcon gentle'<sup>v</sup>.

Where this peregrine orientation might be considered to be detrimentally limiting to the research, is in the respect of the shortwings; the goshawk and the sparrow hawk. Whilst the terminology of the sport enables hawk and falcon to be used interchangeably when regarding one of the longwings, or true falcons, and this author has followed that practice; it has never been acceptable to refer to an accipiter as anything other than a

hawk. Examination of the text will reveal that unless stated otherwise, the mention of falconry is predominantly orientated towards the falcons generally, and the peregrine in particular. It is clear that the shortwings did occupy a place in the falconry tradition that was allied to but somewhat distinct from the mainstay of flying falcons. Little is written on the goshawk or the sparrow hawk when compared to the lofty peregrine, but this does not necessarily mean that the use of these hawks was a rarity. Indeed, the demands of the habitat are far less for the shortwings and for the goshawk in particular, there is an abundance of available quarry species that encompasses both mammals and birds.

### Reiteration

This research set out to establish how the sport of falconry was adapted in order to accommodate the changing environmental and cultural circumstances that were encountered between 1750 – 1927; whilst it did seek to provide an earlier context and an examination of the period 1650 – 1750; and a short consideration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century passage for the sport. In addition, to illustrate how the practice of falconry informed and indeed reflected the ideas of the time both in sport and a wider framework. Through a discursive consideration of the literature, private letters, diaries and records written by those who practised the sport or were closely linked with it during that period, it has been possible to illustrate that falconers have been dynamic in reacting to change. Falconry, a most conservative and introspective of activities, survived when it was peripheral to even the rural cultures of the time and certainly to the dominant philosophies exhibited in Britain during the period. The links and interests that falconers shared with other sportsmen, ornithologists and natural historians have been discussed. Through the commitment of those who practised falconry in difficult times, when to turn to riding to hounds or taking up a shotgun would have been an infinitely simpler option in relation to field sports, a time-

honoured activity survived not only the change to an industrial society but through the 19<sup>th</sup> and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Addressing the issue

Finally; there is little doubt about the most profound threats to the sport during this period. It was not as articulated most often by falconers and writers on the topic, the shotgun. Whilst shooting did not directly facilitate the continuance of falconry, it certainly brought about a set of circumstances through which gamehawking was at least a possibility. Neither did shooting rob the older sport of potential practitioners, falconry was in the estimation of this author, already in the decline prior to popular use of the firelock, and was at any rate a far more limited pastime even at its height of popularity in what falconers call the 'golden age'. The single and most unavoidable environmental reality for successful falconry is the necessity of suitable land over which to fly hawks and falcons where the sought after quarry can be found. The key factor here is the perception of suitability which may not reflect actual possibilities that tracts of land holds for falconry.

In 1892 Lascelles was to write;

*That falconry is not better known or more commonly practised is due to the great alteration in the character of the country since the days when it was the pursuit chiefest in the estimation of the sporting public. (pp217)*

And he continued;

*In other sports the best can be made of a bad country: ... But in a country unfavourable to that sport falconry cannot be carried on at all, and any crude attempts to do so must result in the disappointment of all concerned and in the depreciation of what is*

*under more favourable circumstances, one of the wildest and noblest of all the field sports in which man has ever indulged.*  
(pp218)

Lascelles' conception of 'bad country' or 'country unfavourable' was a combination of the physical geography – fundamentally that which did not allow a mounted field to follow the flight, through enclosure, cultivation, plantation or the like – and where suitable quarry could not be regularly found in sustainable numbers to afford hunting opportunities for trained hawks and falcons. The red kite population had declined so markedly that it was not a viable quarry by the end of the eighteenth century. It had not been hunted to extinction by falconers, but environmental changes and its status as a pest species in the years of increasing game preservation had effectively rendered it extinct as a breeding species in the United Kingdom<sup>vi</sup>. Heron had likewise declined markedly. Their breeding had been disrupted by the drainage of fens and marshes. In addition to this they had gained a reputation as being competitors with the sporting angler for fresh water fish, thus they also faced persecution. When Stonehenge wrote about falconry in '*British Rural Sports*' (1881), he listed thirty six Heronries. By the time he was in print however hawking the heron was a thing of the past in Britain.

It is likely that the pessimism seen amongst the falconers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, their oft articulated concern that they were amongst the last Britons for whom falconry was a viable hunting sport, was bound up in their traditions. Whilst the sport had adapted a great deal, it had become a more modest and small scale activity than was the case in the late medieval and early modern period, changes in Britain seemed to perplex falconers. The Old Hawking Club, when seeking suitable hunting ground over which to fly falcons at rooks, gravitated to Salisbury Plain for open and unfenced country; this at the very time when the agricultural depression of the 1870's saw a considerable acreage of the English

countryside abandoned in terms of agriculture due to disadvantageous economic conditions. The desired quarry for the OHC at the time was the rook, a corvid – adaptable and widespread, with a wide tolerance of breeding habitat. It seems unlikely that the tracts of land in Berkshire and Buckinghamshire freed from cultivation would have been bereft of the ubiquitous rook<sup>vii</sup>. So why was this apparent opportunity for sport, overlooked by the premier club of the day?

It is the contention herein, that the established Victorian falconer in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had constructed his sport in quite rigid terms. Whilst game hawking was viable and increasing in popularity it had not yet taken the place of the flight of a falcon 'out of the hood' at a quarry that could be followed by a mounted falconer and field. The descendant of the 'haut vol', the great flight originally undertaken at kite & heron, was rook hawking, it was considered the highest form of British falconry. Together with this status came an inflexibility that prevented much in the way of adaptability when it came to the conditions deemed to be suitable. The aspiration for extremely open countryside, uncluttered by ditches, bushes or dry stone walling was in order to facilitate the mounting flight. Rooks, unlike the kite or heron, are reluctant to mount and trust to their powers of flight high in the air in the face of a falcon when there is any cover at all. Thus whilst rook hawking was certainly possible in many districts, it did not meet the aesthetic demands that sought the mounting flight.

The late Victorian falconer illustrates well, that perception is somewhat more important than reality. The 'out of the hood' flight at quarry that would seek to beat the falcon in the air, was the ideal. It was eulogised by falconer writers of the day and was the 'tradition', the sport of the nostalgic memory, the flight directly linked to falconry's 'good old days' (Wentworth Day 1948). Herein lay the crux of the problem for the Victorian gentleman falconer following

the traditions of the mounted aspect of the sport. To compromise in aesthetics would reduce the sport to a meaningless, unproductive and anachronistic activity. This author suggests that whilst mounted falconry was possible over quite large tracts of land in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was not possible in the terms that the elite practitioners of the day had set themselves. The 'favourable circumstances' Lascelles desired were ones that had in all likelihood never been very common in the British context. The balance between open, perhaps virgin countryside and the availability of suitable quarry was what made falconry as they knew it 'one of the wildest and noblest of all the field sports' (Lascelles *ibid*).

Falconry did adapt, but it was the post Great War generations that took the sport forward. The Old Hawking Club had fostered falconry in the manifestation of its day and unsurprisingly when both social and environmental conditions changed it found its operation and sport challenged. Like earlier clubs such as the Confederate Hawks and the Royal Loo Club, it had carried and maintained the sport but ultimately failed to meet the challenges that all cultural organisations face in a modern and dynamic society: that of change.

Falconry as a cultural manifestation, has shown a tenacity and ability to undertake social and functional adaptations that have led to a continuity and considerable longevity. It is and has been an abiding preoccupation for a small yet in field sport terms, significant number of British men, and latterly women. This work has been an attempt to describe, explain and analyse how the sport continued and to an extent flourished until 1927. It is hoped that in the context of previously published scholarship on the earlier expressions of the sport and together with work on 20<sup>th</sup> Century falconry, an important and often neglected aspect of cultural history has been addressed.

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<sup>i</sup> Graham, H.G. (1899) *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*. A & C Black. London

<sup>ii</sup> A criticism that could be levelled at all literature.

<sup>iii</sup> See Chapter 7

<sup>iv</sup> See Chapter 6

<sup>v</sup> Literature of the period has been extensively examined to underpin this research however a unique first edition copy of Salvin and Brodrick's *Falconry in the British Isles* (1855), has recently become part of the collection at the Archive of Falconry in Boise. This text was added after this author's research trip to the archive and it has not been possible to examine it. The copy was purchased by Major Hawkins Fisher in the year following its publication. Fisher was a well known falconer of the late 1800s, and he wrote copious notes in the margins and blank areas of the text. These comments are accompanied by descriptions of various flights at quarry. The text also has placed inside it, a letter to Fisher from the Scottish professional falconer Peter Ballantyne, who served in turn Lord Carmarthen, Sir James Boswell, Mr Ewen and Mr Oswald. Ballantyne in keeping with the Scottish tradition, specialised in game hawking with eyass peregrines; a professional falconer all of his life, he died in 1884 at the age of 86. Neither the hand-written notes, nor the letter have yet been transcribed.

<sup>vi</sup> The decline in the red kite is noted as early as 1740 (Pennant 1766) and it had ceased to be anything but a memory as a quarry, by 1830.

<sup>vii</sup> The British Trust for Ornithology (XXXX) record that rook populations were considerably higher in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, than are seen in contemporary Britain.



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## Appendix I

## Appendix I

### Birds of Prey (Accipitridae)

There are 217 species of birds of prey worldwide of which 27 breed and occur in Europe, of those only 9 have been habitually used in the sport of falconry.

#### Hawks

##### *Goshawk* (Accipiter gentilis)

Much used in falconry this bird was the "cooks hawk" in the mediaeval period. A true hawk, it has short rounded wings and a long tail. It hunts its prey directly, flying straight at it in a short fast dash. These hawks take both birds and mammals from pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and hare (*Lepus europaeus occidentalis*) size downward.

##### *Sparrowhawk* (Accipiter nisus)

A smaller and more delicate hawk than the above, these birds also have a long history of use in falconry. They hunt like the goshawk but only take winged quarry up to the size of a partridge (*perdix perdix*), traditionally flown at blackbirds (*Turdus merula*).

#### Falcons

##### *Merlin* (Falco columbarius)

The smallest European falcon. It preys almost exclusively on small birds. This is the "ladies falcon" of mediaeval times when it was used to hunt skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*). The flight at which resembled a miniature "great flight" with both falcon and quarry ringing up in the sky.

##### *Hobby* (Falco subbuteo)

A small/medium sized, slender falcon. Used in the mediaeval practice of "daring" larks, but of no use in falconry proper, being insectivorous for much of the year. It is also highly migratory.

##### *Lanner* (Falco biarmicus)

A peregrine sized falcon although rather less bulky in build. Whilst it is predominantly an African species it does occur sporadically in southern Europe and has long been a favourite with falconers. There is some evidence to suggest that it was once rather more wide-spread than it is today.

##### *Saker* (Falco cherrug)

A large, heavily built falcon from the steppes of eastern Europe and Asia. It is this species that Arab falconers have used for centuries. Of all the medium and large falcons, this is probably the most versatile, being capable of tackling quite large mammals as well as

most birds. It was favoured for the "great flight" at heron by mediaeval falconers when gyrfalcons were not available.

#### *Gyrfalcon* (*Falco rusticolus*)

The largest and fastest of the genus and historically the most prestigious. From the far north in Europe, Asia and North America this falcon was much sought after, even though its performance as a trained bird has often been inconsistent. Able to tackle the largest of birds this falcon was favoured for the "great flight". Its regional variations were considered distinct species at one time and were named after the region of their occurrence; the Iceland, Greenland and Norway falcons.

#### *Peregrine* (*Falco peregrinus*)

A medium sized, heavily built bird. This is the archetypal falcon and probably the bird of prey most closely linked with humankind.

Preying on birds almost exclusively, its powers of flight have captivated falconers in Europe since the activity was first recorded. Found throughout Europe, although now much reduced, this falcon is the standard against which all other species are measured. In mediaeval times it was also known as; the falcon gentle, slight and grey falcon.

### Eagles

#### *Golden Eagle* (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

A large and powerful raptor. Although not infrequently used for falconry, in Europe they have a history of use for display and shows of status rather than serious hunting. In Asia there is a tradition of flying 'berkut', a sub species, to hunt large mammals.

Other species of European eagle, such as the Steppe eagle (*Aquila rapax*) and the Imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) were kept by medieval royalty for display at court. Symbolically the eagle has represented nobility and power.

### Others

#### *Osprey* (*Pandion haliaetus*)

This fish hunting raptor was the subject of a training experiment at the court of Frederick 11, but this was not continued for long.

#### *Harriers, buzzards, kites and vultures*

These may from time to time have been taken into captivity but they are not rapacious enough to warrant any attempt to train them for field. Kites in particular were once a favoured quarry for falconers and they facilitated 'the great flight'.

## Appendix II

## Appendix II

### Glossary of Falconry Terms

*Bate*: To flutter off the perch or fist through wildness or from temper.

*Bewits*: The strips of leather by which the bells are fastened to the legs.

*Bind*: To seize and hold on to the quarry in the air.

*Brail*: A strip of leather with which one wing of a hawk is secured so as to prevent her from moving it.

*Cadge*: A frame of wood with padded edges upon which hawks sit when carried to the field.

*Calling off*: To call the hawk to the lure from the fist of an assistant.

*Carry*: To fly off with the quarry which has been taken, on the approach of the falconer; a fault hawks are very liable to contract.

*Cast*: A couple of hawks.

*Castings*: Fur or feathers given to a hawk, together with its food, to promote digestion.

*Cere*: The wax like skin above or round the beak.

*Check*: To leave the bird flown at for another.

*Coping*: Trimming and paring the beak and talons.

*Crabbing*: Hawks fighting with one another.

*Deck Feathers*: The two centre feathers of the tail.

*Enter*: To train a hawk to a particular quarry.

*Eyass, Eyas, Eyess*: A hawk taken from the nest.

*Falcon*: Means the female of any hawk as opposed to the male, when used by falconers. Naturalists use the word to signify a long-winged as opposed to a short-winged hawk.

*Falcon Gentle*: Another name for a peregrine.

*Frounce:* A disease in the mouth and throat of a hawk.

*Gorge:* To give a hawk as much as she will eat.

*Hack:* A state of liberty in which young eyasses are kept for some weeks to enable them to gain power of wing.

*Hack-board:* A board or table upon which the hawks at hack are daily fed.

*Haggard:* A hawk captured after she has assumed the mature plumage- i.e. is two years old at least.

*Hood:* A cap of leather used for blinding a hawk, so as to bring her under proper control

*Imp:* To repair broken feathers.

*Intermewed:* A hawk that has been moulted in confinement.

*Jesses:* Leather straps about six inches long permanently secured to the legs of a hawk.

*Leash:* A leathern thong fastened by a swivel to the jesses in order to secure the hawk to a perch or block.

*Make-Hawk:* An old hawk flown with a young one to assist and encourage her.

*Manned:* A hawk that is tame enough to endure the company of strangers.

*Mantled:* To sit on the perch with the wings and tail fully spread - a sign of an ill-tempered hawk.

*Mews:* The place where hawks are kept.

*Mutes:* Hawks droppings.

*Nares:* Hawks nostrils.

*Nestling:* The same as an eyass.

*Pannel:* The gut of a hawk.

*Passage:* The regular flight of any quarry to or from its feeding ground; also the annual migration of hawks.

*Passage-Hawks:* Hawks which are caught when they are fully grown, as they migrate.

*Perch:* The pole or rail on which hawks are usually kept within doors.

*Pitch:* The highest point to which a hawk rises when waiting on.

*Point, to make:* The perpendicular shoot up of a hawk over the exact spot where the quarry has put in.

*Put in:* The quarry is put in when driven to take refuge in some covert.

*Put over:* To digest food.

*Quarry:* The game flown at.

*Ramage:* Wild and stubborn.

*Rangle:* Small stones that hawks take with their food to aid digestion.

*Reclaim:* To tame a hawk, or bring her from her wild condition to such a point that she is fit to enter at quarry.

*Red Hawk:* A hawk of the first year - i.e. in the "red" or immature plumage (sometimes also termed a 'soar' hawk).

*Ring:* To rise in wide circles, or spirally.

*Rousing:* Shaking all the feathers.

*Ruffer Hood:* A hood of peculiar construction used for freshly-caught hawks.

*Serving a hawk:* Driving out the quarry which has "put in" to the hawk as she waits overhead.

*Slight Falcon:* A peregrine.

*Stoop:* The rapid descent from a height upon the quarry.

*Swivel:* Used as a link to attach the jesses to the leash, and to prevent entanglement.



*Tiercel, Tercel, Tassel:* The male hawk as opposed to the female; he being a "tierce" or third smaller in size.

*Truss:* To clutch hold of the quarry in the air.

*Varvels:* Small rings of brass or silver which used to be attached to the end of the jesses. Now disused and a swivel adopted, being less likely to become entangled in trees, etc.

*Waiting on:* To soar steadily above the head of the falconer or his dog, in expectation of the springing of game.

*Watching or Waking:* Sitting up at night with a newly caught hawk, so as to tire out and tame her.

*Weathering:* Is placing the hawks unhooded upon their blocks in the open air.

*Yarak:* An Indian term to signify good flying condition.

(Lascelles 1892 )

## Appendix III

Appendix III



Figure I  
*The Illustrated London News* October 4<sup>th</sup> 1856  
Magpie hawking in England



Figure II  
*The Illustrated London News Supplement* June 13<sup>th</sup> 1857  
Fanciful exotic falconry in India



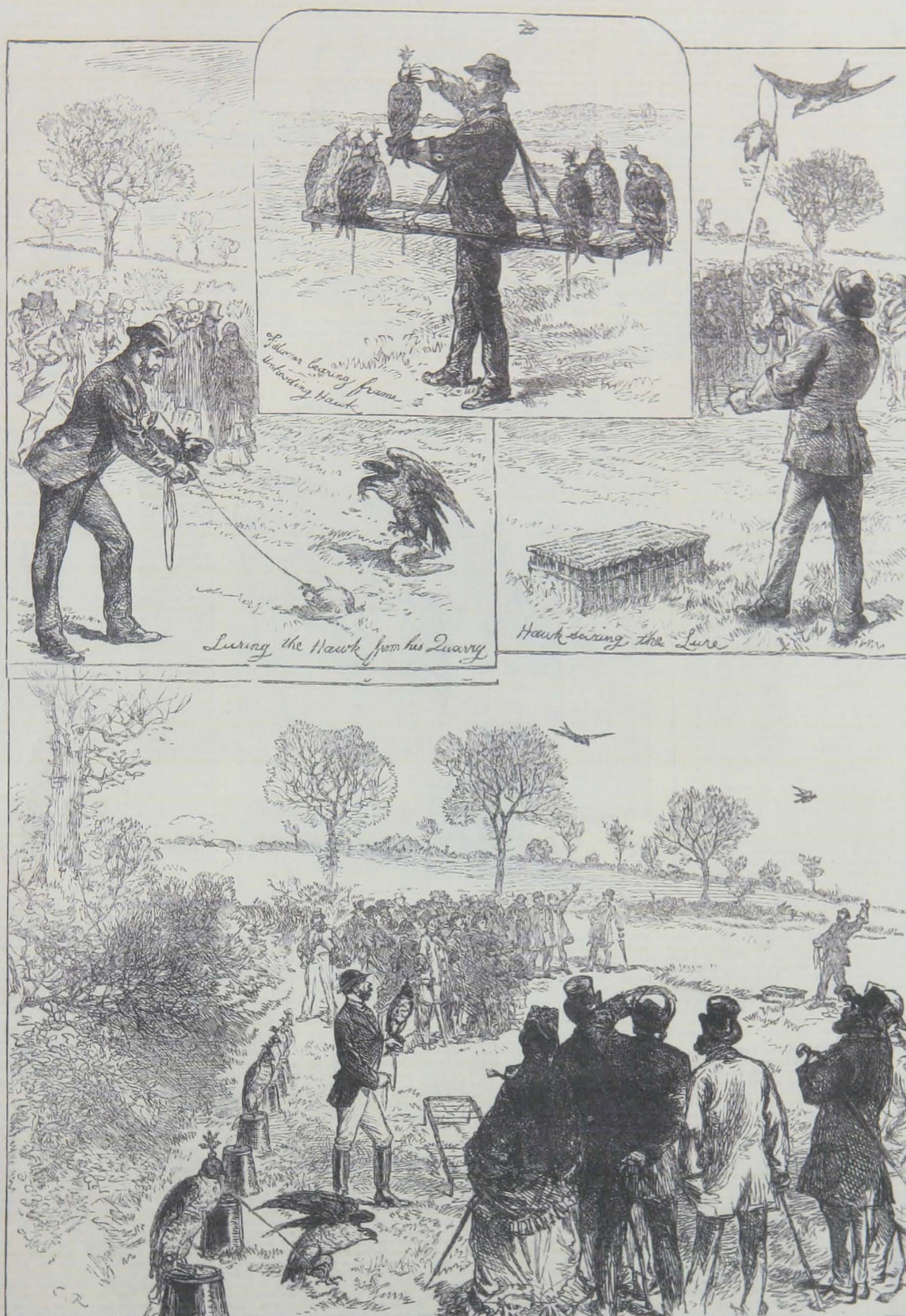


Figure III  
*The Illustrated London News* December 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1871  
 The professional falconer giving the display is John Barr





Figure IV  
R.G.Reeve: The Fatal Stoop. circa 1830  
Repeating the mythology of how falcons attack their prey



Figure V  
Landseer 'The Chieftain's Friends' 1828



Figure VI  
Landseer: 'A Falconer' 1837



Figure VII  
Sonderland: Le vol du Heron 1. circa 1840





Figure VIII  
Sonderland: Le vol du Heron 2. circa 1840



Figure IX  
A black-line engraving of a trained 'falcon' dated 1803. Whilst the hood is reasonably well detailed, and of the common or Dutch style, the artist evidently had no actual experience of falconry: the hawk is restrained by a single jess which is impractical and would doubtless lead to leg injury.



Figure X  
A Gyr Falcon: image circa 1790



Figure XI  
A Peregrine: image circa 1790



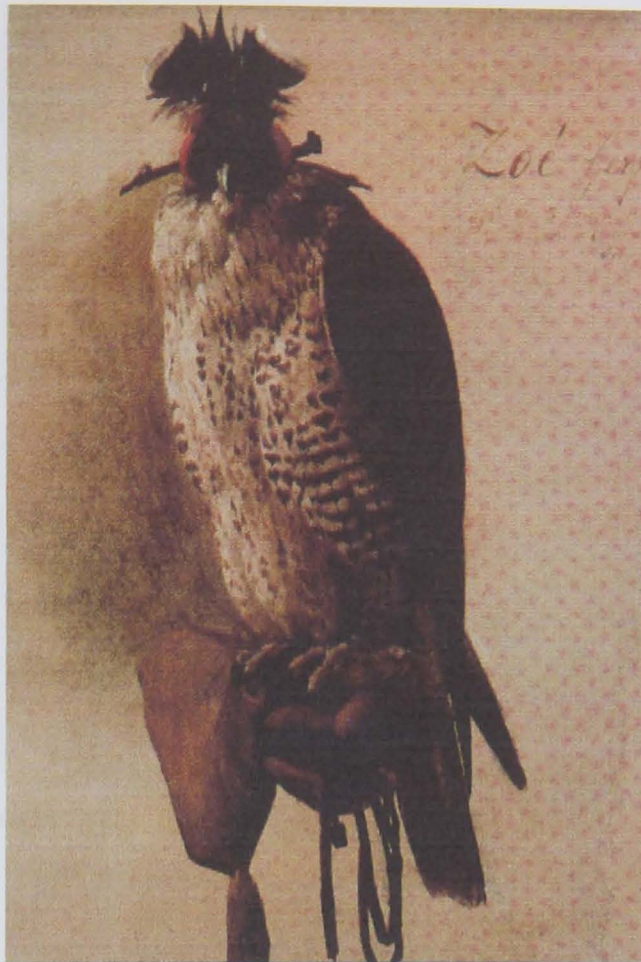


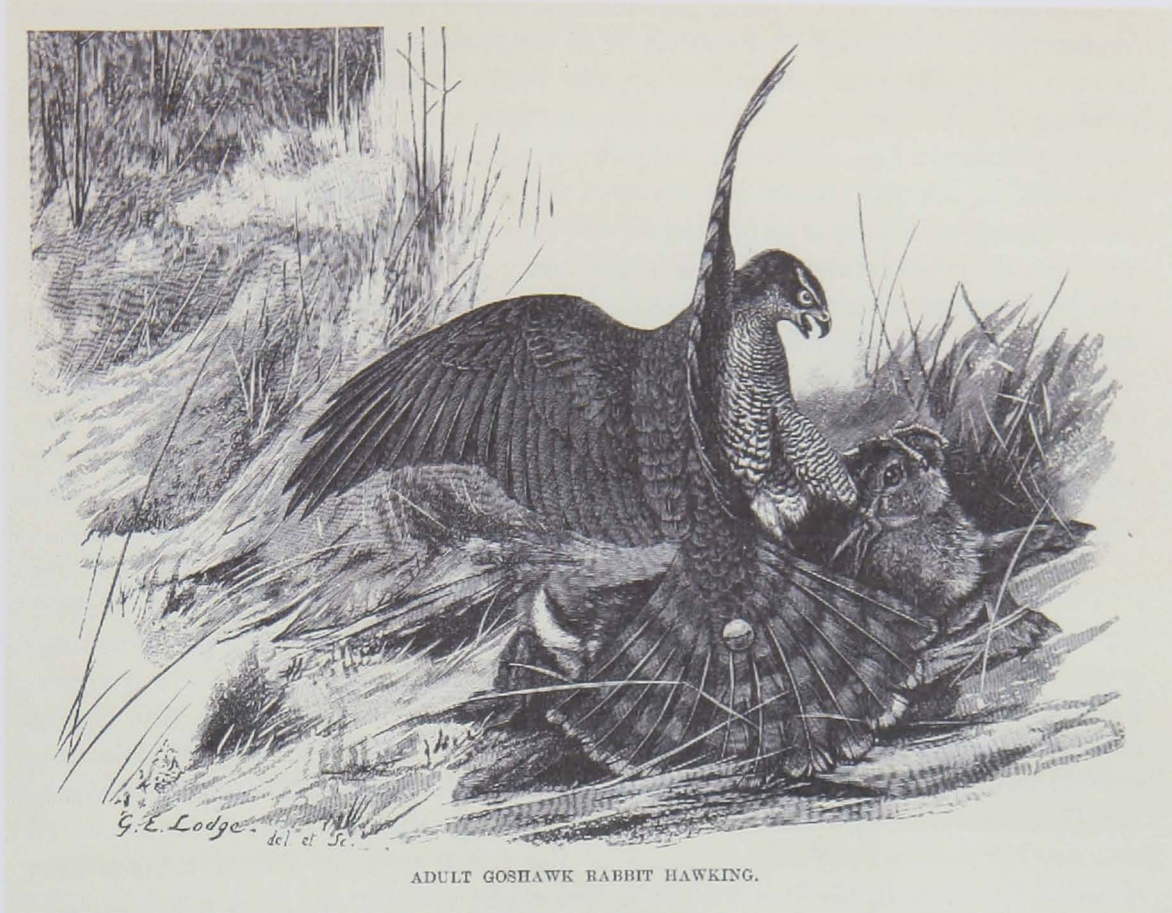
Figure XII

The Gyrfalcon 'Zoe' used by the Royal Loo Hawking Club in the early 1840s. This work is widely attributed to Wolf, although Van de Wall (2004) claims it was actually painted by the artist Dubourcq. The style is clearly more naturalistic than that seen in figure IX, X, & XI



Figure XIII

The British hawking in India. circa 1890



ADULT GOSHAWK RABBIT HAWKING.

Figure XIV

Lodge: Adult Goshawk Rabbit Hawking. circa 1890