

The

Falconers

& RAPTOR CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

Summer '93

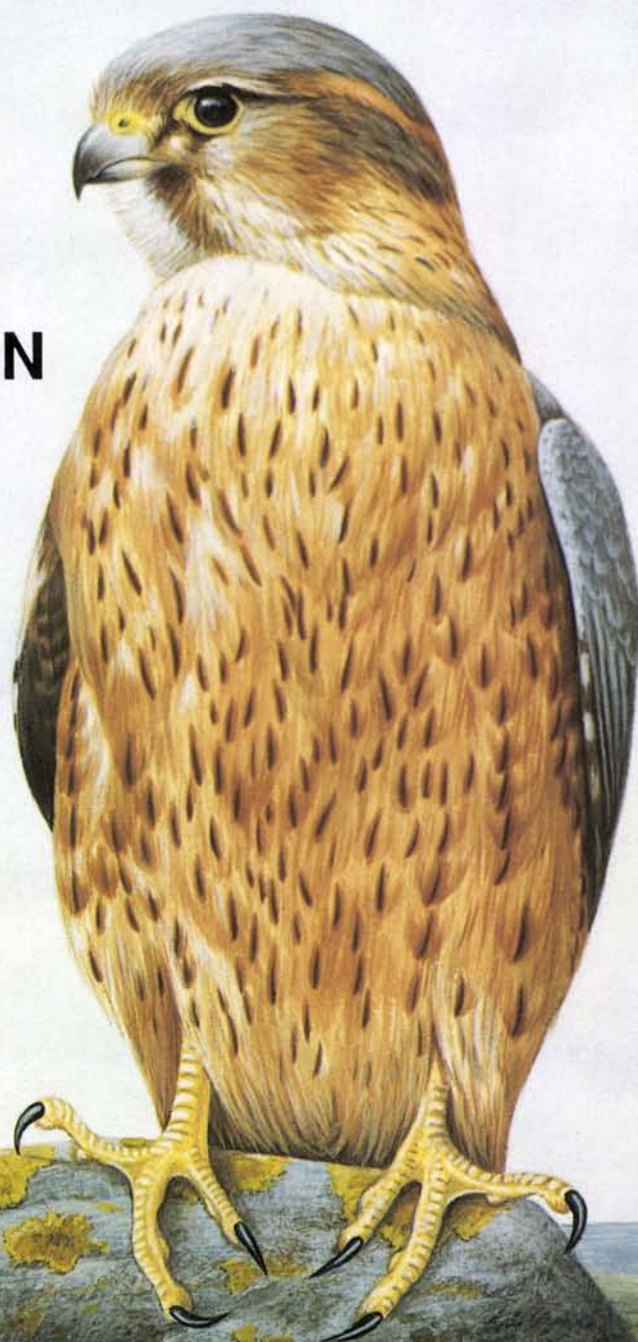
£2.50



THE MERLIN

**RAPTORS IN
MOROCCO**

**FERRU-TAIL
COME
TRUE**



**HOODS
&
HOODING**

**RAPTORS
IN
ART**

ISSN 0967-2206



9 770967 220001

C. Christoforou 93 ©

Cotswold Falconry Centre

Falconry Courses:

Join us for a day on our very popular introductory course.

Hunting Parties:

Early booking essential for 93/94 Hunting Parties.

Falcon Leisure:

Here with a full range of Falconry Equipment, Books and Video's.

We now sell Honeybrook Farm's best quality Hawk Food.

**Cotswold Falconry Centre, Batsford Park,
Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos. GL56 9QB.**

Telephone: (Blockley) 0386 701043.

*Open 7 days a week from March 1st - October 31st and open weekends only
during November and December*



Falconry.

**Exciting All
Absorbing Holiday
With a Difference**

*Scotlands renowned
centre offers holidays
in which you will be
flying falcons and
hawks, in scenic and beautiful Border
countryside.*

From Novice to Advanced courses including
falconry from horseback.

Fully residential status. We cater for all age
groups.

Send now for full colour brochure or telephone
**L. & D. M. Durman-Walters,
The Scottish Academy of Falconry &
Related Studies, Hyndlee, Bonchester
Bridge, Hawick TD9 9TB.
Telephone: 045086 666**

THE SCOTTISH ACADEMY OF
FALCONRY



& RELATED STUDIES

BRITISH FALCONERS' CLUB

Founded in 1927



We offer free help and advice to anyone who wants to take
up the sport of falconry.

We strongly recommend that nobody should acquire a hawk
without first learning how to handle, feed it, and generally
see to its welfare.

We are the largest and oldest hawking club in the country.
We work closely with the British Field Sports Society (BFSS),
The Federation of Field Sports Associations of EEC (FACE)
and other organisations to see that legislation in EEC or
Britain does not endanger falconry.

For free leaflets please send an A4 S.A.E. with 42p stamp to:-

**THE BRITISH FALCONERS' CLUB
HOME FARM FM, HINTS, Nr TAMWORTH,
STAFFORDSHIRE B78 3DW.**

SUMMER 1993

No. 15

Front cover painting:
Merlin by Chris Christoforou.

Published quarterly by:
**THE FALCONER & RAPTOR
CONSERVATION MAGAZINE**

D & LR Wilson
20 Bridle Road,
Burton Latimer,
Kettering,
Northants.,
NN15 5QP.

Telephone: (0536) 722794
Fax: (0536) 722794

Editors:
LYN WILSON/DAVID WILSON
(0536) 722794

Design:
D. PERKINS

Advertising Executive:
LYN WILSON
(0536) 722794

Subscriptions:
Rates: UK & Eire £12.50
Europe £16.00
Airmail £24.00

Cheque/Postal Order payable to:
The Falconers Magazine.
For more details phone:
0536 722794

Marketing Manager:
Jeffrey A. Wilson P.G.D., B.A

The views expressed in this magazine are the views of the author. No responsibility for the quality of goods or services offered in this magazine can be accepted by the publishers or the printers, and the advertisements are accepted in good faith.

All material included in the Falconers and Raptors Conservation Magazine is copyright Falcon Publishing 1993, and may not be reproduced in part or whole without the written permission of the publishers.

The Falconers

& RAPTOR CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

With birds heavily into the moult and the breeding season is well under way most of you have time to reminisce over the last years hawking season and I'm sure will by now be thinking of the forthcoming season. Some with new eyasses and many with their seasoned, trusted hawks.

Just a few weeks away, 30th & 31st May, will see the Falconers Fair. This must surely be one of the most impressive gatherings of falconers this country has ever seen. **DO NOT FORGET WE ARE AT ALTHORP HOUSE THIS YEAR.** We look forward to seeing you there.

Ed.
Poem in the last issue with no name was sent in by Jamie Heesom

NEXT ISSUE
The Adventures of
a Forest Hunter.

An Irish Safari.

**Ferruginous
Hawk, Lanner &
Lugger Falcon -
Do They Make
Good Hunting
Birds?**

FEATURES


| | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|----|
| Raptors in Art..... | Kim Thompson | 8 |
| Poem | Sheila Loakes | 11 |
| Ferru-tail Comes True | | 12 |
| Tree-Nesting Hen Harriers | Don Scott | 16 |
| No Comparison | Steve Radford | 19 |
| Hybrids | D. Durman-Walters | 26 |
| Hawk Conservancy..... | Paul Browne | 28 |



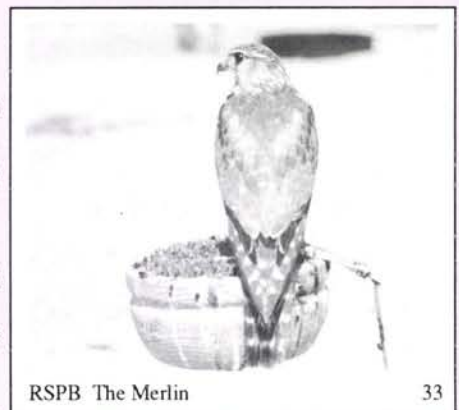
Hawk Conservancy

28

REGULARS

| | | |
|--|----------------|----|
| Ferrets for Working or Pets | Bryan Cockings | 10 |
| Raptors in Morocco | Philip Snow | 20 |
| <i>This is part of an ongoing series of a personal view of raptors in different countries.</i> | | |
| Gundogs for Falconry | Guy Wallace | 24 |
|  THE MERLIN | Mike Everett | 33 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----|
| RAPTORK: | | |
| Hoods and Hooding | Griff Griffiths | 36 |



RSPB The Merlin

33

UP-TO-DATE

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|----|
| News - Clubs | | 4 |
| Review | | 7 |
| Competition | | 7 |
| Raptor Rescue | Mick Cunningham | 15 |
| Letters | | 22 |
| How to Subscribe | | 35 |
| Classifieds | | 38 |



Ferru-tail Comes True

12

News

THE 1993 FALCONERS FAIR

This years May Bank Holiday 30th - 31st, will see the Falconers Field Raptor Fair at its new venue at Althorp House on the outskirts of Northampton, the family home of Earl Spencer. The Fair is set to be as successful as other years with a few surprises in store.

The main arena will be hive of activity with the very high standard of flying displays being given by Bryan Patterson and Terry Large.

Roger James will be sharing his knowledge of dogs with us. Being a well respected falconer himself, he understands what is required of dogs working under birds of prey.


Chris Christoforou has organised the most superb display of wildlife art with over thirteen artists exhibiting from all over the country.

There is to be a large number of Falconry and Hawking Clubs attending and I'm sure you will be able to find one in your area. As this is one of the best ways to talk to people and gain some first hand experience of these magnificent birds.

There will also be the largest gathering of falconry-related traders bringing with them all you could possibly need. There are discounts for large parties and camping facilities for those of you who are travelling a long way.

**ALTHORP
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

By kind permission of
Earl Spencer



**NEW
VENUE**

ring 0588 672708

L to R: Terry Large with Lanner falcon, Organiser Ron Morris, Bryan Patterson with Lanner Falcon.

MICROCHIPPING DAY

In the near future I am hoping to arrange with a vet a day's microchipping. The more people that are interested the cheaper it will be. It will mean, however, bringing your bird(s) to a pre-arranged destination that has yet to be decided. Anyone who is interested in having their birds chipped please contact me for further details. I cannot emphasise enough the need for this to be done. Once microchipped, it is then identifiable for life and if it is stolen you stand a better chance of proving the offence, and more importantly, returning it to the rightful owner.

For more information, please telephone:- Paul Beecroft: (0734) 536257.

SEBASTIAN THE EAGLE BEAMS HISTORIC PICTURES FROM THE SKY

A fourteen year old golden eagle called Sebastian has secured an unusual place in the history of broadcasting by becoming the first eagle to transmit his own 'in-flight' moving pictures.

BBC Engineers fitted Sebastian with a 10 ounce miniature camera and transmitter to relay his bird's eye view pictures back to the ground for a new television series called "COUNTRYWOMEN", being made by the Lake District-based Independent production company, John Peel Productions for screening on BBC 2.

Sebastian, whose previous screen exploits have included being fitted with a saddle to carry a prosthetic pixie for the fantasy film WILLOW, was recorded in a take off and landing sequence for a programme about falconry expert, Emma Ford.

Producer Paddy McCreanor wanted shots of the bird landing on Emma's gloved hand and had the idea of using a miniature camera to get the in-flight sequence. Engineers Dave Lees and Adrian Lane, from the Special Facilities team at BBC Television's Outside Broadcasting Unit at Acton were called in to design a working system.

Although miniature cameras of this type have previously been fitted to larger animals, it's the first time that a television transmission has got off the ground on the back of a bird. The engineers worked to a strict weight limit using a commercially available Japanese miniature camera and a radio links unit soldering together some standard Triple A batteries.

The output was good for about 200 yards, strictly line of sight to a portable 12 inch microwave dish mounted on a tripod. The Special Facilities team is now looking at ways of extending the range of Sebastian's transmissions.

Paddy said today: "It has produced some marvellous pictures which are a first for television anywhere in the world. They will be used to show the scene from an eagle's point of view as Sebastian takes off and flies towards Emma at tremendous speed."



Final adjustments to Sebastian's camera and transmitter pack for his historic flight.

CONVICTIONS

1. In 1992, the first ever use, in a British Court, of D.N.A. profiling to help convict a bird of prey keeper, believed to have been in possession of wild Goshawks. JOSEPH SEIGA from Prescott, Merseyside, was fined £100.00 plus £100.00 costs after pleading guilty to a charge of possessing four juvenile Goshawks.

Enquiries by Merseyside Police and the RSPB resulted in the discovery of an adult female Goshawk and a brood of four juveniles. Mr Seiga claimed that he had bred the juveniles that year from the female and a male borrowed from another keeper.

In order to prove or disprove this, blood samples were taken by a vet from all five Goshawks for the purpose of D.N.A. analysis.

D.N.A. "fingerprinting" is a technique which has its major use in human paternity analysis but the methods has also been applied to other vertebrate species. Analysis of the D.N.A. profiles showed conclusively, that whilst the four juvenile Goshawks were all siblings, they were not related to the adult female.

I feel that the R.S.P.B. have done a first class job in respect of this conviction and should be commended for it.

2. Following a joint operation by myself and the Lancashire Police into the theft of some Falcons, a premises in Rossendale, Lancs., was searched and one Peregrine, one Sparrowhawk and two Kestrels were found that were suspected of being kept illegally.

On 7/1/93 PETER TALBOT of Bacup, Lancs., appeared at Rossendale Magistrates Court charged with illegal possession of these birds and failing to register and ring them in accordance with regulations.

The Magistrates found him guilty for which he received:-

- (1) Conditional discharge
- (2) Costs - £102.00
- (3) Forfeiture of the birds.

3. A colleague of mine, P.C. ANDY MAWE, of Humberside Police, also a falconer, has recently dealt with a case concerning a range of animal/bird related offences.

On 22/12/92, ADRIAN ROBERTS, of Brigg, S. Humberside, appeared at Scunthorpe Magistrates Court charged with the following:-

- (1) Abandoning a Cockatiel
- (2) Keeping birds that were not registered, i.e. Kestrels, Common Buzzards, Harris Hawks, Redtails.
- (3) Keeping Tawny Owls confined in a basket
- (4) Illegal possession of Tawny Owls
- (5) Causing suffering to Red-eared Terrapins.

Roberts was sentenced to 120 hours Community Service and a Forfeiture Order was made in respect of all animals and birds seized.

Paul K. Beecroft.

FALCONRY & RAPTOR ORGANISATIONS' SPONSORED RIDE FOR CANCER RESEARCH

Bob Haddon has been associated with falconry and birds of prey for more years than he probably cares to remember. His interest in the sport developed from a part-time hobby to the stage where he became involved in a full-time capacity. He was a familiar sight at all the leading Game and Country Fairs, where his displays were highly regarded both by the general public and those within the Falconry fraternity. He was, and indeed still is, an excellent ambassador for the sport of Falconry and the general welfare of all birds of prey.

Bob's objective is to raise at least £6,000 towards Cancer Research. This undertaking was spurred on by the loss, within a short space of time, of two of his friends, both of whom were keen falconers. The method of fund-raising Bob has chosen to adopt is in the form of a sponsored cycle ride. He proposes to leave from his home in Scotland on May 24th and cycle through Scotland, progressing through Northern Ireland, Southern Ireland, Wales and finally, into England, culminating with his hopeful (!) arrival on May 30th/31st at the British Falconry & Raptor Fair at Althorp Park, Northants. This is an approximate overall journey of 325 miles and major towns en route include Stranraer, Belfast, Dublin, Holyhead and Shrewsbury.

Bob would appreciate as much support as possible in the venture. Due to the falconry orientated connections, we have chosen to approach clubs and associations with an interest in birds of prey. Sponsorship forms are available from your branch/club secretary or from Bob Stanley, 11 School House Lane, Walsgrave, Coventry CV2 2BA.

Completed sponsorship forms and any monies collected should be returned to your branch/club secretary or direct to Bob Stanley at the address above.

Please make cheques payable to:
'Falconry & Raptor Cancer Research Fund.'

The organisers would like to take this opportunity to thank you, on behalf of Cancer Research, for your support.

THE MUNCASTER OWL CENTRE



Snowy Owl

The Owl Centre now has 26 different species of world Owls, plus an observation unit with close circuit television cameras on owls nests and also a Diary Theatre Information Centre. In there we have owl videos running continuously throughout the day along with general information plus displays of owl skeletons, skins and exploded pellets etc.

We are holding a Conservation Weekend on 19th and 20th June. Various conservation

organisations have stalls during this particular weekend. During the course of the weekend we give guided tours of the grounds with a conservation emphasis, e.g. there is a birds nest box walk, wildflower walk, owl habitat walk, and how to create your own wildflower meadow.

For more information contact Jenny Thurston, Tel: 0229 717393.



Woodford's Owl

THE MILL ON THE SOAR FALCONRY CENTRE



In June 1992, Richard opened a Falconry Centre at The Mill On The Soar in Leicestershire.

The Mill On The Soar is a Hotel, Lakeside Restaurant and Pub, with a fishing lake and Children's Play Area.

The Falconry Centre, situated behind The Mill, is well laid out with large open-fronted aviaries, one of which contains a pair of Redtailed hawks which look all set to breed this year.

Richard flies a variety of birds for his displays, including a Saker and a lovely male Kestrel which he has now encouraged to hover overhead, then stoop to the lure in true falcon fashion.

Display times vary depending upon visitors' requirements.

Richard also offers Hunting Days, School visits, talks and lectures and there's a discount on the entrance fee for parties.

The Scottish Centre For Falconry at Turfhill, Kinross, is run by Philip Allen and Sylvia Hughes.

There is an exhibition and Information Centre in which the history of falconry is fully described together with information on the conservation and breeding birds of prey.

Flying demonstrations are given at regular intervals during the day and one of the main attractions must be the free flying Golden Eagle. In-between times, you can browse in the Gift Shop and buy a souvenir or stroll down the Hawk Walk where you can take some lovely photographs.

During the breeding season you can, with the aid of Close Circuit T.V., see chicks being fed by their parents.

Other attractions include: Coffee Shop, Garden Centre, Craft & Gift Shop and Golf Shop.

For more information telephone 0577 862010.

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL

Visitors to the National Birds of Prey Centre near Newent in Gloucestershire will soon be able to see its newest arrivals, two baby Verraux Eagles, sometimes called 'Black Eagles.' Only one baby was bred last year but this year they have doubled their success and are keeping their fingers crossed for a couple more.

Adult Verraux Eagle



C lubs

THE SCOTTISH HAWKING CLUB

The Scottish Hawking Club held its seventh and final Field Meeting of the season at Leuchars, in Fife, on the 14th March, numbers attending were down on normal due to hawks being put down for the moult, so it was more flights for those that attended. The meeting was held near the coast on unimproved pasture and grass clad sand dunes with rabbits in their hundreds. I've never seen so many holes in my life, we started by walking through some rough with regenerating birch scrub, but any rabbits out were away and down holes before the hawks could get to them, so we moved on to some warrens out on the pasture and started ferreting, much to our surprise, rabbits started bolting immediately and in multiples which added in testing the hawks, the first half dozen hit were able to escape by dragging the Harris's through sheep fences, gorse bushes or just down holes but it wasn't long before Iain Campbell's female Harris nailed a good rabbit before it could make cover. The Eagles were making very hard work of it as the country was as flat as a pancake and the rabbits were down holes before they could get anywhere near them but the female American Bald Eagle put in some good flights and on a couple of occasions when she caught some wind, showed those that hadn't seen it before, what a flying door looks like!

In the afternoon we moved on to some rougher grass dunes with more single holes rather than large warrens and still they bolted well, with only Hamish having to be dug out twice that day, and backed up rabbits, which for those of you who know Hamish, is unheard of. The Eagles left early afternoon for a feed-up back at the car as Stuart Steven's male Harris had been intimidated all morning by these big beasts near him and he had never really settled, so this gave him a chance to have a go. Some extremely good flights were had over undulating ground with the big strong rabbits showing that they just had the edge over the birds, but nevertheless, with the sun out, warm sea breezes, it was a very contented bunch of falconers that retired back to the cars at about 4pm.



For details send SAE to: L to R: A. Knowles-Brown, S. Stephen, I. Cambell, L. Haigh, N. Rostron.
The Scottish Hawking Club,
Crookedstane, Elvanfoot, By Biggar, Lanarkshire ML12 6RL, Tel: (086 45) 287/245.

WELSH HAWKING CLUB REPORT

Another hawking season comes to close and I hope everyone has ended happily with hawks, dogs, ferrets and sanity intact.

At the start of the season, the CLA Game Fair was well attended by Club members (as indeed it was by other Clubs, Societies and individuals) and, in my opinion, was a first class shop window for Falconry and allied activities.

Club members who swept the moors in the Autumn report excellent sport and high quality falconry and camaraderie and this can also be said for the short and broadwing fliers, individuals of whom I have spoken to, who have recorded fine hunting, due to the mild winter and abundance of quarry.

The Welsh Hawking Clubs' 30th Anniversary International Field Meeting was held on the Llyn Peninsula, courtesy of some very obliging landowners, arranged by Gary Morris and Jerry Large and organised by the Club Committee. It was well attended by both members and guests; high standards were maintained all around and the whole thing finishing with a superb feast, with votes of thanks given by the Vice-Chairman - who, incidentally, continues to shatter the age-old myth that all Welshmen can sing.

The Club held its AGM in February and the Rules and Constitution were revised, bringing the Club, hopefully, into the 1990's. Membership remains healthy with applications arriving monthly, both from home and abroad, at a steady rate, and, although like any Club people drift in and out, we can boast a good rolling average of just under 500.

With hawking now over but the breeding season about to begin, I wish you all a good moult and the best of luck for the future.

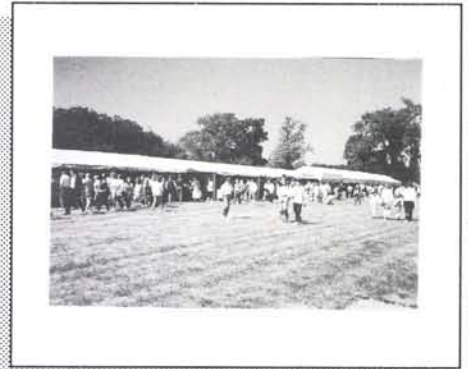
10 FREE TICKETS TO THE FALCONERS & RAPTOR FAIR

30th and 31st May

How to Enter

Answer the question and write it on a postcard along with your name, address and telephone number and send to competition, 20 Bridle Road, Burton Latimer, Kettering, Northants, NN15 5QP.

All entries to be received no later than 19th May 1993.



Question

Name the famous Royal Lady who has close connections with Althorp House?

Review by Tizi Hodson

THE HUNTING FALCON

Author: Bruce Haak

Published in Canada

Available from normal U.K. Falconry Dealers

Price: £19.95



This well presented hardback book is suitable for those just about to start in falconry as well as to falconers who already have some years experience in the sport but who are still eager to receive 'outside' views, which may include methods or techniques that can improve upon their own ways.

Bruce covers the basics such as furniture and housing the new arrival, through to the in-field hunting tips that are seldom included in a book. (Some adjustments must be made for the differing views held regarding "bagged quarry" which was always used in historical times, but in the U.K. today is likely to raise eyebrows.

The book also covers aspects of the sport such as choice of hawk as a hunting partner and discussion on hawking dogs and the various breeds best suited to the land that is available to hunt over.

Captive breeding and rearing of eyasses are included as well as the author's views on the advantages, or otherwise, of imprinted, socially imprinted and parent-reared birds.

Although this is definitely a modern book on falconry, it is lovely to see the old method of 'walking' hawks condoned rather than condemned and dismissed out of hand as is often the case in contemporary books where it is labeled as merely time-consuming and unnecessary.

A good section on the use and practicalities of telemetry includes the pro's and con's of leg, neck and tail mounting.

In conclusion, I can say that "The Hunting Falcon" is a well-written book that covers a great deal of the important areas of our sport and that it does so in sensible detail. It is also enhanced by a multitude of excellent photo's and line drawings. Certainly a book that many can benefit from within the hawking fraternity, yet also it will prove interesting to non-hawkers too.

Falconry MARTIN JONES Furniture



THE FIRST NAME IN PRACTICAL, TOP QUALITY, ORIGINAL FALCONRY EQUIPMENT.

Over 25 years unrivalled experience supplying superior equipment to a wide range of falconers, including many of the world's leading exponents.

Only top quality materials used in manufacture.

Our unique working knowledge of most birds currently used in falconry enables us to produce a range of equipment unsurpassed for fit, quality and practical use.

Most items are available ex-stock, or can be made to customers requirements

BOOKS, VIDEOS AND PRINTS & LONG RANGE TELEMETRY

We stock one of the largest range of books currently in print, as well as several out-of-print titles, plus a comprehensive range of videos. We also supply a few fine art prints from world-famous artists.

Free Pewter Badge with orders over £25

COLOUR CATALOGUES

Send S.A.E. for Furniture & Book Lists to:-
Martin Jones, The Lodge, Huntley Manor, Huntley,
Gloucestershire GL19 3HG.
Telephone: 0452 830629

FULL ACCESS/VISA FACILITIES AVAILABLE. FAST MAIL ORDER SERVICE

Customers welcome to visit us weekdays (or at weekends by arrangement)

ADVICE:— We offer free advice on all falconry and raptor keeping matters (please 'phone during normal working hours if possible).

RAPTORS IN ART

by Kim Thompson

Birds of prey and falconry have long been inspiring subjects for wildlife artists. It cannot be denied that the fierce elegance and beauty of all raptors does seem to set them apart from most other birds, making them a challenging and exciting subject for the artist. Some artists have, in fact, narrowed their subjects down to painting only raptors; perfecting their skills and knowledge with years of study and observation of the birds. These artists are often also keen falconers, keeping and flying the falcons that appear in their paintings. Such involvement often threatens their painting careers, falconry frequently proving to be a bigger attraction than painting! Anthony Rhodes, an artist whose fine watercolours are evidence of a substantial knowledge of birds of prey, admits to a perpetual struggle between his painting and his love of falconry.

All wildlife artists have different ways of tackling the challenge of painting raptors and styles differ greatly. Some work in a very controlled, illustrative style, as can be seen in the paintings of Ron David Digby. With a formidable history of illustrating and painting birds for exhibitions, limited edition prints and books



Bengalese Eagle Owl by Paul Apps.



Ken Stroud's 'The Plucking Post.'

(including such publications as Tom Cade's 'The falcons of the World' and Hal Webster's 'Game Hawking at its Very best') Ron David Digby's work is faultless in its attention to feather detail and accurate portrayal of the falcons in their natural habitat.

Painstakingly observed, Chris Christoforou's birds and the habitats in which they are to be

Painted are all carefully researched before painting begins, he maintains that it is equally important to paint the environment accurately, with its variety of plants and trees, as it is to draw the bird correctly! (An opinion expressed by most painters of wildlife).

To enable the artist to achieve



A Peregrine head study painted by Kim Thompson.



Saker Falcon in the Saudi Desert by Chris Christoforou.

this end, sketchbooks are a necessary discipline and photography an invaluable aid in the endless collection of reference material. Many artists also use study skins and taxidermy specimens to facilitate an even more precise study of their subject.

Some artists, however, can skillfully present the impression of detail while painting fairly loose. The work of Andrew Ellis is striking in this respect. A love of falcons and falconry is obvious in his paintings where his confident understanding of bird anatomy is combined with an impressive use of light and shade to great effect.

Working exclusively in graphite pencil, the delicate drawings of Katie Wendover provide a complete contrast to the paintings of other wildlife artists. Relying on the tones and textures within the birds to create interest, her detailed studies of raptors are almost photographic. Just as detailed are the intricate miniatures of David Cook. His

tiny paintings of raptors and other birds demand a steady hand and exact rendering of the subject to achieve such results on this small a scale.

Whatever the medium used by wildlife artists in their paintings of raptors, all strive to capture the very essence of the bird of prey which first inspired them. Those artists who achieve this are not only skilled with pencil and paintbrush but also possess a sound knowledge and love of their subject. We only have to look at their work to appreciate this fact.



Burrowing Owls by John Parsons.

For all who are interested in raptor art, a trip to this year's British Falconry and Raptor Fair at Althorp House, Northampton, is recommended. Here, some of this country's most outstanding wildlife artists will be exhibiting their work, including all the artists featured in this article.



A detailed study of a Peregrine by Katie Wendover.



A Spotted Eagle Owl by Yvonne Hughes.



A miniature of a Common Buzzard by David Cook.



The popular Barn Owl by Andrew Benfield.



Two Peregrines with their quarry by Ron David Digby.



A Peregrine surveys the mountain scene, by Anthony Rhodes..



The magnificent American Bald Eagle by Andrew Ellis.



Border Country Fairs

34 Port Street, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 6AW
Tel: (0386) 48974 Fax: (0386) 443245

YORKSHIRE DALES GAME & COUNTRY FAIR

July 31st and August 1st 1993

1/4 mile off the A65 near Settle

Falconry Display by Yorkshire Dales
Falconry Centre

Nissan Air Display Team, parachutists going up and
coming down

Bungee Jumping, Hounds, Terrier and Lurcher Show
Gundogs, Fishing, Clay Pigeon Shooting etc.

"Hold a Hawk" - "Feel a Ferret" - "Flick a Fly"

Something For Everyone.

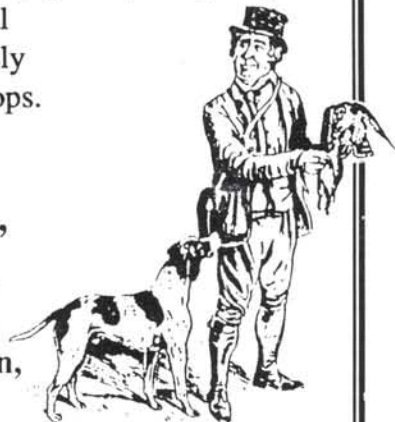
Enquiries (0386) 48974

THE FALCONER

QUALITY EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY ROY
HART

SEND FOR YOUR FREE CATALOGUE

Finest handcrafted equipment, using only the
best quality material
and made exclusively
in our own workshops.



"THE
FALCONER"

4 Croft Cottage
Banbury Road,
Stratford-On-Avon,
Warwickshire
Tel: 0789 262770

Simply the best in the field!

FERRETS FOR

Ferrets in Season

From about March both Jill and Hob ferrets come into season. They will stay this way until late September to early October. You can tell this by looking at the Jill's vulva.

It will be quite swollen. She is now ready for mating, either to have young or to be mated with a vasectomised Hob, in both cases, if there is more than one Jill, it is best to have the Hob in a cage by itself and introduce the Jill to the Hob.

After the Jill is taken from the Hob (usually after twenty four hours) the vulva will go down after seven to ten days, she will start to get fatter and towards the end of her pregnancy will start to make a nest. Then she will want peace and quiet for a couple of days, gestation takes six weeks. Don't be in too much of a hurry to look at the young kits which

can be anything from one to fourteen (usually five to eight) as the Jill may kill and eat them.

After the first week of mating, puppy or kitten vitamins can be added to the meal once a week. Calcium and yeast tablets can be crushed and sprinkled over the food. This will ensure the mother and kits will have strong bones and teeth.

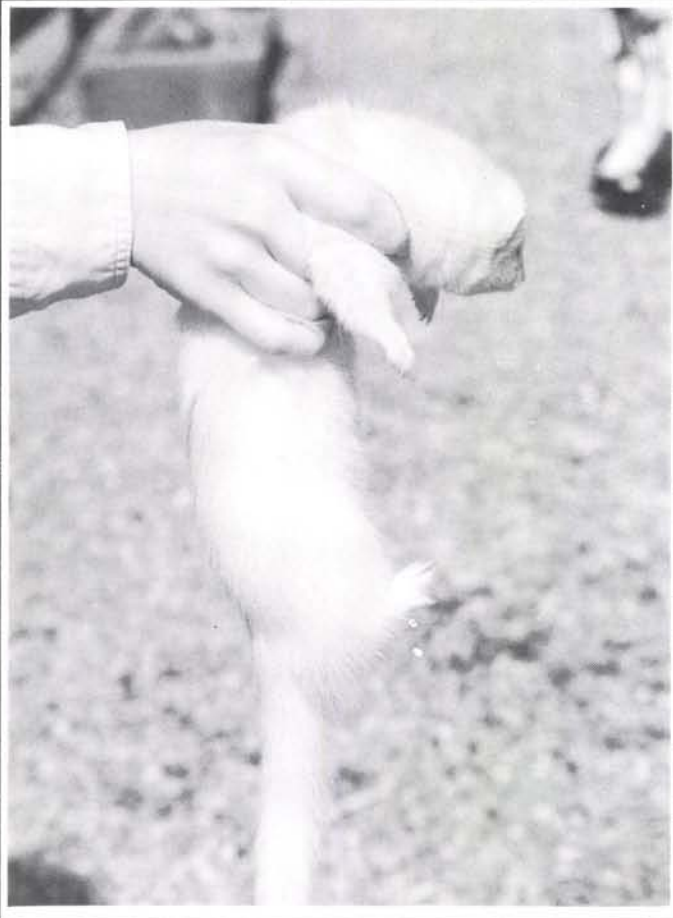
With the mating there could be quite a lot of noise and possibly squealing from the Jill, don't interfere. Leave them to it.

Mating with a vasectomised Hob is more or less the same without the Jill having young, the Jill is taken to the Hob the same, rough mating takes place. The Jill will go through the same routine as a pregnant Jill but after six weeks, no kits. This saves the Jill from



On examination, this female (Jill) ferret has a swollen vulva and is ready to be mated.

by Bryan Cockings



This is the correct way to hold a ferret.

being in season for a long time, also keeping down a large number of unwanted kits.

Not mating a Jill can result in a serious infection which can lead to death.

When the Hob comes into season his testes drop down and become more prominent. They have moved into his body cavity over winter and he may also become very aggressive to other Hobs and sometimes to humans. His odour will become much stronger.

The kits, when born, will be about an inch long, no fur and blind. After three or four weeks, the Jill will

take food to them and although they will have only very small pin-like teeth, they will suck and chew on this. At four to five weeks, still blind, they will begin to investigate their surroundings, only for the mother to drag them back into the nest. At six weeks their eyes will open.

Some ferret owners have been known to leave two or three other Jills in with the mother as foster mothers or 'aunties'. These will wash and clean the kits as well as looking after them as they were their own.

I Am An Apprentice Falconer

*I walk in weary from work,
and breathe a heavy sigh.
"Are you ready?" shouts the Boss,
The bird's waiting for a fly.*

*"Yes, I'm coming, just a jiff,"
I reply, clambering into jeans,
then run to don my wellies
for they're waiting eagerly, it seems.*

*Down to the fields, we all plod,
I, hawk upon my fist.
The Boss is marching onwards
lest quarry should be missed.*

*Through the hedges, over stiles,
wading through a brook.
Up hill, down hill on we go,
where was this in the instruction book?*

*He took me just the other day
to be measured for my glove.
The motive, so he could have his back,
not to be confused with love.*

*Now the nights are drawing in,
it's dark before I'm home,
and so my intrepid family
have to walk alone.*

*How I miss my nightly jaunts,
I wish I could be there
for though I'm moaning often
their trips I love to share.*

*I am an apprentice falconer,
and proud that I should be so,
for where the Boss and the Harris is
then I'll gladly go.*

Sheila Loakes

P.S. The "Boss" Phil Glover

WORLD FIRST

FERRUGINOUS HAWK CROSS REDTAILED HAWK

“A Ferru-tail Comes True”

Having been, for the last twenty years, an advocate of the shortwing style of 'hawking,' my experiences in the field have centred around suitable species, i.e. Goshawks, Ferruginous, Redtails and, latterly, Hawk-eagles. Each species has its merits and can give very satisfactory results in the field, when handled appropriately. Equally it could be argued, whilst having the greatest respect and admiration for mother nature's creations, that when these species are utilised in a specific way by man, there are certain areas where improvements would be welcome. For instance, when trying to fly, effectively, a broadwinged hawk on a windy day, in an area where there is no lift available. There are many examples, from the domestic racing pigeon to the greyhound that demonstrate the way in

which cross or selective breeding has created the enhanced performance desired by man. I would just like to add here that apart from their difficult temperament, it would be very hard to improve upon the performance of the true hawks (accipiters) or that of the Bonellis Eagle.

There are many examples these days of hybridising amongst falcons, using A.I. methods which are well known, but there are very few examples of shortwing, or more specifically, broadwing hybrids.

Some five years ago, having already flown and captive bred both Redtails and captive bred Ferruginous hawks, I began to believe that a combination of these two Buteos was, by natural methods, not only possible but was also, for a number of reasons, desirable. At worst the experiment would prove an interesting

reconnaissance expedition into the feasibility of hybridising Buteos.

My ultimate intention has been to attempt to combine the virtues and eradicate the less desirable characteristics. With the Redtail for instance; improve the poor performance on windy days and give it a faster coursing flight, also improve the desire and ability to return long distances, into wind, to the glove, finally, beef her up a little with a few extra ounces of muscle and bone, to help her tackle our European brown hares, which are considerably larger than their natural American cousins. For the Ferruginous, the aims are to improve the foot size, especially of the males, also to reduce the natural tendency to be ground orientated, finally, to give it the Redtail's adaptability and versatility.

Having made up my mind that the combination of these two species should produce a worthwhile result, I proceeded to set about establishing a pair. This pairing consisted of a male Redtail and a female Ferruginous. Within the limitations of space for this article, I am unable to describe in detail the many considerations made in the early days. Suffice to say that we cross-fostered the Redtail male chick to Ferruginous and the Ferruginous female chick to Redtail foster parents. They were placed together after they fledged and have remained together since. Development followed familiar patterns in behaviour up to sexual maturity. At two years old the female laid infertile eggs. At three she laid seven, five of which were fertile, one appeared to be double yolked, the remainder hatched without any problems and proved to be very vigorous right from the start. Three males and one female were raised, by their parents to fledging, again without problems.

After fledging, the young were removed to a nursery aviary, close observation followed for a number of weeks. Once I was sure they were all hard panned, wing length and foot span measurements were taken. To my utter delight none of the males displayed the short toes of the male Ferruginous, the exact sizes correspond with those of the Redtail (this supports my suspicion that the short toes are sex linked to the male Ferruginous gene). The wing lengths fell between those of the parent species. All young



It's impossible to look like this and be slow! Male in nursing aviary

By
Robert J. H. Creese

show the long legs of the Ferruginous. The tails, like the wings, are long. The head shape is like that of the Ferruginous but with a reduced gape width. The overall appearance is Ferruginous, with large feet. The looks can tell you a lot about a bird's nature, what about its subsequent field performance?

I realise in retrospect, that keeping the Ferru-tails for as long as I did, in order to obtain size/weight comparison data, was a mistake. It resulted in them becoming very wild, grossly overweight and consequently difficult for the recipient falconers to train. Nevertheless, at this point I shall quote brief extracts from reports with which I have been kindly supplied from the following pioneering falconers; Gary May, Dick Carr and Kevin Sanderson.

First, Gary of Kent, with the female, flying weight 3lbs 5ozs.

"It has been many hours of manning to quieten her down but it has been well worth the hard work. She is a very gentle natured bird but extremely strong and fast off the fist. She flew free three days before Christmas and caught her first quarry on Christmas eve, a Magpie!"

Second, Dick from Whitby, with a male, 2lbs 4ozs.

"I am very pleased with my bird, for many reasons. I like the shape and how he flies against, with and along with the wind. After a difficult start he has developed an almost imprint attitude towards me and seems to enjoy a walk out or ride in the car. I think he is a good cross, which must improve both his strength and general health. If I were looking to obtain another bird, should anything happen to him, I would not



This close-up clearly shows the very adequate foot size and feathering to mid-way between the knee and ankle.



Gary Sanderson's Male

hesitate to have another bred the same way. I am looking forward to seeing how he moults out."

Lastly, Kevin Sanderson from Kent, with another male, currently 2lbs 3½ ozs.

Kevin has supplied a most comprehensive report which you may well see published more fully in club literature. Here are some extracts from his conclusion chapter:

"His inconsistency at quarry is, I am sure, due to not getting his weight right, both in the early days when he was far too high and latterly, by allowing it to creep up a fraction over 2lb 3½ ozs which seems to be the weight that brings out the best in him. His ability in the air is obviously superior to the Redtail. He appears far more buoyant and aerial and on occasions I have flown him in very high winds, he has coped with them very well and can return to the fist in high winds with apparently little extra effort, unlike other Buteos I have flown. It is difficult to compare his speed with other hawks but I've no doubt that not only is he more aerial than a Redtail, he is also faster and has a very good off the glove speed. Certainly his wing shape, when seen clearly in flight is very Ferruginous. Although a large bird, he has shown himself to be agile for his size. What he has inherited from the Redtail is very good sized, powerful feet and a willingness to utilise trees when required

(something my Ferruginous would never do). His manners towards me and my dog, when on quarry or the glove, are immaculate and he has NEVER attempted to foot or bite me. His appearance is, in my view, very very pleasing. Other falconers have commented on how "beautiful" he is and I have to agree. He seems to have inherited the appearance, temperament and aerial ability of the Ferruginous and the feet and willingness to utilise trees from the Redtail. I can certainly see more Ferruginous than Redtail in him. In my view, an excellent combination!"

You can see from these authentic reports that almost all of the desired attributes from both species have been inherited. The only trait that may or may not be present, which is not desirable, is the stubbornness displayed during the initial stages of training. If it persists, then it is from the Ferruginous side, as those that I have trained certainly were not the most responsive early on. On balance, I think we have produced a bird that is not only good looking but also ultimately very capable. It remains to be seen if they can themselves produce young, my guess is that with a varying success rate, yes they will.

A Ferru-tail come true, without doubt.

"Happy hawking, whatever you fly."

THE WELSH HAWKING CLUB

Est 1962

...

An International Club with countrywide membership.

We meet once a month.
Northern Meetings nr. Chester.
Southern Meetings at Usk.

For further information, please contact
Adrian Williams on:

0443 206333

CENTRAL FALCONRY & RAPTOR CLUB

Jeff Sealy, Chairman - Tel: 021 360 6343
Helen Damerum, Secretary - Tel: 0858 466670
Kim Oakshott, Vice-Chairman & Field Secretary - Tel: 0604 414155
Sara Richards, Press Secretary - Tel: 021 457 9806.

Meetings are held on the 2nd Sunday of every month at Coventry & North Works Cricket Club, Binley Road, Binley, Coventry.

For further details please contact any of the above.

THE LONDON HAWKING CLUB

(and Owl Keepers)

The only Falconry Club in London with flying and breeding experience with birds of prey.

For more information call
Paul Barham on 071 515 7754 or Bill Fiveash on 071 639 9087.

NEW FOREST FALCONRY CLUB

We are a small but very active Club based in the New Forest area. We have some 80 members. We encourage all our members, experienced or inexperienced, to participate in all activities of the Club. We are very keen on conservation and attend local shows with our Conservation Display Unit.

We have access to 98,000 acres and organise meetings every week throughout the hunting season.

We meet the first Wednesday of every month and for more information please telephone FRANK or CHRIS on
0202 478862.

BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB

Founded in 1927

The oldest and largest Hawking Club in the country.

Nine Regional Groups -

Scotland, Wales & Borders, Midlands, Cotswolds, Eastern, North Western, North Eastern, Southern and South Western.

For more details send SAE with 42p P & P to:-
**THE BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB,
HOME FARM F.M., HINTS, Nr.
TAMWORTH, STAFFS. B78 3DW.**

THE CHESHIRE HAWKING CLUB

welcome guests and new members to our meetings held at The Railway, Mill Lane, Heatley, near Lymm. Meetings held every second Tuesday of the month at 8pm.

Telephone Martin 061 976 3694

or

George 061 976 1037.

Falcon Telemetrics

The complete British-made system operating to maximum range. Specially designed by practical falconers for use with Longwings and Shortwings. better than most imported systems, with the added advantage of immediate back-up service available in the UK. operates on 173,200-173, 275 mhz. (the legal frequency). Competitively priced.

Basic Price: (to 31st May, 1993):-

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| RECEIVER | £315 |
| FOLDING YAGI | £35 |
| CAR MOUNT AERIAL | £19.50 |
| SINGLE STAGE TRANSMITTER | £45 |
| TWO STAGE TRANSMITTER | £60 |
| TWO STAGE TRANSMITTER (in metal tube) | £70 |

SUPER TWO STAGE TRANSMITTER

(in metal tube, arguably the most powerful transmitter on the market)

BATTERIES, SPARE ANTENNAE Available at
TAIL MOUNT KITS ETC Competitive prices

(All prices are subject to VAT at the standard rate)

COMPLETE SYSTEM (Receiver, two stage transmitter, folding yagi and co-axial cable, plus all batteries)

£410 + VAT (Post-free)

FALCON TELEMETRICS

The Lodge, Huntley Manor, Huntley,
Gloucestershire GL19 3HG.
Telephone: 0452 830629

FULL ACCESS/VISA FACILITIES AVAILABLE

BOOKS

Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of the World, Brown & Amadon. 2nd edition. Reduced from £39.95 to £29.95
Falconry, Arts and Practice / Emma Ford£16.99
Seasons with a Kestrel. Gordon Riddle.....£16.95
Birds of Prey in the British Isles. Brian P. Martin £16.99
Owls. Chris Mead£6.95
Eagles. John A. Love.....£6.95

All current and many out of print Falconry and Raptor books available.
Postage is extra. Telephone orders are preferred.

Access / Visa / Mastercard

COCH-Y-BONDDU BOOKS (Paul Morgan)

Penegoes, Machynlleth, SY20 8NN

0654 702837

All birds of prey on display with flying demonstrations, including Falcons, Hawks, Eagles and Owls.

A wide range of Falconry Furniture is available.

Falconry courses are available.
THE CENTRE IS OPEN to visitors from 9.30am to 5.00pm, 6 days a week (Closed Mondays except Bank Holidays)
Last admissions 4.30pm.

YOU'LL FIND US AT **LOCKSACRE**

AQUATIC NURSERY

WOPHAMS LANE, BIRDHAM, CHICHESTER
TELEPHONE: (0243) 512472



RAPTOR RESCUE

RETAINED FOR A PURPOSE

By
Mick Cunningham

In September 1987, a juvenile female kestrel, apparently imprinted on humans was brought to us for attention. Initial examination revealed compound fractures of fibula and tibiotarsus, complicated by maggot infestation. She also had noted difficulty in breathing. After 24 hours of treatment for shock and dehydration, full clinical examination revealed a fractured sternum and several broken ribs.

Euthanasia would normally have been carried out on such a casualty due to the bird being socially disorientated and not releasable, even if its physical injuries were treated successfully. Several factors stopped us taking that course of action. Firstly, we had recently lost an imprinted kestrel which had been an excellent foster parent, when dealing with wild eyass kestrels and we were seeking a replacement. Secondly, the birds physical injuries had a fair prognosis and due to being human orientated she would settle down well in captivity, having a quality of life we thought would be acceptable. Treatment was reasonably successful, leaving a slight hind talon disability due to unforeseen tendon damage.

The bird was housed in an open fronted aviary and a relationship was formed and from its behaviour the imprint appeared to accept me as a surrogate partner. She was soon sitting eggs; after sitting this clutch for 3 weeks she deserted, but soon recycled. During this period we had a brancher kestrel in. Being a single bird and too old in any case for a traditional hack we decided to place it in with the imprint to test her reaction. For the first day she ignored the brancher and continued sitting where the eggs had been (which we had exchanged for the brancher). The next day the brancher was calling for food and she let it take food off her and she showed no aggression towards it. The brancher stopped in with her for 3 weeks before being withdrawn for training and eventual hack.



Imprinted female who foster rears.



Male coming in to hackboard after initial release

1989 was a repeat of the previous year but instead of a brancher, several downy eyass kestrels were placed in with her and she proved to be an excellent foster mother, coming out of the nest box for food when called and fully accepting me as a surrogate partner, replacing the male, bringing food for her to feed the eyasses.

In 1990 she proved again to be an excellent foster mother on several occasions. In 1991, a male she had reared was put out to hack with an unrelated female, using a hack board technique in the vicinity of the aviary where the male was reared. All appeared to go well, although the male reappeared at the hack board site in winter and looked quite low, so was duly fed.

Several months went by and then at the end of May he made an unexpected visit to the hack board, he looked well so he wasn't fed but he continued to hang around. We were then astonished to find him on the hack board with a dead day old chick, we were even more astonished to see where he was getting them from. He approached the aviary with the imprint that had reared him and displayed excessive juvenile regressive behaviour. The imprint responded immediately and passed food to him through the mesh. The imprints rations were increased and so did the frequency of the males visits to the aviary, up to about ten a day. Eventually, we tracked the male down to a nest less than a mile away. Branchers were later heard in the vicinity. Perhaps he had paired with the female we hacked with him? So the imprint had not only reared the male but also played a major part in rearing its offspring.

As I write, it is November 1992, he has suddenly reappeared again and guess what? The imprint is passing food to him once more!

I wonder if we will ever fully hack this bird?

* * * * *

TREE NESTING HEN HARRIERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

by
Don Scott

When I saw my first male and female Hen Harriers during the spring of 1986 in the Glens of Antrim (their stronghold), I was immediately captivated by their sheer beauty and elegance, and also by their breathtaking aerial displays known as the sky-dance routine.

I was aware of its rarity as a breeding bird, not only in Northern Ireland but in many areas of the U.K the species is also considered to be quite rare. This was all I needed to see and know about this bird to spark my enthusiasm, with regard to seriously studying and observing its movements and little did I know that some 5 years later in 1991 I would be rewarded finding the world's first ever successful tree-nest, followed in 1992 by another world first which I shall mention later!

* "Nest (1)" — During the spring of 1991 my constant companion on many Harrier watches Philip McHaffie, and I, observed two pairs of Hen Harriers displaying over a moderately-sized Co. Antrim forest. The birds' aerial abilities were observed for many weeks before they eventually decided to go to ground and nest, or so I thought!

A walk through the forest on the 9th June revealed one nest only two metres from the well-used forest path. The nest complete with female and a full clutch of five eggs, was very exposed in short grass, amongst a little old brash by a few long-dead young conifers, where they had been felled to widen the firebreak. It seemed almost inevitable that the sitting Harrier would be disturbed by every passer-by, and by the 16th June the eggs had disappeared without trace, although the nest remained intact. Within the space of ten days this unfortunate pair of Harriers had left the area, leaving only one pair to continue what I thought was another ground nest.

This final pair was now the main focus of our attention during the next three to four weeks, and on several occasions I noticed that the two adults were alighting in an area of the forest where there did not appear to be any open ground available for a ground nest. The manner of their approach to the nest with wings

held high in a vertical position was noted many times and I never imagined for one minute that the birds were actually tree-nesting!

On the 14th July I returned to the forest alone and after several sightings of a male, female and one young Harrier in the area I found a moulted primary from a female Hen Harrier on the ground. Looking up, my attention was drawn by a nest some 4.5 metres high in a Sitka Spruce and chalky white droppings and pellets beneath. Within seconds I became aware of a young Harrier calling, scuffling and wing-flapping on the nest and so feeling somewhat bewildered by the whole proceedings I retreated immediately.

Everything I had read and learnt about Hen Harriers over a period of years seemed to contradict what I had discovered and so I sought help from two friends in England who are known as Harrier experts.

On the 20th July, Roger Clarke and Colin Shawyer from the Hawk and Owl Trust and myself visited the site to officially confirm what I had found the previous week. By this time the second young Harrier had fledged and was seen with the female and the older fledgling high above the forest.

At this stage I should mention that the nest was not built by the Harriers, but it was thought that Hooded Crows may have been responsible, although other species such as Sparrowhawks and Buzzards could not be entirely ruled out.

Below the nest lay a total of 26 pellets and when they analysed by Roger Clarke, they mostly contained remains of Meadow Pipits, Skylarks, Starlings and rabbits. A badly decomposed feather from a female was also found and its importance was to be finally solved the following year (1992).

Within minutes my historic find was confirmed as a "Hen Harrier tree-nest," and what made it so special was; — that on several occasions in the past Hen Harriers tried unsuccessfully to nest in trees (mostly in Europe) but failed badly making this probably the world's first known successful "tree-nest," fledgling two young.

To cap a wonderful year for me personally, the site was visited by the world famous Harrier expert from Scotland, Donald Watson on the 23rd July and in all his 40 plus years of studying and painting this species he had never come across this form of nesting before!

* "Nest (2)" — the spring of 1992 was extremely wet and windy, but by the 22nd March two pairs of Hen Harriers were again "sky-dancing" over the forest and on the 5th April three males were now observed displaying vigorously. The three males were last seen together on the 21st April and by the end of the month just two pairs again remained in the area. Activity above the forest continued well into May and I reckoned that nesting was delayed by at least two weeks due to the wet weather that prevailed throughout the country.

I was again joined by Philip on several of my thrice weekly visits to the forest and we discussed the possibility of "tree-nesting" occurring this year again and we were left wondering if the same nest would be inhabited by the Harriers in 1992, what a surprise lay ahead for me some two months later!

The first hint of a nest was the disappearance of both male and female



Hen Harrier (female) at a typical Ulster ground nest site.



A close-up view of a tree-nest site.

down amongst the trees on one side of the forest on the 30th May (site A). On the 14th June the second pair of Hen Harriers were observed passing food over a different part of the forest (site B). The forest was not visited between the 14th June and the 4th July due to a family holiday in Scotland and the pair at site A were seen on the 14th June but had disappeared by the 4th July. On the 4th July I watched site B from a moorland vantage point and prey deliveries to the site were seen regularly for the next three weeks. These were mostly made by the female, whilst the male spent most of his time loafing and preening close to my observation point. This lack of interest in the nest was probably due to the males inexperience, as he had a dingy coloured back and wing coverts, suggesting that he was not an old bird.

My observations during this period suggested once again that a "tree-nest" was being used because the birds were descending into thick trees where no clearing was known to exist and they lifted their wings up vertically before landing in the tree-tops, in helicopter fashion! In fact, everything about their flight pattern resembled what I had watched many times during 1991 and I was now more convinced that this pair were "tree-nesting" and in a different nest from the previous year.

On the 29th July, the female was observed looking down into the trees whilst circling and calling from a great height. She landed briefly near the nest and a young Harrier flew up out of the trees. When the male approached the nest a short time later, two young Harriers flew up to greet him, hoping that he had brought them an item of food, but, as usual, he arrived empty-handed and both fledglings returned to perch at the top of the trees.

Exactly one month later (29th August), I found the long-vacated nest with the help of my friend Philip. The method we had to use to find the nest was invented by Frances Hammerstrom in the U.S.A. and this involved a tall pole bearing a flag which was carried by Philip and I guided him through the forest until he reached the point where the birds had

been seen disappearing down amongst the trees. The operation was successfully achieved without the use of a two-way radio. The nest was found close to a drainage ditch and had been built two metres above ground in a Sitka Spruce which was of stunted growth. The nest had been constructed entirely of grass, except for a few mature heather branches and the sturdiness of the outspread branches, which were curling upwards, could be described as an inverted umbrella without the stem and handle.

This nest was surely built by the Harriers and, if so, must go down as a world first as Hen Harriers have never been known to be a nest off the ground, and especially in a tree! This fantastic achievement by the birds was confirmed by Roger Clarke as a "world first" during his visit to the site on the 5th September.

When I found the nest on the 29th August, two primaries from the female and one from the male were found below the nest and these were removed at the time to prevent further deterioration by the wet weather. The removal of these feathers were to prove very important findings at a later stage of my story!

When Roger and I began our examination of the area, we found 14 pellets underneath the nest with a further 24 - along the banks of the drainage ditch. This ditch was where the young birds were fed when they left the nest, as it was littered with skeletal remains and heavily soiled with hardened excreta. All 38 pellets were again analysed by Roger and were similar in content to those found in 1991; i.e. Meadow Pipit, Skylarks, Starlings and rabbits.

I now asked myself the question, was this the same tree-nesting female as last year (1991)? I believed that it was, because its behaviour was similar to what I had witnessed many times in 1991 and again in 1992. Any doubts about this female were dispelled a short time later, when the primary collected in 1991 matched with one of the 1992 feathers and the surviving vein of the disintegrating feather, which was also found in 1991, matched very well with the other feathers. It was now official, the same female Hen Harrier had "tree-nested" in 1990, 1991 and 1992!

With regard to the 1991 tree-nest, it was visited in January 1992 and a shell of a hatched Hen Harrier egg was found on the forest floor. It would appear that this had eventually fallen out of the tree and being in addition to two shells found in the previous summer (1991) indicated that a third young had hatched, although only two were seen fledged, another interesting discovery! The site was visited several times during the summer etc. and fresh excreta was found underneath the nest, showing that it had been visited, but not used in 1992.

Finally, as the Northern Ireland representative for the Hawk and Owl

Trust we have arranged, with the help of the Northern Ireland Forest Service to erect 3 artificial platforms in this Co. Antrim forest before the commencement of the 1993 breeding season. This pilot scheme, if successful, would then be extended to include other forests in the Province at a later date. Surely this new conservation project deserves a real chance if the Hen Harrier is to remain part of our moorland life in Northern Ireland!

Footnote: On Saturday 6th February 93, 3 artificial platforms were successfully erected. A visit was also paid to the 1991 and 1992 tree-nest sites in order to make any necessary repairs before the commencement of the breeding season. The 1991 nest was found to be in good shape but the 1992 nest had totally disintegrated due to the wet and windy weather. The nest was repaired with a lining of sphagnum moss and during those repairs a very significant discovery was made. A Hen Harrier was using the nest to 'roost' in, which, up to now, is unheard of in this species. The ground below the nest was freshly spattered over a wide area with large lumps of white excreta and the inner branches of the nest were also heavily soiled. Two fresh Harrier pellets lay in the bottom of the nest as did a 10 inch length of rusty wire probably carried there by the birds during construction in 1992 and which would have resembled a long twig of heather. The Harrier concerned was believed to be a male as one had been seen in the vicinity a week earlier. This was fully confirmed on the 6th March 93, when, during a monthly check on the platforms and nest sites, a male was flushed from the 1992 tree-nest. Again the ground below the nest was freshly soiled with excreta as was the outer branches of the nest, but no pellets were found and the nest itself was not disturbed by the constant visits by the bird. This instance of tree-roosting, especially in a nest, is unprecedented and is yet another find to be fully investigated and perhaps fully explained at a later date!

* * * * *



Hen Harrier artificial platform erected on 6/2/93.

A GREAT DAY OUT

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 10.30am - 5.00pm

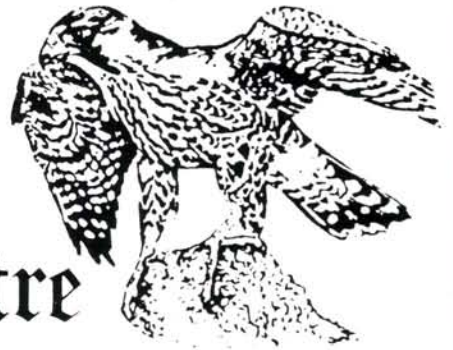
BIRDS FLOWN DAILY (Weather permitting)

FALCONRY COURSES AVAILABLE

FROM SEPTEMBER 1993 TO MARCH 1994

Welsh Hawking Centre

Weycock Road, Barry, S.Glam (0446) 734687



NO. 2's NOW AVAILABLE!

Due to demand we have had issue No. 2 reprinted. £8.00 each
If you wish to purchase a copy, please send cheque or Postal Order to The Falconers Magazine, 20 Bridle Lane, Burton Latimer, Nr. Kettering NN15 5QP.



QUALITY FROZEN FOODS

Mice 13p + 20p each

Rats 25p + 30p each

Rats (high protein fed) 30p each

Rats (weaners) 20p each

Rat Pinks 17p each

Quail size chickens 40p each

Small chickens £1.50 each

Large rabbits £2.50 each

Amtrak at cost.

J. Bryant

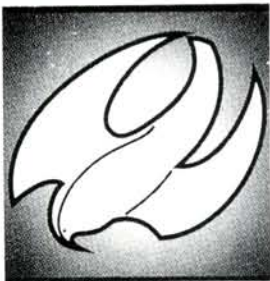
14 Eatons Mead,
Chingford

London. E4 8AN.

Tel: 081 - 524 2522.

24 hour

answerphone.



The Scottish Centre for Falconry

Come along this weekend for some family fun...

● Flying Displays

Regular flying displays, with, among others, Moscow the Golden Eagle.

● The hawk Walk

Unrestricted views of the birds, ideal for taking photographs. Come and meet the star, the Lugger Falcon featured in Seal's pop promo video.



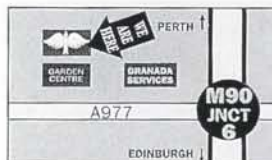
Open daily 10am - 5.30pm.

● Exhibition and Information Centre

A full history of falconry and information on the conservation and breeding of birds of prey.

● Gift Shop

Choose from a wide selection of gifts.



THE BRITISH FALCONRY AND RAPTOR FAIR

AND THE

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE GAME FAIR

NEW VENUE FOR 1993!



30TH & 31ST MAY 1993

ALTHORP NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

(15 MINUTES FROM M1 JCT.15A/16)

THE NATIONAL FALCONRY EVENT

AN ACTION PACKED PROGRAMME OF COUNTRYSIDE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

- DISPLAYS
- SEMINARS
- TUITION
- DEMONSTRATIONS
- PLUS MORE !

ADMISSION : £5.00;
UNDER 14s FREE
(if accompanied by an adult)

For further information please telephone 0588 672 708



No Comparison EACH to THEIR OWN


by
Steve Radford



A recent article in the *Falconers' Magazine* (Issue 14) reminded me of something a falconer friend once said of his birds, "... I never compare them - each is an individual with its' own style - and if they all did the same thing I'd only need one bird..." Last season I was fortunate enough to be invited on a day's hawking in Kent which illustrated this point quite effectively.

There were four of us with two Harris Hawks - both male, one juvenile and one in its second year. We lined out with the



hawks at either end, both carried on the fist but free to fly as they pleased.  *One of the adult male Harris Hawks in hot pursuit.* Throughout the morning we covered quite a distance and had numerous flights at rabbits but, although some were hard pressed, they all escaped, leaving disgruntled hawks peering down the burrows.


We were all considerably warmer than was comfortable and somewhat out of breath - I think the hawks were getting tired too! - when we finally marked a rabbit squatting in a shallow dip full of dry grass and rushes. When flushed, it ran a wide arc to get round us and to the safety of the warren. The young hawk immediately went tearing off after it, but the older bird stayed a moment on the fist, then set off deliberately flying straight towards the warren. Arriving at the same time as the rabbit he took it almost head on right next to a burrow and managed to stop it from getting underground. The rabbit was despatched and both birds shared their quarry - although they mantled and scowled at each other for a moment, they soon settled to plume and feed.

Later that same day, in the same area, I saw a juvenile male Goshawk fly. This bird was much more striking in appearance than the Harris', with yellow eyes and a merciless reptilian glare. It was like lightning from the fist on its first slip at a rabbit. Gaining quickly it soon had a hold: the rabbit jumped straight up in the air and both bird and quarry turned a complete somersault, parting company as they hit the ground. But it was not over - the hawk picked itself up and caught the rabbit thirty yards on. This time it had been hit by the head and there was no escape!

There are purists who fly Goshawks and say Harris Hawks are not as good, as indeed there must be people who fly Harris's who would argue that the time spent manning a Goshawk could be better spent hunting with the Harris'.

What it boils down to is:

Each to their own - flights with Goshawks or Harris's can be equally exciting, in their own different ways.

 *This juvenile male Goshawk was like lightning from the fist.*

RAPTORS in MOROCCO

SKETCHES & TEXT by PHILIP SNOW • part 2

Morocco's fascinating mix of semi desert, plain & mountains holds a wonderful selection of birds, with 32 regular raptors, & 5 others just possible. ELEANORAS FALCON is a rare migrant breeder at two coastal sites, like Essaouira's offshore islands (below) SHORT TOED EAGLE is a fairly common passage breeder, as are BOOTED EAGLES; but the western IMPERIAL EAGLE now seems only to be an occasional visitor? LANNER FALCONS are a common resident, breeder in semi desert, similar to BARBARY FALCONS. (see part 1)

ELEANORAS FALCONS -
Light & dark phases

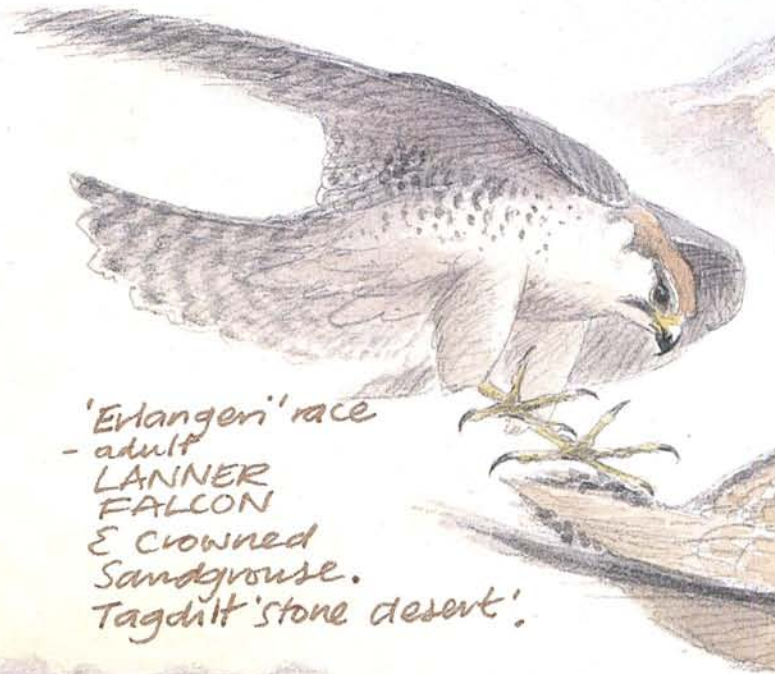


SHORT TOED EAGLE -
Commonest dark hooded colour phase.



ELEANORAS FALCONS -
Light & dark phases

'Erlangeri' race - adult
LANNER FALCON
& Crowned Sandgrouse.
Tagdilt 'stone desert'.



Essaouira (formerly Mogador). Eleanor's breeding isles from the ramparts hotel -

P. SNOW 09
Birds not to scale

LONG LEGGED BUZZARD is fairly common, a localised resident breeder in semi desert/plain. 'Cirtensis' race in N.W. Africa tends to be smaller & paler, but variable. BUZZARD & HONEY BUZZARD are both common migrants. BEARDED VULTURES & BLACK VULTURES are rare montane breeders, & GRIFFON VULTURES, with only the EGYPTIAN reasonably common.



typical ad.
L.L. BUZZARD



BEARDED
v. High Atlas.



Darker
1st yr? L.L.B.



adult
D.C. Goshawk



MONTAGUS
ad. ♂

Marsh H.
ad ♀

The DARK CHANTING GOSHAWK is found at only 1 location, the Sous Valley (See part 1), although common further south in Africa. GOSHAWK & SPARROWHAWK seem relatively widespread, but of the 4 hawks, only the MARSH & MONTAGUS are relatively common. LESSER K., KESTREL & MERLIN bring the falcon tally to 8, & the uncommon RED KITE completed Morocco's fine raptors.

L etters

All letters should be addressed to:-
THE EDITORS, THE FALCONERS AND RAPTOR
CONSERVATION MAGAZINE, 20 BRIDLE ROAD,
BURTON LATIMER, NR KETTERING,
NORTHANTS., NN15 5QP.

Dear Editors

Some, or a lot of us, are aware that, falconry, hawking and flying raptors for fun, is now well and truly gaining ground. As for the prices of the birds, it is now becoming a wide open pastime to all.

I myself look forward to the hunting ground, being content with the peace of mind, absorbing the tranquillity and growing with the birds enthusiasm throughout.

Raptors are lost all over the country, by many people, as accidents occur in the early days whilst learning falconry, for the professional teachers cannot be by one's side at all times. One cannot learn the 'Art of Falconry,' the confidence and knowledge that it takes in just weeks or by books alone, so losses are inevitable. So the key to the future, with individuals like myself, is, undoubtedly, captive breeding.

It must be said that one takes interest in raptors, from kestrels to buzzards, or to whatever type of raptors suit us as individuals, the whole system of ideas that naturally follow, will grow and capture our spirits, whatever age, creed or nationality.

The inevitable will happen. We will want raptors to breed for ourselves. What seems odd to me, now I see the light, is that this is truly the first steps into the raptor world. So could the answer be for more articles, from far and near, on captive breeding information? I, for one of many, upon reading would be absolutely transfixed.

p.s. The Falconry Magazine is a 'wonder.'

My regards

Paul Swain.

Dear Editors

Once again a small club promotes a national ideal which it cannot support (a proposed National Display Unit - Spring issue).

The New Forest Falconry Club suggest that all falconers contribute 50p each to the Hawk Board for such a unit. But what do they currently contribute to this excellent organisation? Nothing, unless its members are also members of one of the recognised

clubs (British Falconers' Club, Welsh Hawking Club etc.) which totally funds the Hawk Board.

It is splendid to see so many little groups of enthusiasts gather together but you cannot have a collective voice when falconry is threatened. When this happens, you are merely a collection of minorities.

If you believe in your sport, then join a recognised club and help support the Hawk Board. Who knows, you might realise your dream of a National Display Unit.

Yours faithfully

Nicholas Kester

Dear Editors

I have read with interest Mrs Griffith's letter in the Spring issue of your magazine ("At The Sharp End, A Professionals Viewpoint").

Whilst not wishing to indulge in undue semantics I must draw the readers' attention to the two meanings of the word "professional" which is:

1. Someone who is paid for their work (as opposed to an amateur).
2. Someone who does their work well (as opposed to an amateurish fashion).

The trouble is that not all those who are paid for flying hawks do their job well. Whilst the amateur falconer who is unprofessional has little effect on the public; the professional who is amateurish has a massive impact.

All over the country, display givers and Raptor Centres spring up. Many are established and excellent. But there are those who do falconry (the field sport) a great deal of damage, which is usually revisited on us through the popular media.

Let us hope that, for the future of our sport, those who are paid for flying hawks do it well, and that I only read good things about them in the media.

Yours faithfully

Nicholas Kester

Dear Editors

The somewhat contentious article by my friend "Keep It Up" Bob Dalton in the last edition of the

Falconers concerning the suitability of Harris Hawks as birds for flying in Britain made me pause and consider the role of the Harris Hawk in modern falconry. Having considered for some time I'd like to share my thoughts and observations with you.

The Harris Hawk can, in the right hands and the right circumstances, be all things to all men. In the hands of an experienced falconer the Harris imprint or parent-reared bird makes an excellent hawk for most of the quarry available for today's modern falconer with the demands of modern life and time. Their only drawback appears to be their natural reluctance to fly in the company of strange dogs, but this can be overcome with sufficient work and careful manning.

Now to the question of Harris and beginners. Does the Harris make a good first bird? The answer must be yes but with the reservations discussed later. An imprinted Harris treated correctly, following the breeders instructions, can make the very best beginners bird. I say treated correctly, by that I mean it must not have its weight reduced, imprints should be treated by their handler as they would be by their parents.

In the wild the young bird would go on hunting trips with its parents, but would not be doing the actual hunting, it would just be watching and learning, both how to fly and the ways of the quarry. The duty of the trainer, as the surrogate parent, is to take the bird into a hunting situation as often as possible, allowing the bird to see, play and chase quarry, to practice and learn quarry behaviour without being forced to start hunting too early by reducing its weight and making it feel hungry.

In the wild when young birds have had enough practice and confident to deal with a real hunting attack, that is exactly what would happen, they will put their feet down and have a go. This is exactly what will happen with the well-trained captive-bred bird, when it has seen enough quarry, built enough confidence, it will take you by surprise one day, really attacking in earnest and that at a high weight, so it will be a non-screaming, non-mantling hunting hawk. How much better that the beginner learns to bide his time and learns to man his hawk properly rather than use starvation

as a prop. As well as this, as the beginners skill increases, so will the bird improve, which does away with the "now I have trained this Kestrel or Buzzard, I'll sell it and get something better" syndrome.

However, a parent reared Harris can be a very different matter altogether, in the hands of a beginner many parent-reared Harris, when in training can behave as badly as any Goshawk, some need the same dedicated training, manning, handling and judicious reduction in weight, often needing hours of patient training. Would you, Bob, give a Goshawk to a rank beginner? I wouldn't, beginners do not have the knowledge or experience to deal with a bird like this, it is not fair, to them, or to the bird. Unless a beginner has access to a competent falconer prepared to give his time unstintingly to the beginner and his parent-raised Harris, the bird should be left to someone with more experience.

Yours sincerely

N. Griffiths

Dear Editors

Following our telephone conversation I write in the hope that you can publish something in the next issue in regard to the use of micro-chips.

Many bird keepers use chips along with other animal keepers and of course they can be used in other applications. However, as the bird world generally is being encouraged to use them the Falconers is probably one of the best places to voice some concern.

The use of micro-chips as an aid to identification either for security or for use in sexing, for instance, is clearly valuable provided the system actually works.

However, it appears that that might not always be the case. Rumours have been around for some considerable time suggesting that chips have been implanted but have later not been readable. They have 'gone missing'. Have they escaped from the body or has the reader simply not been able to pick up the chip number? These rumours have usually been discredited by the chip companies as they are unsubstantiated. Fair comment. Now, however, because it does seem that there is some substance in the claims of failure, I would ask that in the interests of all concerned - those who wish to

avail themselves of the security aspect, those who already have it and those who claim to provide it, that we ask all those who have had chips implanted, however long ago, to check if they are, in fact, readable. Please then let me or the Editors know in order that the results can be published. Most people don't have a reader if they only have a small number of chips due to the high cost. However their vet might have one or you could ask your local RSPCA, zoos etc. Failing that, you could ask the chip supplier who has the nearest reader. It is in the companies interest to be helpful.

Comments from vets, from chip companies etc. are, of course, very welcome. It is not my intention to attempt to discredit the micro-chip but to ensure that if the system is viable that it is shown to be so but equally, if it is not, then we should know. Perhaps the chip companies should indicate their confidence by offering a guarantee of full compensation for losses incurred as a result of failure.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Williams

*Replies please to the Editors.

Superb **FALCONRY**
Displays



May 29 - 31
KNEBORTH COUNTRY SHOW
Knebworth House & Gardens
Stevenage, Herts. J7 A1(M)

August 28 - 30
HIGHCLERE COUNTRY SHOW
Highclere Castle
Hants / Berks border

Living Heritage Country Shows
Trade Vacancies: (0773) 533929

RAY PRIOR FALCONRY EQUIPMENT



A full range of top quality Falconry equipment at affordable prices. S.A.E. or telephone for 1993 price list

Coping, Imping, Bell and Jess fitting.

Frozen quail and chicks usually available (collection only)

Falconry tuition for beginners on a one-to-one basis (maximum two persons)

Callers always welcome, but please phone first.
For a personal, friendly service phone Ray on (0635) 200545
4 Hackney Bottom, Hampstead Norreys, Newbury, Berks, RG16 0TU
New Brochure Now Available


Clarence Court Limited

BREEDERS OF JAPANESE QUAIL

For large regular supplies of best quality stock from leading quail breeder.

Please contact: 0242 621228
0836 061581 (24 hrs)
0831 849036 Mobile
0242 620145 Fax



THE FALCONRY CENTRE
(HAGLEY)

Falconry Courses from 2 days to 2 weeks Residential and non-residential, Equipment by mail order
Video's available

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| Fistful of Feathers | £18.50 | Just Harris Hawks | £16.50 |
| Redtail Hunting Hawk I | £16.50 | Just Owls | £5.95 |
| Redtail Hunting Hawk II | £16.50 | | |

HURRANS GARDEN CENTRE
Kidderminster Road South, Hagley, West Midlands DY9 0Jb.
Telephone: (0562) 700014 Fax: (0562) 700177

also at: **GARDEN VILLAGE**
A454 Wolverhampton to Bridgenorth Road. Telephone: (0902) 701115

Training Gundogs For Falconry

By Guy Wallace

Part Eight

Additional Training

So you have taught your dog to sit on its backside, to hunt, to point and to flush on command, which is the main object of the exercise. However, before you can pick up your hawk and take them both hunting, there are a lot of gaps in the dog's education that need to be filled in before then. Most of these can be taught as you go along when the situation is right for teaching that particular lesson.

SHEEP: I am hearing of more and more 'boo-boos' involving gundogs and sheep with some of the dogs having to pay the ultimate penalty because their owners could not, or would not, spend ten minutes introducing them to sheep properly. It is no use keeping a dog away from sheep forever "in case it chases them." Far better to meet the potential problem head-on and get it over and done with.

Sheep, deer and hares are natural canine prey species and are extremely attractive to dogs by reason of both their smell and their reaction to predators (in this case, a wolf cunningly disguised as Fido), which is to run away. Telling an irate farmer with a loaded 12-bore at lambing time that Fido "only wanted to play" does not cut much ice! This is why sheep training is the one lesson in which I am hard on a dog.

Any time after twelve weeks old (and soon after that as possible) when your pup is walking comfortably on a lead, push a bamboo garden cane down your wellie out of sight and walk the pup up to a flock of sheep, from downwind, so that the pup can both see and smell them. As soon as the sheep start to run away and the pup starts after them, catch the pup a sharp sting across the fleshy part of its quarters at the same time growling "WARE SHEEP" and quickly put the cane back into your welly without the pup seeing anything. What goes through the



Introducing young dog to sheep.

pup's mind is "Every time those things run, I (literally) get a pain in the backside." When the sheep have settled, repeat the exercise. When the pup hangs back on approaching the sheep, remove the lead and it will probably run back to the gate. The lesson has been taught.

The fact that a pup is steady to those sheep in that field is not a guarantee that it is steady to all sheep in all fields, so the lesson needs repeating with several flocks in several fields. A word of warning! Hill sheep and inby sheep (sheep in grass fields) are, to a dog, two completely different animals. Hill sheep smell different (probably more like deer) and all the dog sees, at its eye level, is a single woolly backside bobbing tantalisingly through the heather or bracken. Therefore, the same lesson has to be taught separately on hill sheep. Baby lambs, in any situation, particularly if they are temporarily away from the ewe, are extremely tempting as they stagger and wobble away, looking like a long-tailed rabbit! They, again, seem to carry a different smell from an adult sheep.

A few points to bear in mind. "More than one dog is a pack" and two or more dogs are more likely to be "sheepy" than one on its own. A dog that has been confined to a car or a kennel for some time is more likely to be "sheepy" coming out fresh than when it has run for twenty minutes. When a dog has just

pointed or chased quarry (yes, even the steadiest have been known to do that!) they are likely to be "revved-up" and more prone, at that moment, to chase a sheep. A dog that has actually killed a sheep, or even drawn blood, can never really be trusted 100% on sheep again. If your dog has not encountered sheep for some time, a cautionary "Ware Sheep" ("Ware" pronounced "WAR" - an old hunting term) just prior to seeing them will remind a dog of its P's and Q's. (I know from my years as a professional hunt-servant that "sheepiness" is hereditary so, breeders, you have been warned).

If you have a lot of deer in your area, it can be extremely frustrating to have your dog continually 'taking off' after deer, not to mention the extreme stress that it causes to pregnant does or hinds and the fact that, I understand, it is technically illegal under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Exactly the same lesson can be taught on deer as on sheep, either in a deer park, on a deer farm, or out in the woods (when you will have to come up on them slightly from down-wind).

If you know of a dog that has to be put down for sheep killing - and that is the undisputable law of the countryside - the same 'qualities' (I use the word advisedly!) that made it a sheep killer are the qualities that a deer stalker requires and since a deer dog spends all its time walking to heel except when actually tracking

wounded deer, it is unlikely to get up to much mischief. An advert in 'DEER' magazine (0734 844094) or 'STALKING MAGAZINE' (0392 410517) may rehome it where it can lead a useful life doing a job for which gundogs are particularly suited.

Hares are a tricky subject. Nothing is more infuriating than a hare chaser, but then there are virtually no hares in my area. Hares should be taboo to a young dog like sheep and deer. True, you may risk a dog 'blinking' them (pretending that they are not there and not pointing them) later on in life, but that is probably the lesser of the two evils. After its first shooting season, a dog may then be introduced to hares like any other game.

HEELWORK: Some 'authorities' tell you to teach 'HEEL' first while other equally eminent 'authorities' tell you to leave it until virtually the last thing. I teach retrievers and deer dogs to walk to heel very early on as that is basically their place in life while I let my hunting dogs learn to hunt first, before teaching them to HEEL since it is all too easy for a hunting dog to get the idea that its place is at its owners side. Fortunately, to a dog, walking to heel on the lead and off the lead are two different things, almost two different canine attitudes of mind so one can be taught long before the other. Shooting and deer dogs walk on the left, while falconers' dogs and left-handed guns' dogs walk on the right hand side - ALWAYS! The dogs shoulder should be roughly level with the trainers leg. 'Hooligans' should learn to walk properly to heel both on and off the lead long before the more sensitive type of dog unless your particular circumstances dictate that the dog must be walked on the road or pavement for whatever reason. This lesson is best taught at the end of a training session or on the way back to the kennel when the pupil has run off its surplus energy.

When you first put a lead of any sort on a dog of any age it will probably fight like a fish on a line. Let it have its fight with the lead out and get it over with but, if using a slip lead, make sure that the metal ring is large enough for the lead to open again when slack. As the horse



When walking on the lead the dog's shoulder should be level with the trainer's leg.



Slip lead with large metal ring.



say "It takes two to pull" and the last thing you want is a permanent tug-of-war for the next ten years. The lead should be either completely slack or being sharply jerked but NEVER taut. Put a slip-lead on like a figure '6' so that it automatically self-opens when slack. Sandwich the pupil comfortably between your leg and a straight fenceline, give the command 'HEEL' and step out. Always make the dog walk at your pace and not vice-versa. If the dog hangs back or pulls forward give a sharp jerk - as opposed to a nagging twitch - simultaneously saying 'HEEL.' The jerk should be sharp enough to cause the dog some discomfort and then the lesson is learned for life after 4 or 5 weeks jerks with an occasional subsequent reminder as necessary. (A 5-inch long stick or length of water pipe tied across the lead handle like a toggle makes life easier on the hands). "Hunting at heel" (the dog walking with its nose on the ground) is a fault that can be cured in the same way. EVERY time the dog puts its head down, jerk the lead sharply upwards, again simultaneously saying "HEEL." if you have a bad offender for hunting at heel, put the slip lead forward on its neck just behind the ears. When the dog is confidently walking beside you in a straight line, you can

occasionally change direction to keep it on its toes. Eventually, you can lay the lead along its back ready to pick it up and correct it should the dog break its HEEL. Once taught, you can walk the dog down a narrow lane carrying a pencil-thick switch and, if it tries to go in front of you, a sharp rap on the nose, again simultaneously with the word "HEEL", reinforces the lesson. If you keep tight in against the hedge, the dog cannot dodge from one side of you to the other. However well-trained you imagine that your dog is, only an idiot walks a dog off the lead where there is traffic.

Hybrids

By Diana Durman-Walters

The Scottish Academy of Falconry & Related

1983 was, for me, a decisive year, it was the year of the Hybrid. The Peregrine cross Prairie female was an introduction to a branch of hawking that offered challenging prospects in the field with an unknown commodity. Not that it was entirely unknown. The previous year had, from a visit to the USA, shown what these Hybrids were capable of. As duck hawks, they were excellent. They took pheasant and grey partridge, all with determination and style. Tiercels and falcons packed a punch which they did from a very good pitch and with power stooping were effective on a wide variety of quarry.

Peregrines were not readily available in domestic projects in the early 80's and the access to take from the wild under licence was limited to a mere 5 a year. The prospect of flying a part Peregrine was undeniably the reason for being.

At that period in time our breeding project was almost exclusively devoted to artificial insemination. We were flying a particularly good prairie falcon who excelled at pheasant hawking. That year she had reached egg-laying age. We had a receptive donor tiercel peregrine and in that year the first UK peregrine cross prairie arrived. This female was unique in many ways.

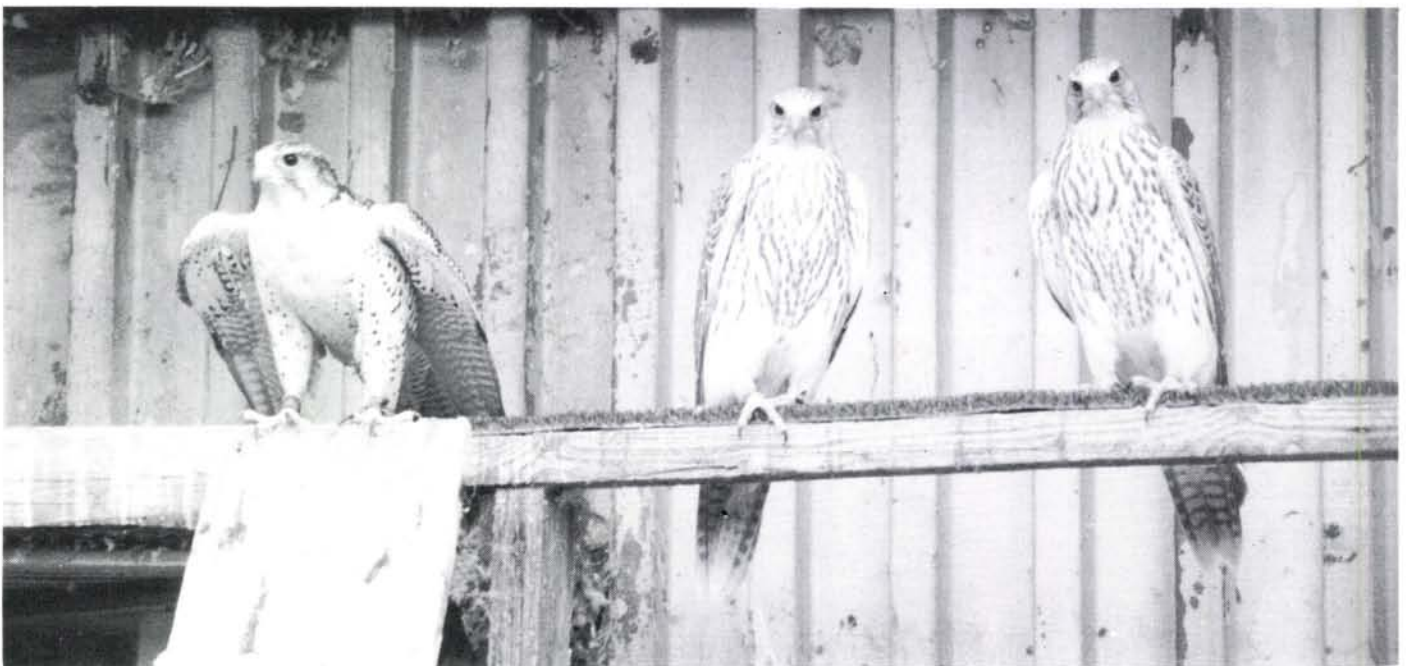
Particularly in the interest focused on her early performance, as hybrids had not been seen before or experienced by British falconers and just how would she compare to true species counterparts?

Shortly after fledging she was put out to tame hack. This method of developing flying and hunting skills suited the hybrid well. She would often spend periods of time harassing the rookeries and any other bird who just happened by and no matter how far she happened to travel, always found herself back home by late afternoon.

On rooks and crows she began to show the approach and aptitude that we were

looking for. She began to take them with consummate ease. It worried her a little that this quarry would strike back as one of the flock was taken. Mobbing with intent to injure here didn't enter the equation as her aggression was always to a level that seemed to give her the upper hand. This was wonderfully illustrated by her sister the following year when she took a crow with one foot and the rest of the flock harassed and dived at her she flew up and grabbed another in the other foot!

However, the hybrid was, if anything, a little independent and required the finer elements of discipline instilled into her. We decided



Silver gyrfalcon with two saker cross gyr daughters 1992 breeding project.

STUDENTS HELP HAWK AND OWL TRUST

Students at Easton College have constructed Owl boxes for the Hawk and Owl Trust. These boxes will be used in Conservation Programmes throughout Britain.

The boxes were presented to Paul Johnson, Conservation Officer of the Hawk and Owl Trust on Thursday 25th February, 1993.

The students are studying for a First Diploma in Country Skills and have made a range of nest boxes as part of their course. Some of these nest boxes will be erected on the college estate and the students will monitor them throughout the year.

Jerry Kinsley, lecturer in Countryside Management, says "the students have enjoyed making the nest boxes and are keen to help conservation in a positive way."

The boxes are part of the Hawk and Owl Trust 'Adopt a Box' Scheme. Individuals or schools can adopt boxes and receive information about nesting activity.

For further details contact Jerry Kinsley at the College on Norwich (0603) 742105.

MEET THE EDITORS

The Editors of the *Falconers and Raptor Conservation Magazine*, David & Lyn Wilson will be at the Cotswold Falconry Centre, Batsford on the 27th June 1993. For anyone wishing to come and see them they will be there from 11am to 5pm to answer any questions and take your comments about the magazine.

VETERINARY DATA

Anyone who has had a bird take ill and die in three or four days for no apparent reason is asked to inform Neil Forbes as he is collating data concerning unusual deaths. Post Mortems relating to the bird would help.

Contact (0536) 722794.

were to be her trade mark in the years to come and indeed were to be the stereotype of these particular hybrids. However, much as they are predictable in one sense, they are not so in another. With their marked aggression to quarry this can be transferred to the falconer. Understanding these behavioural differences is easier if dual knowledge of both species that make up the hybrid are fully understood. Often the quote is heard "Yes; that's the prairies coming through in it..." Temper tantrums are very evident in both prairies and peregrines if they happen to be imprinted. In fact peregrines brought up in this mode can sometimes be as difficult to placate as any prairie falcon. Like unidentical twins they spring from the same source in a hybrid.

A decade later we are flying gyr cross peregrine and gyr cross saker hybrids. The females are best flown at duck and pheasant over wide open country which best suits their ability in power pursuit. In this category they are capable of long sustained flights plus the stamina to rise above their quarry to stoop at it from above. The tiercels are more than capable of

taking upland and lowland gamebirds.

Dispel the notion that these hybrids are too large to face our native quarry. In the wild most raptors are content with high protein quarry that make few demands on energy expenditure to catch it. Their choice of quarry is consequently small and quite often commonly found. They are, according to their size, equally capable of taking very large quarry, should the need arise. For example; a gyr falcon weighing 4lbs plus will specialise on ptarmigan where they occur. Ptarmigan weigh just over 1lb. However, gyr females can take capercaillie and Barnacle goose. It seems something of an enigma that there is firmly fixed in many minds that large falcons and their hybrids need to be faced at large quarry. It is the criteria you set for these falcons in the field that is the importance. If trained to a high degree and capable of hunting with style and proficiency at very testing quarry, then it is comparable to any other branch of gamehawking, that develops their physical and mental skills, ultimately producing the brilliance of flight.

Studies

that year to take her onto the grouse. With her talents already visible in tackling formidable quarry, her entry to upland game hawking should provide the approach necessary for quality flights at masterful quarry.

The first ten days of that September there were gale force winds. her attempts to jockey into a purposeful position simply had her buffeted and hurled around the moor. Her every effort inevitably seemed to be a tail chase in which, finally, she was successful and caught a grouse. One thing was certain. She would not give up. Winds of some velocity are frequent in the north and as quickly as they arrive, they blow themselves out. The calm that follows is just what the falcons have been waiting for. She had become increasingly fit whilst trying to stay in the same county as us and this she put to its very best use as soon as she could. On the first day of favourable breezes she left the fist and pitched until she resembled a starling. onto her grouse underneath she stooped with such power that a puff of feathers exploded then slowly descended to the tussocks below. As if in a delirious state of fitness and ability she literally did a mighty loop the loop through the sky before landing gently onto the heather to claim her bird.

Pitching to these heights



Female peregrine cross prairie hybrid



Straited Cara-Cara



Bataleur Eagle



Tawny Eagle



Red-tailed Hawk

THE HAWK

TRADITIONS in the art and practice of falconry go back a very long way.

At the hawk Conservancy, at Weyhill, near Andover in Hampshire, traditions are equally as important, although the timespan is very much shorter.

Ashley Smith was born at around the time his father, Reg, and mother, Hilary, opened their small zoo 27 years ago on the site the Conservancy still occupies today.

It progressed to become a specialised European Wildlife Centre before its final metamorphosis into its current form around a decade ago.

"I was a falconer in the days I was still a farmer,

long before I became a zoo owner," says Reg.

"It made sense to use my skills to concentrate the collection here on birds of prey, and of course by the time we made the change, Ashley was also a keen falconer."

"In those days, Ashley was my assistant but today the roles are very much reversed," Adds Reg, who to many people will always be the "voice" of the Hawk Conservancy."

His commentaries at the four-times daily flying demonstrations make the best of his skills as a raconteur. His talk is laced with anecdotal tales, some serious, others merely entertaining. But they hold the attention of his audience to keep visitors focused on the action unfolding in



Secretary Bird striking imitation snake.



Woods Owl



White bellied Sea Eagle

CONSERVANCY

By Paul Browne

front of them.

The passion is obvious as he warns spectators about the perils facing barn owls, but the pride is equally apparent as makes them aware at the next demonstration, an hour later, of the great strides already made in preserving the wild population of Peregrines, largely due to the captive breeding techniques established by falconers with Lanners.

"We make reference to falconry during our flying but unlike other people we don't claim to be providing falconry displays. They are not, which is why we refer to them as bird of prey demonstrations."

"To make the best of the birds' abilities means

everything you have learned as a falconer must be brought into play."

"It's not an easy task and you always have to keep coming up with something different to hold people's attention. That doesn't mean elaborate, but it does mean thoughtful."

"This year, for instance, Ashley has come up with an idea to show barn owls in a more natural way using nothing apparently more complicated than a couple of owls and a shepherds hut in the middle of a field."

"But the mechanics of achieving the end result are far more complicated and took a lot of trial and error to get right. It was an engineering problem, something we are not too



Lanner Falcon

Continued overleaf



Wedge-tailed Eagle



White bellied Sea Eagle taking food from the water.

good at overcoming on our own. However, we have a great team of helpers with a variety of talents so the solution was found without too much mental suffering on our part."

"We are lucky in the support we get," chips in Ashley, "and there's never any shortage of help for a variety of tasks."

"Over the last four seasons we have developed a very strong membership and among them are many people with professional skills who are only too ready to place them at our disposal."

"Our memberships secretary says we can take the success of the scheme as an indicator of how well we are doing in running the Conservancy, and I suppose he's right."

"The fact that we have gone from nil in 1989 to almost 750 at the end of last year must say something for the way we do things. And he says that renewals this year are running at a higher level than ever before - by the end of March as many people had paid their subscriptions for 1993 in the whole of 1992."

"It's pleasing to get such a reaction and by now, of course, many of the members have become regular friends, too."

Both Ashley and Reg are philosophical about seeing their ideas turn up elsewhere.

"At first you feel a little angry that people come round to pinch your ideas, but then it's also nice to know they are trying to keep up. We lead, they follow!"

"Within a year someone else will be doing what we have just started with barn owls. When we started black kites flying in a group others tried but it's more difficult than it looks. Instead of people from the business just watching they had to ask how it was done. We are, of course, still using our carousel of kites and I like to think we do it better than anyone else, which we probably do," comments Reg.

While Reg and Ashley are the public face of the Hawk Conservancy, Reg's wife Hilary is still the unseen force working behind the scenes on the day to day tasks of keeping the business afloat.

"While we are outside enjoying the fresh air, Hilary is inside coping with the vagaries of VAT, Income Tax, and

wage packets. In between, she manages the shop, orders stock, takes charge of the diary when our secretary finishes her morning stint, and even finds time to make the lunch!"

It's Hilary, too, who ensures guests on the popular hawking days have a warming coffee awaiting their return and a similar welcoming cuppa is also on hand for people on the regular beginners' courses and activity days.

"Other people ask how we can enjoy doing something like this for a living instead of just for pleasure," says Ashley.

"But I am lucky. I get three months good hawking on excellent land. We are not cheap for hawking days, but we run them only from October to Christmas and we pay well to get land where there's plenty of quarry."

"Our courses run only from January to the end of March, each lasting two days and giving potential falconers or austringers an insight into keeping birds successfully."

"Activity days will be running throughout the summer to give ordinary people a chance to get closer to birds of prey and see what they are all about. Not everyone can own a bird of prey, and it's good that they can't, but many people want to find about them and we can help with this."

"By breaking up the year into sections, you can have an enjoyable time doing the things you want in the way you want and it doesn't get boring."

For the rest of the summer, though, it's down to the hard work of coping with days dealing with visitors and evenings spent with his wife, Brigid, and son, Patrick, and trying to get a break from the work routine.

"I don't know anything else, and I don't think I want to." Ashley concludes.

"I enjoy this job - it's what I've always wanted to do. This is a family firm, which is how it works best, and in the years to come the Hawk Conservancy will grow even better."

"There's plenty to do and we'll keep on at our own, independent pace getting to where we want to be. Dad and Mum founded something which has become an institution very quickly and will go on for a long time."

* * * * *



Ashley Smith flying Eagle Owl.



This Andean Condor is a baby and weighs 18lb.



Ray Prior exhibiting his falconry equipment.



Barn Owl



Light phase Buzzard



Ashley and Reg Smith.

"TRAINING GUNDOGS FOR FALCONRY"

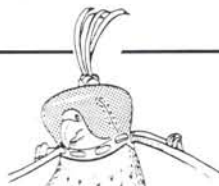
Training day at The Warren Gundog Training Centre on Sunday 13 June 1993

Covering all aspects training a gundog for falconry including pointing live game.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own dogs.

Details from Guy or Marian Wallace

0874 754311



Ian Vance
falconry

SUPPLIER OF PRESTIGIOUS FALCONRY EQUIPMENT IN THE U.K. & EUROPE.

Gloves, Bells, Swivels, Video's & a new comprehensive book-list.

Try us for those "hard to find" titles.

There is no secret to our success. We simply offer the best value beyond compare backed by a quick & reliable service.

For catalogue, please send SAE to:

10 Beauvale Crescent, Hucknall, Nottingham NG15 6PA.

Visa

(0602) 633836

Access



THE OWL CENTRE

ONE OF THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTIONS OF OWLS IN THE WORLD

Where Wildlife Conservation and Captive Breeding come together in wonderful Lakeland Scenery

A complete day out for all the family with Historic Castle, Children's Playground, Restaurant, Nature Trail, Wildflower Meadow, Wildfowl Pond, Gift Shop, Owl Shop, Garden Centre, Facilities for the disabled

'MEET THE BIRDS' daily on the Castle lawn - 2.30 p.m.

'WORLD OF OWLS' exhibition and CCTV on some nests in breeding season.

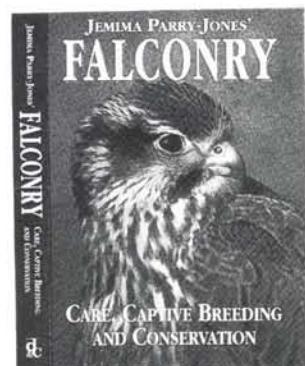
'OWL KEEPING & CONSERVATION' - 1 & 3 day courses available for all ages.

Owl Centre and Grounds open every day of the year 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

SAE for further details from The Owl Centre, Muncaster Castle, Ravenglass, Cumbria, CA18 1RQ. Tel: 0229 717393

1 hour from M6, Junction 36.

READERS OFFER



In this issue the Falconers Magazine can offer you a copy of Jemima-Parry Jones, book **Falconry, Care, Captive Breeding and Conservation**, personally signed by the author.

**Price UK £16.99 - p&p Free
Europe £16.99 + £3.00 - p&p**

Send cheque or P.O. payable to the Falconers Magazine with your name and address to:-

**FALCONERS MAGAZINE
20 Bridle Road,
Burton Latimer,
Kettering, Northants,
NN15 5QP**

The Hawk Conservancy

NEAR ANDOVER, HANTS Tel: Andover (0264) 772252

(3 Miles west of Andover, just off the A303. (Stay on the A303 until you see the signs to *The Hawk Conservancy*).

open from March 1st until last Sunday in October, from 10.30am to 5.00pm Summer months, 4.00pm Spring and Autumn.

A specialist centre for Birds of Prey from all over the world, including Hawks, Falcons, Eagles, Owls, Vultures and Kites.

Birds are flown completely free (weather permitting) at 12 noon, 2.00pm, 3.00pm and 4.00pm.

The Cafe is open daily and offers a varied menu.

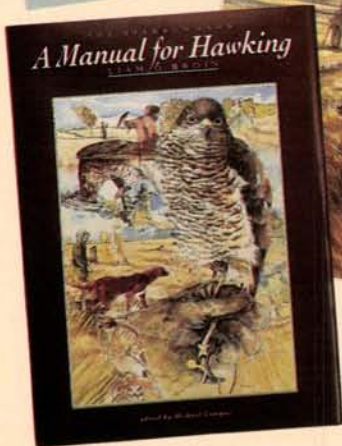
Large free car park. No children under 16 years admitted unless accompanied by a responsible adult. Regret no dogs or pets allowed in the grounds.





Free colour print with each book purchase.

This 8" x 11" full colour reproduction of two intermeshed sparrowhawks on the bow perch is **yours absolutely free**. It will be dispatched along with your softbound or hardbound copy of *A Manual for Hawking*. You can also purchase further prints to complete the set of four which includes the hawking scene on the cover. See inside your copy for details.



Now available
Softbound @ £35
post free.

Hardbound @ £45 post free.
Hardbound & softbound vary only in cover & binding.

Old Abbey Books,
Slane, Co. Meath, Ireland.

A Manual for Hawking

LIAM Ó BROIN

Ireland has a centuries old tradition and love of the hunt especially falconry. Now, for the first time in print, the author traces in text and illustrates with fascinating photographs, the history of falconry in Ireland from its earliest beginnings on these islands over a thousand years ago to the present day.

Illustrated in colour and line drawings by the author, an artist and falconer. 15 chapters of detailed practical advice on rearing, training and hunting with the sparrowhawk and veterinary health care. *Individual chapters cover field tactics, finding quarry, beaters and organising a field.* And there is a complete chapter on training spaniels for hawking.

Over forty full page size diagrams and illustrations are placed together with their own index in an easy-to-use reference section. Step by step, these drawings, executed with the experience of a falconer, illustrate in concise detail everything the beginner and, indeed, the experienced falconer needs to know in making all the hawk's equipment, including hoods, bow perch, mews, glove-making etc. Included also is a fold out full size glove pattern.

"I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW LIAM Ó BROIN'S CREATIVE METHOD OF TRAINING SPARROWHAWKS A HIGH STATE OF DEVELOPMENT INDEED. FALCONERS WILL READ IN THE PAGES OF THIS BOOK WHAT CONDITIONS ARE NEEDED TO PRODUCE HAWKS WITH SUCH DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES." RONALD STEVENS.

"LIAM Ó BROIN IS KNOWN IN THE IRISH HAWKING CLUB AS A THOUGHTFUL AND SUCCESSFUL FALCONER. HIS HAWKS ALWAYS COME TO THE FIELD WELL MANNERED AND IN THE BEST OF CONDITION, AND FLY QUARRY IN GOOD STYLE AND YOU HAVE ALL THE ATTRIBUTES OF A FALCONER WHO KNOWS HIS BUSINESS.... HIS STYLE IS CASUAL AND REASSURING. HIS OPTIMISM THAT ALL WILL WORK AS HOPED IS CLEARLY FOUNDED ON EXPERIENCE AND SUCCESS." IHC Journal

Credit cards welcome

For credit card facilities by phone
U.K. customers dial 010 353 41 24133 6 p.m.-7 p.m. 7 days
Europe and overseas intl. code + 353 41 24133
Free post to Ireland U.K. Europe. Overseas add £5

The Eagle by Norman Weaver (1913-1989)



Your opportunity to buy one of a limited edition of 850 numbered commemorative prints of "The Eagle", the magnificent penultimate work of acclaimed wildlife illustrator Norman Weaver.

The painting depicts a now rare Golden Eagle in its natural habitat in Scotland, and captures the solitary splendour of this awe-inspiring bird.

Each numbered picture, measuring 60 cm x 40 cm, is signed by the artist's daughter and is offered either as a high quality print for you to mount and frame as you wish, or presented on acid-free barrier card with ph. neutral, hand-bevelled, wash line mount, ready for framing.

The price for these prints is £45.00 + £2.50 p&p unmounted or £60.00 + £3.50 p&p mounted. All prices are inclusive of VAT.

Cheque made payable to Deltor Ltd. and send to:

THE FOUNDRY, NITON ROAD,
ROOKLEY, VENTNOR,
ISLE OF WIGHT, PO38 3NR
PLEASE ALLOW 14 DAYS FOR
DELIVERY.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS, PLEASE
TELEPHONE (0983) 721445

break from tradition...

The falconry bag is fast being replaced with the 'flying waistcoat' usually adapted from fishermen or photographers smocks. The 'Fastnet' is different, designed by a falconer for falconers, it is practical lightweight and strong.

Incorporating features such as a field jess holder, fully lined (washable) full rear pocket, lined 'pick up' pocket, 'D' rings for lanyards/leashes, 5 pockets, one elasticated for lures etc.

The *Fastnet* also incorporates the unique belted waist to keep the fit snug even when climbing over fences or gates!

Small 32-36 Medium 38-42 Large 44-46 Extra Large 48-56

- 100% Cotton Drill
- Fully washable
- Lined rear game pocket
- Lined 'pick up' pocket
- Belted waist
- D rings and field jess holder
- Machine washable
- Colour olive

Available from:-

Malvern Strollers, Dept F/M, Digby House, Ebrington,
Nr. Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, GL55 6NL.
Telephone 0386 78 248



£34.50
+
£1.25 p.p.

THE MERLIN

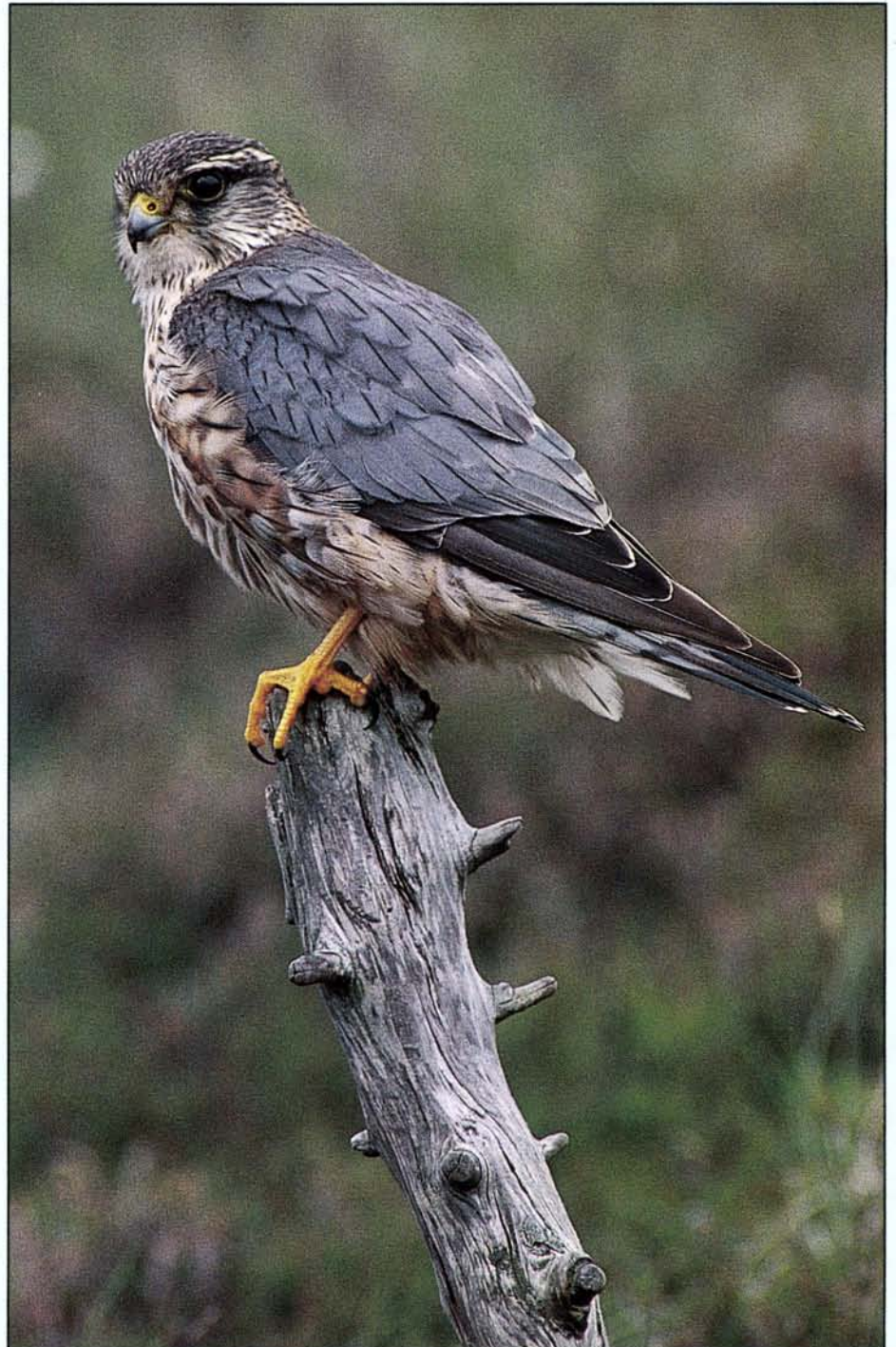
by Mike Everett

As a young teenage birdwatcher, long on enthusiasm but short on identification skills, I saw quite a few Merlins which I now know were actually Kestrels. The first *real* Merlin I saw (shown to me 30-odd years ago by someone who knew what he was talking about) was hunched on a fence-post on a Solway merse: I remember being disappointed that we didn't see it flying. The most recent one, at the time of writing, was certainly doing that - belting along a foot or two above the ground and barely checking its progress as it crossed the four lanes of our busy dual carriageway on its way from one stretch of arable to the next.

I have managed to see a fair number of Merlins since that first Solway bird, but only a small percentage of these have been on their breeding grounds. The only occupied breeding site I have ever seen was in an old Magpie nest in Northern Ireland! Most of the Merlins I see are passage migrants and winter visitors and the majority of those are in the flat farmland of the Fens (where I suspect that they may be commoner in winter than most of us realise).

Summer and winter, Merlins are above all birds of open country. Wintering birds not only occur on farmland but also on coastal marshes and estuaries and, in a few places, close to where they breed. The British and Irish population, which is essentially non-migratory (with birds generally moving onto lower ground), is supplemented in winter by virtually the whole of the Icelandic stock. Our breeding birds are most closely associated with moorland, especially where there is extensive heather, but it has become clear recently that some numbers have also colonised the forest-edge habitat of plantations, where there is access to open country. This is not too surprising since such habitat is widely used elsewhere in the northern hemisphere; in northern Scandinavia, for instance, I have seen Merlins in the breeding season in the scattered-trees-and-clearings landscape of the interface between conifer forest and open fells and bogs.

Wherever and whenever they occur, Merlins are principally hunters of small birds, relying on a combination of speed and the element of surprise to capture prey. They are famous for their persistence: I have watched them



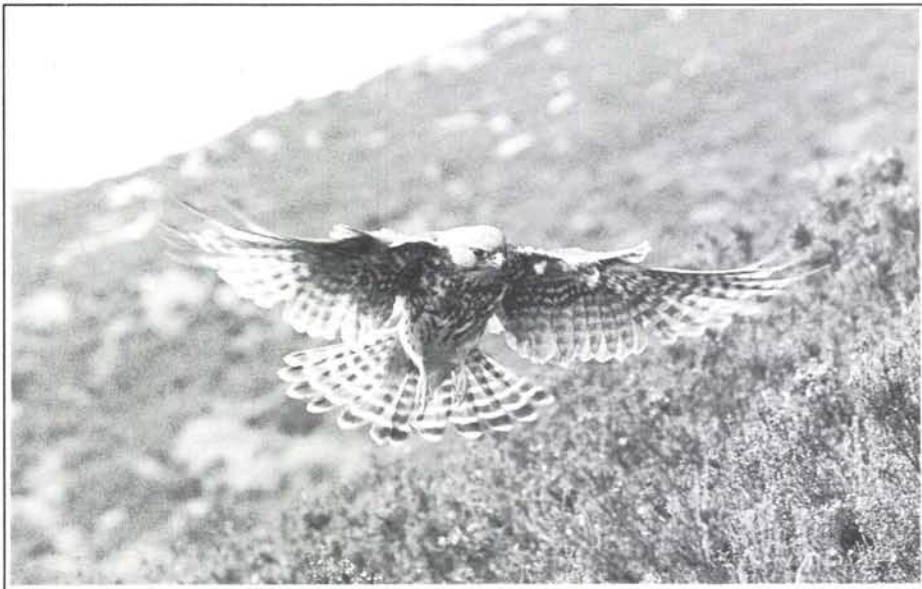
Adult male Merlin.

Photograph by C. H. Gomersall

doggedly following and repeatedly trying for Skylarks and Meadow Pipits, even hundreds of feet above the ground, following every twist and turn of their quarry with marvellous agility for minutes on end. On Havergate Island, in Suffolk, I once saw the relentless pursuit of a Pipit come to an end only when the small

bird entered a wooden hut. I remember thinking at the time that it would not have surprised me at all if the Merlin had gone in after it! Many observers have had the impression that Merlins put in a vast amount of effort for very little return, or, to put it another way, that their successful strike-rate is remarkably low. That may

Photograph by Dennis Green



Female Merlin hovers briefly above her nest prior to landing.

be so, but clearly it works for Merlins.

Again on Havergate Island, I once watched a Merlin in close attendance on a Hen Harrier which was hunting in long sweeps along one of the sea-walls. The falcon was apparently "waiting on" for whatever was flushed by the bigger bird. It was a very windy afternoon and both birds, in their very different ways, put on a splendid display of flying. Raptor-watchers all have their favourites, but when all is said and done most species are capable of tremendous feats of flying on occasion and the little Merlin is certainly no exception. I had forgotten about them until I began writing this piece, but without doubt two of the most marvellous sessions I have ever seen involved breeding Merlins, a pair buzzing a passing Golden Eagle in a Scottish glen, and one harrying White-tailed Eagles over a coastal cliff in Norway. The speed and manoeuvrability of the tiny falcons was astonishing.

On summer moorlands, Meadow Pipits and Skylarks are generally the commonest small birds and, along with a few other species such as Wheatears, usually make up the bulk of the Merlin's prey. Other small birds on marginal farmland near breeding areas can be important prey early in the breeding cycle, before the moorland small bird population reaches full strength, as can the tits and finches found in the fringes of conifer plantations. Small species virtually disappear from upland moors after the breeding season and the Merlins go with them. Wintering Merlins feed on the small birds of farmland and coastal marshes, dunes and shorelines - larks, pipits, finches, bunting and others - but will also take the small waders which are so very numerous along low-lying coasts.

A decade or so ago, the Merlin could still compete with the Hobby for the dubious honour of being our least-known breeding bird of prey. Since then, population surveys and ecological studies have revealed a great deal about this fascinating little bird. The RSPB organised the first-ever national survey in 1983-84, which revealed a British population of 550-650 breeding pairs; the Society's Northern Ireland survey in 1989 produced a figure of 25-30 further pairs there. In the early 1980's, it was clear that Merlins were still suffering from a long-term decline which had probably been going on for most of this century - they were, in fact, believed to be the only raptor whose numbers were declining. The decline was not universal, however, having been more severe in some regions than others; it was not noted at all in some areas. The reasons for the

general decline were not entirely clear. Persecution by gamekeepers must have been a big factor in the first half of the century, but much less so after that, and the DDT-related toxic chemicals (and also mercury compounds) took a heavy toll at least into the 1960's; research into Merlin habitat requirements pointed to the loss of open moorland to afforestation and its degradation through overgrazing as important factors.

The survey figures quoted above probably erred on the low side since the edges of conifer forests and plantations were not fully covered: recent work such as that by the Hawk and Owl Trust in south-west Scotland and the RSPB in Wales has shown that Merlins will use (and move into) such areas, at least where they are close to open country suitable for hunting. Merlin conservation, then, is not only a matter of safeguarding open moorland habitats, especially those with extensive heather (generally where there is well-managed grouse shooting), vitally important though this is for many species besides Merlins. It also involves suitable management of those forest-edge habitats which we now know are used by Merlins too.

As we move into several new phases of Merlin study and conservation, we do so against an encouraging background of local and regional population increases; it looks as if the decline has halted and has even been reversed. There is speculation that the population may now be somewhere around 800 pairs. An RSPB co-ordinated national survey in 1993-94 will produce a more reliable figure and further information on population trends. I don't think I'm sticking my neck out in anticipating that in a year or two's time we might all be pleasantly surprised...



Female Merlin guarding eight day old chicks.

Photograph by Dennis Green



**Cotswold
Wildlife Park**
Burford, Oxford OX18
4UW

Tel: (0993) 823006

Why not come and spend a day in beautiful surroundings at the Cotswold Wildlife Park and enjoy a Birds of Prey Demonstration on:-

will take place on:-
May 3rd and 31st
June 12th
July 18th and 25th
August 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th.
September 5th.

Other attractions include a large and varied collection of animals from all over the world, children's playground • train rides • bar • restaurant and refreshments

The park is situated on the A361, two miles south of its junction with the A40.



Large £7.50 each Medium £7.00 each Small £6.50 each

The only one piece stainless steel swivel, no joints, no trouble.

Lifetime guarantee. Pentapoints bells also available in two sizes £18.00 per pair, hand spun.

Large range of Falconry Gifts available.

**The Pentapoint Studio Collectors House,
Bank Buildings, High Street, Cranleigh,
Surrey. GU6 8BB.
Tel: (0483) 276636**

SUBSCRIBE TO
The **Falconers**

& RAPTOR CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

and get 4 action packed issues about

FALCONRY

and

**BIRD of PREY
CONSERVATION**

Delivered to your door.

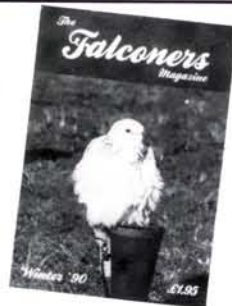
A combination of beautiful colour pictures and interesting articles from home and abroad

ONLY £12.50 A YEAR

European/Overseas subscribers ensure cheques are £ Sterling

Please make cheques/postal orders to:
THE FALCONERS MAGAZINE

£12.50 UK £16 European/Air £24 Overseas



All you have to do is write your name and address separate sheet of paper, stating what issue you wish to start from and send it with payment to:

The Falconer Magazine, David & Lyn Wilson, 20 Bridle Road, Burton Latimer, Kettering, Northants NN15 5QP.

Back Issues available -



For More Information

Call: 0536 722794



HOODS & HOODING

by Griff Griffiths

Blaine said "No man can claim to be a master of hawks until he is master of the art of hooding; he who has perfected himself in the art has gained the whole secret of the control of falcons." He may have been overstating the case but there is a lot of truth in what he says, an unruly hawk is made calm, slips controlled and training made easier.

The first basis of successful hooding is that the hood must fit properly. This means the bird must not have any light getting into the hood, it must be comfortable for extended wear and it must not be able to remove it when left. This means that the beginner must be able to make his own hoods or be prepared to either alter what can often be an expensive purchase or find a supplier who will take the hood back and change it or alter it by post (never an easy job). Give the supplier as much information as possible when ordering the hood, the bird's species and weight, and whether it has a large or small head and a light or heavy beak. Even taking a photo of the head in close up may help. If you are going to alter it yourself make sure that none of the following apply: if the basic hood is too large and will come off when the braces are tight, too loose causing difficulty in slipping the hood on, or too long or too short in the back, this cannot be altered and the hood will have to be changed. Do not expect the furniture maker to change it if you have taken a scalpel to it! The only alteration you can do yourself is to alter the beak opening if it too small. Remember that leather cut off cannot be stuck on again! Often, if the edge of the beak opening is damped and softened then put on the bird this will often be enough easing, if you have to remove leather only take tiny slivers off, trying on the bird each time. If you are in any doubt, get an experienced falconer to help you.

Hood types are largely a matter of preference. My own feelings are that providing it fits spot-on, most birds prefer the American-style Dutch hood with the keyhole beak opening, but if



Holding hood upside down gently stroke the bird's chest.



Bring the hood up under the beak and slowly rotate so the bird's beak enters the opening.



When the bird relaxes tighten the braces using your teeth and thumb and finger of your free hand.



When hooded, the bird will sit still and calm.

they are a bit wrong then the bird will scratch the hood and never be happy in it. Anglo Indian hoods are quick to make and alter and do not have to be as close a fit as Dutch.

When the braces are done up, make sure that they tighten up under the lump at the back of the bird's head. They should never tighten onto the bird's skull as the bird will be uncomfortable and will be able to remove the hood.

When you are sure the hood fits, and this is a major problem with the beginner and a first bird (try and see if the breeder will sell you a hood that he knows fits). You have to "make" the bird to the hood. Assuming the bird is not an imprint, then it should start its hood training as soon as you start to man it. At this stage, the bird *must* be more frightened of you than the hood. If you wait till the bird is manned and then you start to try to hood it, you will have major problems. Pick the bird up and you will find as it sits on the fist it will be staring at you and probably leaning forward. Hold the hood by the plume or topknot between your thumb and first finger, holding the hood upside

down gently stroke the bird on the chest, bring the hood, still upside down, under the beak and then slowly rotate the hood so that the beak enters its opening. be deliberate and firm, do not rush or push the bird's head into the hood, if the hood fits, there will be no need to push at this stage, the bird will not resist what you do. Once the hood is on the bird (providing it's not a Prairie Falcon - if you are a beginner do not start learning how to hood on a Prairie!) it will relax, then tighten the braces using your teeth and thumb and finger of your left hand. Falcons can do their initial manning with the hood, some falconers even feed their birds through the hood, I personally do not recommend this. While the bird is on your fist but before you intend to feed it, every now and then loosen, wait, and then tighten the braces. When you intend to feed it after you have loosened the braces, rotate the hood in the opposite way to putting on the hood, do not pull the hood off straight up. Feed the bird and put the hood back on. Only when the bird is becoming

manned.may it resist the hood and only then if you were rough with it. As soon as the bird will eat as soon as it sees food on the glove and take titbits from the fingers, trap a piece of meat between the little finger and the base of the thumb, when you remove the hood allow the bird to take the piece of meat, then slip the hood on as soon as it swallows the meat. Do this 5 or 6 times at each manning session. At any time should the bird bate before you hood it, wait till the bird is back on the fist and settled down before re-hooding it. When the only reaction the bird gives that it is going to be hooded is a flicker of the third eyelid then you know it is made to the hood.



Imprint should start their hooding at a very early stage.

HOODING IMPRINTS

In some ways this is much easier than with parent-raised birds. It must be started when the bird is still in half down and half feathers as at this stage the baby will not be able to resist the hood even though its head will be fully grown.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF HOODS

*These fine examples are all available from
Martin Jones*

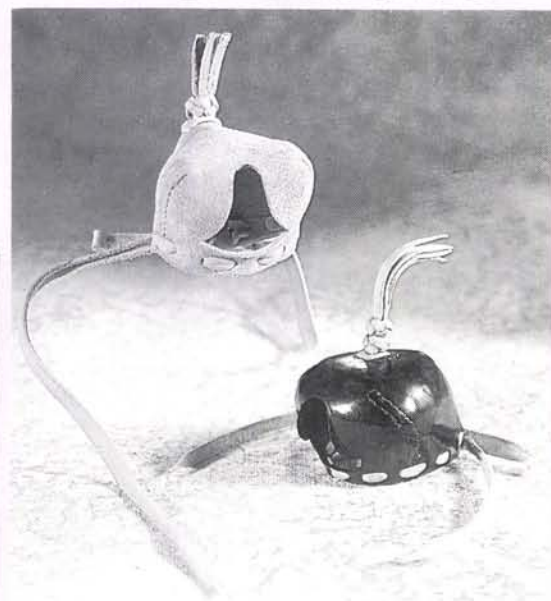


Top: Traditional Dutch Hood ▲

Bottom: American style Dutch hood.

Top: Arab-style Bahraini. ▶

Bottom: Fully blocked American style Dutch Bahraini hood with a boned finish.



Top: Anglo-Indian suede. ▲

Bottom: Blocked Anglo-Indian.

CLASSIFIEDS

TELEPHONE (0536) 722794

It is an offence to sell or offer to buy or sell most birds (and other animals dead or alive, without a licence or exception from the Department of the Environment, or (for dead birds only) registration under section 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. All advertisements should be accompanied by a declaration form obtainable, with an explanatory note, from the Advertisement Manager

DOGS

Trained "English" and German Pointers.
Experience Grouse, Pheasant and Rabbits.
Some older dogs available
Guy Wallace
0874 754311

Guy Wallace has a limited number of vacancies for pointing breeds of gundog to be trained for next seasons hawking. We also train spaniels and retrievers.
0874 754311

FENTOWZER

GERMAN WIRE-HAIRED POINTERS

Black/white and liver/white dog puppies.
Sire F.T.W. Badger of Bryantscroft. Dam Field Trial Award Winner
Both H.D. Scored and eye tested with impeccable temperaments.
Bred from excellent German and Dutch bloodlines, out of two hardworking, consistent parents.
Tel: (0406) 364487 (Lincs/Camb.)

Top Quality Birds

at sensible prices

1993 EYASSES FROM MARTIN JONES

Bred from stock actually proven in the field (a rarity). The progeny are also of proven ability, enabling us to match a particular bird to your requirements. All eyasses are genuinely parent-reared in skylight and seclusion aviaries (unless otherwise specified). Please telephone and discuss your requirements, without obligation.

LONGWINGS

Peregrine - game or rook hawking types available. The gamehawking strain has acquired a very high reputation, and have excelled themselves at grouse and partridge. Can be hacked if desired.

Peregrine x Saker hybrid - Combining Peregrine speed and trainability with Saker manoeuvrability and tenacity, these birds have made a tremendous name for themselves as all-rounders. Can be flown in country often considered too enclosed for most longwings. Arguably the most successful hybrid for UK conditions and quarry.

Peregrine x Merlin hybrid - Limited production. A few occasionally available.

Gyr hybrid - Limited production, please call.

SHORTWINGS

Harris Hawk - Bred from unrelated stock which has proven itself in the field. Not only are the eyasses parent-reared but are normally kept with the parents until six months old, thus avoiding any risk of screaming or imprinting often associated with Harris Hawks from other sources.

All birds are guaranteed free from any genetic defect.

For colour brochure please contact:-

Martin Jones, The Lodge, Huntley Manor, Huntley,
Gloucestershire GL19 3HG.
Telephone: 0452 830629

TAXIDERMISTRY



PENNINE TAXIDERMISTRY STUDIOS

Best prices paid for deceased legitimate birds of prey.

Telephone: 0457 762715

D.of.E. Registered Taxidermist requires all legitimate birds of Prey.

Best price paid.
Please ring:-
Morcot (057287) 531
for further details

INSURANCE

BIRD INSURANCE

(UK and Overseas)
For your FREE information pack
Call:
0981 240536 anytime

GOLDEN VALLEY FINANCE & INSURANCE
Ewyas Harold, Herefordshire HR2 0ES.

BIRDS FOR SALE

HUNTING FALCONS

Large Falcons and Harris Hawks

1993 Colour Brochure now available

Tel: 0267 233864

FURNITURE

ATTENTION ALL CLUBS, RETAILERS, MANUFACTURERS AND CENTRES...

Top quality Falconry furniture at trade prices, from Falconry Supplies
Tel: 0789 262770
Export enquiries welcome

VETERINARY SERVICES



A.D. Malley, BA, MVB, MRCVS.

SOUTH BEECH VETERINARY SURGERY

40 Southend Road, Wickford, Essex, SS11 8DU

Special interest in Avian Medicine

Services include Surgical Sexing and Microchip Identification

Tel: 0268 560660

Fax: 0268 562083



SOUTH WALES FROZEN FOOD

Chicks, all individually frozen
Mice and Rats (dead)

Tel anytime 0269 844610

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Manufacturer of Microchip Identification System is looking for somebody in falconry world to market its products.

Exclusive or agency package available.

Contact:

Richard Fry, AVID Plc.,
Holroyd Suite, Oak Hall,
Sheffield Park, Uckfield TN22 3QY.

ANDERSEY QUAIL

Whether you are flying or breeding Birds of Prey, Quail are recognised as being an excellent quality food source.

We can supply any number of Top Class Quail at 50p each plus delivery.

Sorry, no live birds.

Tel: (0235) 772040

HawkSport

Hunting Days, Courses and
Weekend experiences

Phone

0531 821753

for details

THE FALCONER

The Journal of the
British Falconers' Club 1972 - 1988

The B.F.C. has graciously consented to the printing of a second quality compilation of the "Journal of the B.F.C." These journals stretch from 1972 through to 1988 and include numerous important pieces by many renowned British Falconers, such as : Stephen Frank, Roger Upton,

J.G.Mavrogordato and T.A.M. Jack.

To name but a few.

British Falconry during this period has evolved parallel, yet distinct techniques and practices and a wealth of understanding can be found in these 1,146 pages.

This book is compiled using the same format and size as the previous edition that covered 1937-1971.

This important 2nd volume is a must for any collection!



Cut out this order form or write

PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER: (To be received by 31st Aug '93)

STANDARD EDITION.....£45

LIMITED EDITION (100 COPIES).....£75
(simulated leather, gold lettering).

REGULAR PRICE :

STANDARD EDITION.....£50

LIMITED EDITION (100 COPIES).....£80
(simulated leather, gold lettering).

POSTAGE AND PACKING : (per book)

Add £8 for international orders. Add £5 for U.K. orders

Name _____ Total £ _____

Address _____

Send cheques or money orders in **pounds sterling** to: A & N Books, 80, Ripon Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 4NB, England.

BINDERS

To hold your collection of the *Falconers and Raptor Conservation Magazine*

(each binder holds 10 magazines)

Only £6.50 + £1.00 p&p UK

£6.50 + £2.50 p&p Europe Airmail

£6.50 + £3.50 p&p Overseas

Send cheque or postal order payable to:

The Falconers Magazine and send with your order to 20 Bridle Road, Burton Latimer, Nr Kettering, Northants NN15 5QP.



For further information telephone: 0536 722794.

BIRD BOOKS

FOR THE FALCONER & COLLECTOR

NEW TITLES FOR 1993

- Ecology and Behaviour of the Lanner Falcon. - *Leonardi*. - A new monograph. - £20.00
 - Collins Guide to the Birds of Prey of Britain and Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. - *Gensbol*. - £14.99
 - Birds of Prey. - *Hammond* - A new identification & behaviour guide - £14.99
 - The Vultures of Africa. - *Mundy et al.* - £55.00
 - The Kestrel - *Shrubb* - A popular monograph - £9.99
 - Birds of the Night: Night Owls, Frogmouth and Nightjars of Australia. - *Hollands* - £35.00
 - Jemima Parry Jones' Falconry. - *Parry Jones* - £16.99
 - The Hunting Falcon. - *Haak* - £19.95
 - Birds of Prey. Natural History and Conservation of North American Raptors. - *Snyder* - £30.00
- Postage is extra. Please enquire.

THIS IS JUST A SMALL SELECTION FROM OUR EXTENSIVE LIST OF NEW AND SECONDHAND BIRD BOOKS.

FREE CATALOGUES ON REQUEST

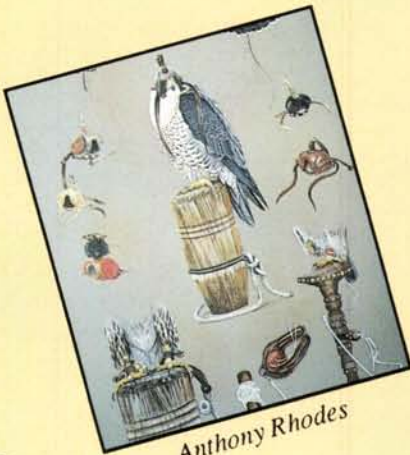
ST ANN'S BOOKS

Rectory House, 26 Priory Road,
Great Malvern, Worcs. WR14 3DR
Tel: (0684) 562818 Fax: (0684) 566491

THE WILDLIFE & RAPTOR ART MEWS EXHIBITION

at the
BRITISH FALCONRY and RAPTOR FAIR
ALTHORP, NORTHAMPTON
Sun 30th & Mon 31st May 1993

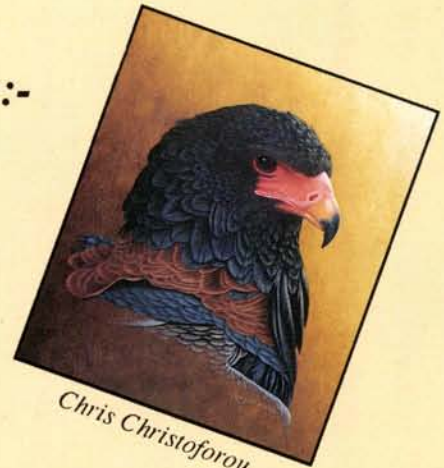
Participating Artists are:-



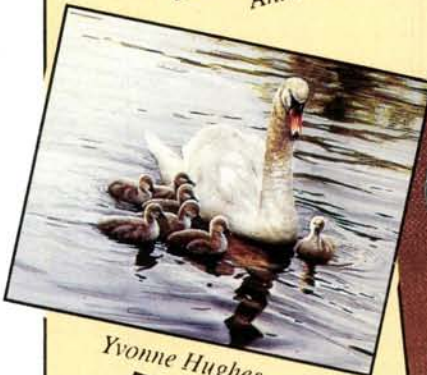
Anthony Rhodes



Kim Thompson



Chris Christoforou



Yvonne Hughes



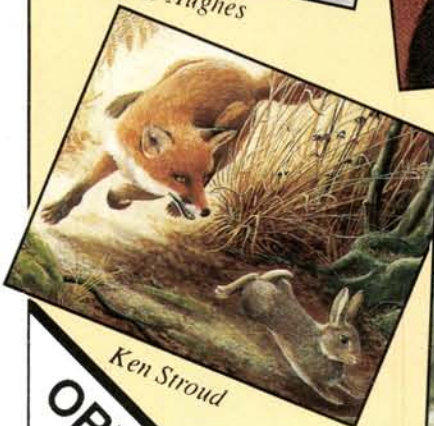
David Cook



Katie Wendover



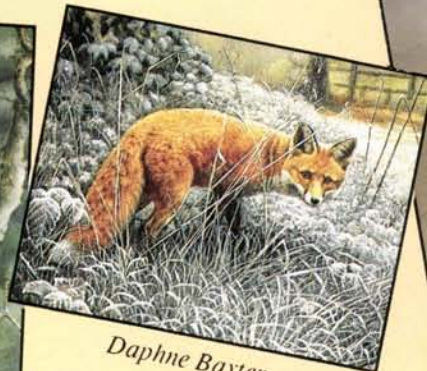
Ron David Digby



Ken Stroud



Andrew Benfield



Daphne Baxter



Andrew Ellis

**ORIGINAL ART &
PRINTS ON
SALE**

*also showing are: Paul Apps, Mary Shaw,
John Parsons, David Crane, Sue Gibson*