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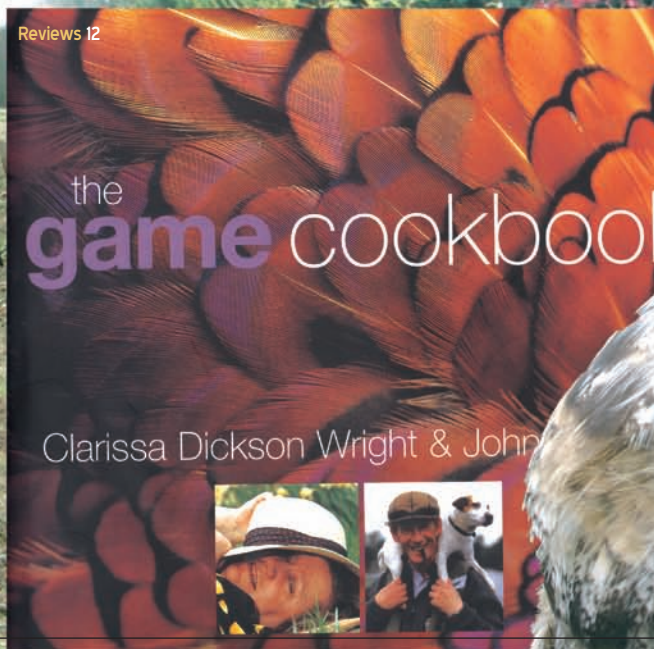
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editorial

Here we are again with another season already started. Where does the time go? I do hope that your birds are all fit and well and have had a good moult throughout the summer.

The Hawk Board have held their elections and the results are published on page seven. Congratulations to the six members who have been elected onto the board and thanks to all of you who took the time and trouble to cast a vote. I hope that all you falconers will give your support to the board over the next few years and beyond.

As you may know, Nick Kester is the Communications Officer for the Hawk Board and has been very ill for the past few months. He had to stay in hospital for quite a number of weeks but is now back home recovering and starting to work at his computer once more. I hope that you will join me in wishing Nick a full and healthy recovery.

Starting in the next issue of this magazine, (February 2005) I hope to have a Question and Answer page with veterinary surgeon, John Chitty. So if you have any questions you would like to ask John concerning your birds health or if there are any problems that you are concerned with, please send them to me at the address shown on page four and I will pass them on.

In the meantime, have a good read.

Peter Eldrett

Falconers

news and products

Send all your news and product information to peter.eldrett@tiscali.co.uk

New Products from Ben Long

Always at the cutting edge of design in falconry, Ben Long Falconry has a number of new items in their catalogue. Some are shown here, all sensibly-priced and in the high quality which can always be expected of the brand.

Hawking Vest

A superbly practical item to replace the traditional hawking bag. It is spacious, with a large net-sided rear game pocket, and two front pockets which each consist of three separate pockets, including a removable meat pocket **with another spare one**. It has comfortable webbing straps and waistbelt, with a silky lining including a secure inside zip pocket. Eyelets are also fitted to hold spare jesses, and also dee-rings to hold a spare leash and swivel. The vest is made in olive green cordura-style material, with contrasting trimming and studs. Sizes medium and large, but it is fully adjustable. The price is a very reasonable £49.00 (p&p £6.00).



Monocular Microscope

A small and lightweight (only 50g / 2oz), alloy-bodied prismatic spotting monocular with superior optical qualities, 8 x magnification, this could make the difference between finding and losing your hawk. The clever part is the extra lens, which can be screwed to the front to convert the device into a **30x magnification**

microscope, suitable for inspecting wounds, removing thorns etc. Could be a nice little present at only £18.00.

Whistles

Pea-type whistle with special **integral compass and thermometer**, at only £4.00, and a high-pitched anodised aluminium straight, in various colours, at £3.50.

Whistle lanyards To keep safe and handy not only whistles, but keys, knives or even mobile phones, with detachable spring clip, for £2.50.

Digital Scales

Most digital scales are rather light and flimsy, but these are quite different. These quality scales are solid and accurate, and weighty enough to eliminate the "fluttering" readings often seen with these type of scales. These also have imperial/metric conversion button, and will zero and switch off automatically, and the single-sided perch allows any hawk to be placed easily on it, even when hooded. The metalwork is powder-coated in an attractive pewter colour, and these scales come with a **5 year guarantee**, at £75.00 (p&p £9.00).

Falconry Community launches Heritage Trust

At a meeting of prominent falconers at Avebury on 10 June, a new charitable Trust was formed to safeguard valuable cultural artefacts and documents from falconry, and its role in conservation. There will also be an internet resource accessible all over the world.

Roger Upton, a falconer and historian, said 'Falconry has an incredibly rich and diverse place in our culture, as it does for many other nations. With the increasing popularity of the sport it is essential to make this available to future generations.'

The Trust is now being registered as a charity by Mrs Jemima Parry-Jones, MBE, and will not be affiliated to any existing organisations. Start-up funding of £1000 has already been raised and a Board of Trustees is being appointed.

The Trust aims to preserve physical artefacts, records, artwork and photographs relating to the heritage of falconry, and its contributions to raptor biology, captive breeding, and conservation. It will provide information, in electronic form as a web-based archive, cataloguing the falconry artefacts and records both in the collection and also items still in private ownership. This will be an information resource available world-wide.

It also plans to establish a physical archive at a suitable location providing public access to the material.

It is hoped that funding will come from individual sponsorship and legacies, and grants from both the UK and the EU, and from sales of use of images available on the website. The Trust will have full links with the North American Archives so that the electronic catalogue would eventually become a global resource for falconry. Other countries could also participate by cataloguing their own material in the central electronic catalogue, via a central regulator.

The public launch of the Trust will be at the Falconers' Fair in May 2005.

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Ex Owner of New Forest Owl Sanctuary sentenced

On 6 October Bruce Berry, the former owner of the New Forest Owl Sanctuary in Ringwood, Hampshire, was ordered to pay £10,000 court costs and given a 240 hour community punishment order at Southampton Crown Court. Mr. Berry was convicted on five counts: stealing a Saker falcon, displaying owl chicks and tortoises without a licence, and selling a marsh harrier and a tawny owl without licences. He was cleared of providing false documentation to obtain a licence and attempting to release barn owls into the wild.

Mr. Berry had been running the Owl Sanctuary since 1990 but last year it was the subject of the BBC Programme "Inside Out", fronted by Chris Packham, which made allegations of mismanagement and cruelty. Mr. Berry was arrested shortly after the programme and he later resigned from his position at the sanctuary.

The new owner of the premises, Mr. Giles Talbot, has plans to re-open as a raptor and reptile centre but has been refused planning permission by the local council.

Pigeon deterrant

Metronet Rail deters depot pigeons using bird of prey London, 8th September, 2004: Metronet Rail, responsible for revitalising two thirds of the London Tube is using a hawk to deter hundreds of pigeons from roosting and nesting at three of the biggest sub-surface depots, Hammersmith, Neasden and Ealing Common.



Every week a licensed trained Harris Hawk is taken to the depots by a pest control company in a bid to control the influx of pigeons taking up residence, not only in the buildings but also in the equipment.

The falconer walks around the depot sites with the bird of prey following overhead. The hawk's superior sight picks out any and all hiding pigeons, moving them out of the area.

Bird pests aren't always first thought of when it comes to lost efficiency. A number of man hours can be lost in cleaning machinery and equipment and there are potential health and safety risks as pigeons carry more diseases than rats. Steve Smith, Metronet's Plant and Facilities Manager comments: "It's made a big difference, the depots are a lot cleaner and safer as a result."

Hawk Board Election News

The Constitution of the Hawk Board states that every 3 years elections must be held to appoint the 6 specialists who are the backbone of the Board. These tri-ennial elections were held in August 2004.

There were 10 candidates standing for election and the results were:

Dr. Nick Fox;	366 votes
Jim Chick;	351 votes
Martin Jones;	314 votes

Paul Beecroft;	269 votes
Tony Crosswell;	233 votes
Mark Hinge;	172 votes
Derek Stotton;	164 votes
David Owen;	149 votes
Mark Robb;	105 votes
Janusz Prymaka;	50 votes

Congratulations go to the first 6 successful candidates and many thanks to Derek Stotton; Dave Owen; Mark Robb & Janusz

Prymaka for offering their services to the Board.

The next meeting of the new Hawk Board is at Kennington Road in October when a Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected. The Board will then continue to look after the interests of all falconers and hawk keepers in the UK.

Mike Clowes –
Co-ordinator.

The Central Falconry and Raptor Club *John Hill*

The club has been very active again visiting Game Fairs all summer and has collected on its travels quite a few new members. What we try to specialize at the club are quality guest speakers on most club nights through the year.

We were pleased to welcome Roger Upton on his first visit to the club early on in the year and last month Neil Forbes visited us to where we put on one of his

famous First Aid Courses. I mentioned it in the last edition of this mag and within two days of the publication we had sold 25 tickets. The day was a great success with the people who run the venue, doing us proud with their helpfulness. We had 50 people on the course traveling from all over the UK plus two from Iceland. Thanks Neil for putting on a very knowledgeable day. We all couldn't wait to get home to check out our birds.

On Sunday 14 November Chris Neal is paying us a visit again with his talk on being a "Wildlife Detective". Chris has been going

away for the winter months for a few years now and he has built up a library of films that makes very interesting viewing. He has been on the National Geographical channel with "Tigers for Sale", and he also has filmed on the illicit trade in birds in India and Elephant poaching in Africa. Chris's new documentary for the N.G. channel is "Living in an Asian Circus".

All are welcome on the night to visit us. The club meets at the Sports Connexion, Ryton on Dunsmore, nr. Coventry at 7.30pm. For more details ring John Hill 07973 224609. email: cen.falc@ic24.net

CAPTION COMPETITION WINNER

The winner of the caption competition is issue 58 is Derek Stotton of Warrington with "Read French? Not me, I only drink the contents!"

The International Association For Falconry And Conservation Of Birds Of Prey (IAF)

Falconry is a universal hunting sport. It is practised on every continent in over 60

countries. Asia has over 13,000 falconers with over 9,000 in the Middle East. Europe in total has 8,500 (around 2,500 in the UK) and the Americas around 5,000. Africa and Oceania have a little over 500 between them. These are conservative estimates based on club returns; no one could hope to know all the falconers in their country and many countries do not have clubs.

IAF was founded in 1968. It now federates 52 associations from 40 different countries.

This number grows every year. IAF was established to be a global voice for falconry and the preservation of the cultures and traditions of the sport worldwide. There is no one country that dominates it and it does not try to interfere with the legal rights of falconers in their own countries. In fact IAF is very much against lobbyists from one country forcing unsuitable legislation on the others. This is important for many of the member countries and their governments, what is acceptable in one country may not be so in another. Because IAF only speaks for falconry and has no other agenda its voice is seen as non-partisan and is acceptable all over the world. IAF believes strongly in the association between hunting and conservation, in the concept of sustainable use of wildlife and in hunting as a tool of conservation.

The delegate representing a country in IAF must represent his country's falconers. They must choose him; he cannot set himself up as a spokesman. The simplest way to choose a delegate fairly is for the falconers to organise themselves into a club, adopt a constitution and select a delegate from amongst themselves. In many parts of the world the concept of a club is in itself unusual and clubs have been formed expressly for satisfying IAF membership criteria.

Full voting IAF Membership is limited to organisations representing falconry. A potential Member Organisation may apply for full membership after it has formally existed for at least two (2) years in a country where falconry is a legal field sport.

Associate Membership is open for those countries where falconry is not recognised as a legal field sport. Other categories of IAF membership also exist

and are detailed in our constitution, which can be seen on our website www.i-a-f.org; all of them require the applicant to be a club or organisation.

IAF encourages those falconry nations without a club tradition to form them. Besides being able to join us there are many other advantages for falconers to be organised in this way: a louder voice when dealing with national governments and international non-government agencies, faster communications between falconers, contact with clubs in other countries, keeping up to date with developments in veterinary medicine, law, falconry techniques and technology, etc., etc.

IAF does not make laws and regulations for world falconry. It produces guidelines on specific issues when asked for them by member countries and has a constitution its members subscribe to.

The responsibility of the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey for governance of falconry is given in its Statutes, namely 'To develop, maintain and amend national and international laws, treaties and conventions to permit the pursuit and perpetuation of falconry' (Article 2.1.4). In its duty 'To represent falconry throughout the world' (Article 2.1.1), IAF is also bound 'To preserve and encourage falconry within the context of sustainable use of wildlife' (Article 2.1.2), 'To encourage conservation, the ecological and veterinary research on birds of prey and promote, under scientific guidance, domestic propagation for falconry' (Article 2.1.3), and 'To require

the observation of falconry, hunting, conservation and welfare laws' (Article 2.1.5).

At a time of global degradation through pollution, habitat loss and climate change, IAF wishes to ensure that falconry contributes maximally to conservation of raptor and prey populations by sustainable use of these renewable resources. Moreover, at a time of rapid loss of humanity's cultural heritage through globalisation, IAF also earnestly desires to play as full a part as possible in the maintenance of the diverse and spiritually important traditions of partnership with animals. IAF desires to cooperate with all others interested in these goals of conserving the world's cultural and natural heritage.

From 30 years of experience as an international non-governmental body, now representing falconry in the Council for Europe (Bern Convention), World Conservation Union (IUCN) and in CITES, IAF believes that falconers can best be motivated to contribute effectively to cultural and wildlife conservation if legislators aim to:

1. Apply legal regulation only where there is real risk to wild raptors or to falconry.
2. Reduce bureaucracy to a level concomitant with real conservation requirements.
3. Register birds, if needed, by a scheme for 1-time recording and passport.
4. Encourage mentorship, or training and

What the IAF is all about...

exams, to ensure best practice.

5. Encourage sustainable-use of wild birds to benefit conservation.

Falconers are recommended to develop good relationships with others interested in conserving wildlife, especially in the government bodies with national and international responsibilities.

Position Statement adopted by the delegates of the member states at Amarillo, Texas, on 21 November 2000.

What does IAF do for member countries?

IAF is the countries that constitute it; it can only be that. Its strength is in the experience of the delegates chosen by its member countries and in the skills of its Advisory Committee of experienced falconers who are also biologists, lawyers and specialists in other fields, all giving freely of their time and expertise. Over the years both governments and non-governmental international organisations have learned to respect IAF and to draw on that huge expertise when falconry comes to their notice.

IAF helps world falconry by providing and offering information and advice. With over 50 organisations representing over 40 countries, IAF members can draw on each other's experience and depend on the knowledge and assistance of the Officers and Advisory Committee whenever falconry practices come under threat from national or international laws. IAF help is only given when requested by the member association. Much of the work done has to be "behind the scenes". Here are some recent examples where IAF played a successful part:

Turkey - falconry had been made subject to licensing of individual birds in 1996, but only 600 of an estimated 5,000 falconers obtained licences. This caused friction and there was a meeting of all interested parties to discuss falconry regulations. The presence of IAF representatives ensured appreciation of the legal nature of falconry internationally. **Instead of a ban the chosen approach was to license individuals to trap and keep sparrowhawks. Falconers are encouraged to work with ringers and help monitor migrant populations of raptors on the very important Bosphorus and Caucasus flyways.**

Czech Republic - A slip of the pen in the legislature resulted in a sudden,

unexpected ban on hunting with hawks. This law was to ban rifles for game smaller than a deer and made illegal the hunting of rabbits, hares and feathered game with anything other than a shotgun. The use of the word "hunting" effectively bans hunting with hawks as well. The Czech Government acknowledged its mistake, but bureaucracy meant the ban could not be lifted until 1st January 2003. In the meantime excuses were made that EC accession would mean a falconry ban anyway. Czech falconers sent a questionnaire to all European IAF Members asking for details of their laws. In a matter of days the Czech falconers presented a document to their government showing falconry can be accommodated into new laws. **The outcome is that the Czech Republic now has falconry laws in line with other European States that are favourable to falconry.**

Ireland - The government turned lands in Co. Wicklow, traditional territory for grouse hawking and merlins into a National Park where no hunting is allowed. The Irish Hawking Club asked IAF to look into the legality of this and letters were sent to the Minister explaining that precedents exist for hawking/hunting state lands in the rest of Europe. **This year IHC met with the Irish Wildlife Department and were informed no obstacles would be put in the way of an appeal.**

EU Laws, CITES, Bern Convention, World Conservation Union There are, on average, two meetings or conferences every month to be attended and monitored. These could be anywhere in the world and IAF sends a delegate each time.

No complaints have ever been lodged against falconry by the EU commission.

Rook hawking and quarry licences. The BFC asked IAF for its opinion on the issue of the compatibility with the Bird Directive of hawking at non-game species and of spring rook hawking. An overview of case law was sent to the Court of Justice concluding that allowing hawking at non-game species and at rooks during the spring could be considered compatible with article 9 of the Bird Directive. Quarry licences: the Commission gave a favourable opinion on UK lark licences in 1998.

Invasive Alien Species: documents from IAF on the draft European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species resulted in an



exemption for falconry from these draconian rules – in other words European law allows for falconers to fly non-native species like the redtail and the Harris hawk.

Reguide: IAF is particularly strong in the understanding of EU laws and produced "The Reguide" guidelines for regulating falconry, which has been used by EU accession states and is also consulted by other countries outside the EU. This is a guide for government departments that lists all the benefits of falconry and offers the best regulations from around the world suggesting how they might be successfully incorporated into hunting laws.

CITES – IAFs' proposed "Falconry passport system" to simplify international movement of trained raptors.

Amman Resolution recognises the role of falconry for conservation, within the context of sustainable use. This resolution requests that Saker range states and falconers work with CITES and other international regulatory authorities to develop an internationally recognized system, initially for this species but applicable for other wildlife, that combines wildlife research and modern marking technologies.

IAF was also present at the **Abu Dhabi Declaration** on saker conservation and the co-operation of all interested parties.

Contact numbers for IAF appear on the website www.i-a-f.org

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Most ferrets work if started at an early enough age. Now there's a sweeping statement. However, to reduce the chances of failure try to buy from someone who works their ferrets. I doubt seekers of potential Derby winners start their search at the local Pony Club gymkhana! Ferrets come into season once a year around March time (sometimes earlier/later) and normally have only one litter so, towards the end of June, there are usually a few kits available. Adult



Check out ferret dentition

On buying

ferrets do come available from time-to-time, though few owners would get rid of a good worker, they are like gold dust. At least when you start with a kit you know that any problems or behavioural quirks are down to you. Ferrets come in polecat (the original dark polecat colour with a paler face mask and blackish nose), albino (white to cream with pink eyes) and what are loosely called fancy (everything in between, from sandy to black eyed white – a multitude of colour variations). In the USA there are in the region of 70 – 80 recognised colour variations and even colour charts, shades of 'Dulux mix and match', to aid identification! I do not think colour affects hunting abilities, although from a working aspect albino or pale sandy ferrets are certainly more visible in deep cover and dark hedge bottoms. Is it easier to break a hawk to a white ferret? It all comes into the equation. Entry in Game Book – Weather fine, light breeze - rabbits 2, polecat ferret 1.

Personally, I like the best of all worlds, a pale sandy ferret that has retained some polecat mask and coat shading, a colour variation known as a 'smokey' in the West Country, but I have heard them called 'cinnamons' too. Confusing isn't it?

Ferrets come in hob/dog/male - or - jill/bitch/female, plus a few local dialect terms for the sexes, and for ferreting with nets I prefer jills. Being much smaller than hobs, with experience they learn to pass through nets even when wearing a locator collar, an important consideration once you've seen a few rabbits disappearing into the distance from holes where nets have been displaced. A hob's greater size means it will pull a net off a hole even without a collar to catch it up on. But for hawking purse nets are not needed, so the choice is yours. If you only intend to keep a single ferret then let it be a hob, they are a much more solitary creature than a jill, which thrives better with another jill to keep it company. Two hobs tend to fight, and if they are both dominants it can get nasty and they will need to be separated (more accommodation), particularly when coming into breeding condition in February/March. And of course a pair will, well do what a pair of anything will do, and will do it noisily and

viciously - not a pretty romantic business at all! They cannot usually be left together once the jill is in season so it means building another hutch too. So, initially settle for one hob or two jills. Please don't breed a litter unless you have homes for them, the welfares and shelters are full to overflowing.

Where to buy

Many prospective owners try to re-home a ferret from the RSPCA but their policy, certainly in my local unit, is not to place them with persons who wish to work them. So, that option is out.

Look in 'pets for sale' columns, keep an eye out for the ferret stand at local country fairs, or ask around and find a local owner who works them and make a first approach there. There are ferret clubs in many parts of the UK too and these can be most helpful. Ferret 'rescue centres' and 'welfares' are another possibility but some have restrictions like the RSPCA. Surf the internet for contact information on many such clubs and organisations.

What to look for

Ferrets should be lively inquisitive little animals and if handled from youngsters will learn not to bite. All baby kits start to bite



Personally, I like the best of all worlds, a pale sandy ferret that has retained some polecat mask and coat shading, a colour variation known as a 'smokey' in the West Country, but I have heard them called 'cinnamons' too. Confusing isn't it?

but do not have the jaw muscle to really do any damage. Regularly handled at this stage, like several times a day, they learn that fingers are not food. A good litter will race around their hutch with boundless energy at first sight of a visitor. Stay away from anything that skulks away in a corner reluctant to come and say hello, and likewise the odd one that comes out to 'get' you. I know it might be possible to change it but is

it worth the effort and anguish? Friendly is best. Don't fall for the runt of the litter syndrome either! Why do we do that? An owner whose children play with his ferrets is always a good bet. Remember, at some point in the future you are going to dig to this ferret, then put your hand down a tunnel to separate it from a rabbit blocked in a dead-end. It's tricky enough with a friendly ferret, stupidity with one in need of

psychiatric help. Hurts too! Have a look at ferret dentition, it says "finger friendly ferrets are best".

Ask what they are being fed and stay away from anything on a bread and milk diet. Good diet, especially whole carcass, develops a healthy ferret. Check out the dung corner for nice firm faeces. Am I sad, or what. Make sure there is adequate water available. Don't worry if their cage hasn't been cleaned out for a few days, that's real life, and it's the condition of the ferrets you're looking at. I always worry when I'm shown to a freshly cleaned hutch and then ask myself just how bad was it! Also, I don't like

a Ferret

part 2



A pale sandy ferret

to see ferrets that have just been fed when I arrive. Nothing slows down little-handed, biting ferrets more than a good bellyful of food, as you'll find out in a few hours time at home.

There are a lot of ferrets out there, get a healthy, friendly, active type. Don't be embarrassed to walk away if you don't like what you see. And – don't be a time waster, if you make an arrangement stick to it or let the man know. I've been there, timewasters are a pain in the ass and ferrets seem to attract them like flies to a dung corner!

There is a disease of ferrets called Aleutian disease for which there is no cure or no immunisation. Many owners have never heard of it, many don't believe in it, but try to buy a kit from negative tested parents or an adult that has been tested negative. Test kits are available and it is easy enough to do it yourself. The Wessex Ferret Club (they have a website) have some testers and might sell you one or two.

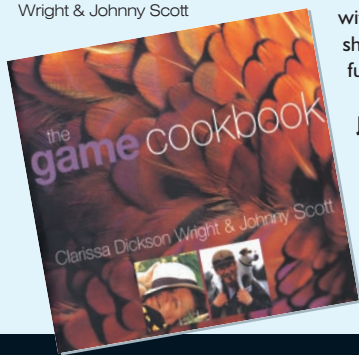
Good ferreting.

Robin Tarrant

reviews

The Game Cookbook

By Clarissa Dickson Wright & Johnny Scott



Just the mention of the word game conjures up thoughts of the exotic and when used in context with the word 'cookbook' the taste buds are tantalised even before the cover is opened. This 200+ page hardback book is beautifully illustrated with mouthwatering photographs (taken by Gus Filgate) showing a selection of the finished dishes to tempt you further.

The authors, **Clarissa Dickson Wright** and **Johnny Scott**, famed for their collaboration on the BBC TV series *Clarissa and the Countryman* combine their skills and knowledge to produce the 130 recipes within the book ranging from pheasant and partridge to coarse fish. This book is more than just a cook book.

Split into sections to cover game birds, wildfowl, cloven hoof, hare and rabbit and fish

there's something for everyone and for added interest each section starts with an introduction providing a background on the game, its history and culinary past. There's also information on how to prepare and carve game, as well as sauce and stock recipes, meat suppliers, a cooking glossary (particularly good for the beginner) and a game calendar.

So, if you fancy trying your hand at cooking up a caribou pot roast, buttered grouse or even a game paella buy this book and you really will have no excuse! With game a healthy alternative to other meats, now being widely stocked in many high street supermarkets, if you've a passion for cooking or just want to have a go at something different *The Game Cookbook* should find a place on your 'Dear Santa' list this year.

The Game Cookbook, published by Kyle Cathie Ltd is available now from all good book shops priced **£19.99**. Reviewed by *Donna Vincent*

This is the latest edition of the modular tuition course for falcons, breeders, rehabilitators, vets and zoo managers. The video covers many aspects of fitness training with both falcons and a Harris Hawk. Nick explains how the muscles work and what the blood needs to carry around the birds body to keep fit. This he does in a way that is not at all condescending or tries to talk in a technical manner that the viewer becomes confused.

With the help of Nick Kester, who also provides the commentary, we learn what to think about when weighing a bird, in this case the Harris Hawk and we are shown fitness training by getting the bird to do verticle jumps to the fist with the aid of a rope or metal chain, so the bird has to 'pump' his wings harder to get to a reward.

We are also shown a training session with Nick Kester on how to swing a lure. This, as Nick quickly finds out, is not as easy as some people think. Nick Fox not only uses a crow wing lure, but shows us how a pole lure can be used.

Other training equipment such as kites and balloons are also shown to get a falcon to ring-up to a lure for a reward. This is all part of the fitness programme for the bird. Even a simple flight between two people is also shown.

At approx 90 minutes long, this is a superb video and I cannot recommend it enough.

You can obtain the film by contacting the production company **Faraway Films, PO Box 19, Carmarthen SA33 5YL**.

Reviewed by *Peter Eldrett*

Fitness Training: The Bird of Prey Management Series

Dr Nick Fox



Hood, Leash & Lure Falconry in the 20th Century

Roger Upton



As soon as you pick up a copy of this book you know you are holding a publication of real quality. Just flicking through the pages and seeing the layout tells you that you are in for an excellent read. The archive photographs, of which there are many, have been reproduced to a high standard.

The book, as the title suggests, concerns the more famous falconers of the 20th Century including those members of the Old Hawking Club, which at a later stage became the British Falconers' Club. The book covers falconers from the early part of the century up to 1980s. Many famous names are covered including Guy Aylmer, Jack Mavrogordato and Ronald Stevens.

There are two indexes, which is unusual. One lists the falconers and the other lists the names of the birds.

The research that has gone into producing such a quality volume has obviously taken many hours, which Roger Upton seems to relish. Those of us who have a sense of falconry history will, I have no doubt, enjoy reading this book and those who do not, will find out a bit about how we practise our sport today.

The publication of this book is well timed. It coincides nicely with the launch, in June of this year, of The Heritage Trust, a body of falconers who want to preserve our falconry past - Roger being one of them. I can recommend this book wholeheartedly.

The book is published by Roger Upton (ISBN 0 9548104 0 6) and for details of how to order a copy telephone 01672 861656. Reviewed by *Peter Eldrett*

If anyone is thinking of buying a Goshawk or even if you own one already, this is a great video to have in your collection. The video starts by introducing the viewer to the three birds involved; a young female, intermewed male and an 11 year old experienced female. Unfortunately, the elder female pulled her leg while flying after rabbit and had to be put in the mews for a long time and so she does not feature very much in the film. This is very unfortunate because she looks like a very beautiful bird.

But the film does show the first training stages of a Gos with the emphasis on manning and fitness. It is stressed that it is best to man the bird by as many different people as possible, which pays dividends by developing into a steady bird.

Next the male bird is shown working on a creance and the use of a drag rabbit before being allowed to fly free. Flying from a tree in wonderful countryside to the falconer is also shown along with a dog nearby so, that the bird can get used to a hunting partner before the day when the bird is first entered on quarry. The use of telemetry is also covered and shows the three main telemetry mounts that can be used.

Rabbit is the principle quarry in the film, although a pheasant is put up at one stage but escapes the incoming bird. After the Gos has been entered, you are treated to some excellent flying at rabbit in the Lincolnshire countryside and the video shows both open country and woodland hawking.

If you have seen the other video from Falcon Leisure, *Hunting with Harris Hawks*, you will recognise the style of film-making from Bob Dalton. There is some excellent footage and close-up shots of the birds, as well as good commentary, which adds to the enjoyment of the film.

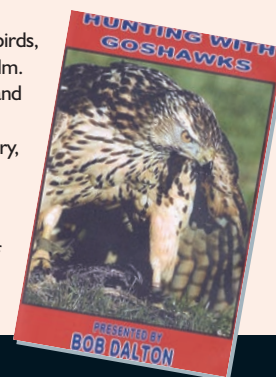
The film is also made with the co-operation of Mike Hewlett and Ray Muttok from Icarus Falconry and Richard James from Phoenix Falconry, all experienced falconers. There is a line in the commentary, which all falconers should heed; "this is a field sport and you should respect your quarry". Sound advice.

The video is available from **Falcon Leisure, Pointers Rest, 1 Witt Road, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 7FW**. The cost of the video is **£23.50** and is also available on DVD.

Reviewed by *Peter Eldrett*

Hunting with Goshawks

Bob Dalton



Set up in 2002, the first Young Falconers Club for children in the UK has been so successful that children are signing up for a third year. Based in Bedfordshire and run by The English School of Falconry, the club is open to children between the ages of seven to 16 years. The club was the brainchild of Emma Gooden, Head Falconer and partner at the school. Emma has been in falconry since she was nine and her aim was to pass on to the next generation her love of the ancient, traditional sport that we all enjoy. Emma says “I believe it is key that we ensure that falconry continues to be enjoyed for the foreseeable future. Through my father, I was brought up to love everything about birds of prey, and I want to pass this on to as many youngsters of today that I can. This way we can make sure that Falconry stays alive.”

Learning respect

“The children are divided into groups dependent on when they join the club. At present there are three year groups, year one have just joined, year two are in their second year and year three have all signed up for a third year. They meet once a month in their individual groups and sometimes it is hard for us to get them to go home.”

The children learn about a range of activities. During year one they focus heavily on learning the basics of how to look after a Bird of Prey. They are taught to respect birds and to ensure that they understand the key safety aspects. Year one focuses on the falconers knot, safety, equipment use, basic food preparation, swinging a lure, the law, basic health and welfare and free flying birds. During the first year they also are taken out hunting with some Harris Hawks and learn to free fly Hawks and Owls. The culmination of the year is when they put together a flying demonstration and talk to invited guests, usually over 150 turn up. “The children work on the demonstration under guidance. It is, however, mainly their own work and they take it very seriously, putting together their own scripts and getting a team of birds flying. They usually fly a combination of Bengal Eagle Owls, Barn Owls, Tawny Owls, Burrowing Owls and Harris Hawks. They have also used some of the Vultures as part of the demonstration”, says Terri Page, falconer, who works with the club.

In year two, the children’s knowledge is



Young Falconers Club soars into third year

extended. They learn to make and fit traditional jesses and prepare more complex food such as Quail, Pigeons and Rabbit. Emma says, “year two is the opportunity to get the children more involved in fieldwork and conservation. Visiting speakers come along and give them talks and demonstrations on working dogs and birds, conservation, countryside management and raptor conservation in other parts of the world.

They completed a project on conservation and endangered raptors in the UK and we conducted a number of field activities with them helping them learn how to track animals, identify animal faeces and assist in some game keeping activities. At the end of this year two the children were taken on a trip to The Hawk Conservancy where they could see some of the important work carried out by Ashley Smith and his team.”

More work planned

The youngsters who have now gone on to a third year will have an even more extended programme of activities. Planned for the year is more work on conservation, more field crafts and knowledge, pest and predator control, pond dipping, tree identification, coping and imping. Professionals will also be joining the children to teach them about working more with dogs. The children will build Owl nest boxes that will be set up in the surrounding area and their project for the year will be to monitor their use. As their confidence grows, the children will be working this year with some of the larger Owls as well as a Chilean Eagle and taking on more difficult tasks.

There have been some personal successes for the children. One youngster was being bullied at school and had taken to not coming out of his room. After joining the club and having so much fun with the other children his mother told Emma that he had changed

completely and that his confidence had returned. “This also makes the work we do worthwhile. We have an Autistic child who loves to come to the centre and take part in the activities with the other children” says Terri.

The club has been so successful that other Falconry and Bird of Prey Centres are now setting up their own clubs. “I am pleased that other centres are following this initiative. This means that the club works and that Falconry will be protected” says Emma. “I am happy to discuss and give help to other centres who may consider setting up their own youngsters club”.

“At present I am trying to set up a library of books and tapes for the children. They enjoy what we do so much that many of them like to take books home to read and they all enjoy their ‘homework’. This is proving to be difficult as with over 120 children at present, and a new influx coming through, we are not able to source all of the books that are needed. To help provide the library for the children I need the help of Falconer Magazines readers. I am sure that there are Hawking and Falconry Clubs and individual Falconers who have unwanted books and tapes that they no longer need. If so, I would appreciate any that are in a reasonable condition, these would be for the sole use of the children. Additionally, if anyone feels they can help with the education of the children and would be able to attend as a guest speaker to talk about an unusual, related subject then I would also like to hear from them.”

The Young Falconers Club has proven that we can take forward Falconry into the 21st century. If you can help Emma to protect this sport of ours, please contact her at The English School of Falconry, Old Warden Park, Nr. Biggleswade, Beds SG18 9EA. Tel: 01767 627527 E mail: falconry.centre@virgin.net

club directory

Join and support your local club today!

The Central Falconry & Raptor Club

Founded in 1988

Is the local falconry club serving the following counties: -
Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, & the West Midlands.

We meet on the second Sunday of each month at 8pm, throughout the year, at the Sports Connexion, Leamington Road, Ryton on Dunsmore, Coventry.

CLUB MISSION STATEMENT

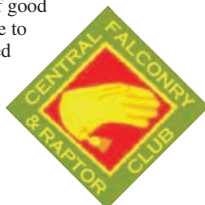
The mission statement of the C.F.R.C. is to offer people the opportunity to embrace all aspects of Falconry in a spirit of good companionship. There will be a warm welcome to people of all ages, whether they are experienced falconers, novices, or families.

For more information e-mail:

cen.falc@ic24.net or phone

John Hill 07973 224609

www.central-falconry.co.uk



The Welsh Hawking Club



SOUTH WALES, Usk

Contact: **Helen Scourse** Tel: **01600 860458**

NORTH WALES, Chester

Contact: **Neil McCann** Tel: **01512 930364**

SOUTH WEST, Exeter

Contact: **Dave Scott** Tel: **01752 830382**

BATH, Hinton

Contact: **Dave Jones** Tel: **01934 811300**

THE MIDLANDS, Loughborough

Contact: **Mike Kane** Tel: **01773 811491**

COTSWOLDS, Evesham

Contact: **Shaun Healey** Tel: **01386 832812**

ESSEX, Colchester

Contact: **Andy Hulme** Tel: **01206 729363**

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Jan France, secretary, 01279 842440



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or e-mail:- bcbgsec@aol.com

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01666 510067

or visit the club website www.brittanyclub.co.uk

WEST OF ENGLAND HAWKING CLUB

We are a fast growing club with members ranging from complete novices to seasoned falconers.

We meet the first Monday of every month at the Bull Inn, Hinton nr Bath. Our meetings are informal and friendly and provide an opportunity to exchange experiences, arrange field trips and establish contact with local falconers. Guest speakers and falconry furniture suppliers regularly attend. We also run beginners' workshops.

ALL NEWCOMERS WELCOMED.

For more information please telephone:

- **Rob Kelly 01275 891813**
- **Keith Wicks 01454 315810**
- **Tony Ellis 01666 510067**

Northern England Falconry Club

Club meetings are held at:-

“The White Swan”

Public House, High Street, Yeadon.

(2 mins from Leeds & Bradford Airport).

Contact: G Shaw on
01274 780800

The Cleveland Hawking Club

“Sharing the knowledge”

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Monthly meets on the first Sunday of the month at 6.30pm.

Venue:-

The Falcon Inn, Hilton near Thornaby-on-Tees

For further information contact:-

Lee Copeland on 07802 251502

or **Jono on 07760 225555**

E-mail: clevelandhawkingclub@yahoo.co.uk
www.clevelandhawkingclub.20m.com

Lancashire Falconry & Hawking Club

Meetings held at:-

The Sand Knockers, Halifax Road, Smallbridge, Rochdale.

2ND TUESDAY EACH MONTH.

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Promoting falconry throughout the Northwest.

For information contact:

07711 514073

www.lancsfalconry.co.uk



Yorkshire Falconry Club

Our meetings take place at 8.00pm on the third Wednesday of each month at the **Rockingham Arms Public House, Wentworth, Rotherham, South Yorkshire.**

THIS IS JUST OFF THE M1 AT JUNCTION 35.

Membership includes;

- Public liability insurance
- Affiliation to the Hawk Board

For further information please telephone Steven on

07736 319 347

or

visit our website

www.yorkshirefalconry.co.uk



The South East Falconry Group

AIMS TO SUPPORT FALCONERS IN THE CONTINUATION AND PRACTICE OF FALCONRY.

Drawing its membership from around the South and East of England, the SEFG provides a forum for falconers and would-be falconers to meet, discuss and practice the art.

Members benefit from having access to a wealth of experience and knowledge, good facilities and field meeting opportunities throughout the winter months.

Meetings take place on the last Tuesday of the month at Tilbury in Essex.

For members in our Southern region informal meetings take place nr Winchester, Hants.

For further information or an application form please contact -

Dean White (secretary) on 01489 896504

E-mail us at enquiry@sefg.org or
visit our web site www.sefg.org

THE SCOTTISH HAWKING CLUB

FOR THE DEDICATED FALCONER

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AFFILIATED TO:- Countryside Alliance - Hawk Board - Scottish Hawk Board - Zimbabwe Falconers Club - North American Falconers Association - International Association for Falconry

Further details from:

Tommy Bryce
01620 850209

★ We are a D.E.F.R.A. recognised club ★

club directory

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0870 7590210

THE CHESHIRE HAWKING CLUB

Meetings:- Held 2nd Tuesday of every month at 8pm.

Venue:- Railway Hotel, Mill Lane, Heatley, Nr Lymm. Ches.

We have speakers and falconry furniture manufacturers in regular attendance.

EXPERIENCED AND NOVICE FALCONERS WELCOME.

Contact: Jeff on 01942 201995
or Jenny on - 0151 424 7217

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Mr Graham Irving - Membership Secretary
THE BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB (F.M.)

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New from

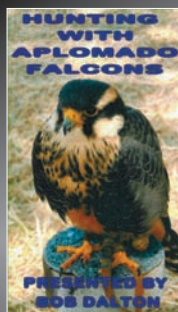
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Independent Bird Register

List of lost, found, reunited and stolen birds from the IBR between 6 April and 21 June 2004

STOLEN x 3		COMMON BUZZARD		BARN OWL	521BC95U
HARRIS HAWK	IBR7022W	ECLECTUS PARROT		BARN OWL	0322BC93U
RED-TAILED HAWK		ELEONORAS FALCON		BARN OWL	250BC97U
EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL		EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL x 2		BARN OWL	2601BC93U
		GOSHAWK		BARN OWL	546AFC98V
REUNITED X 77		GREAT HORNED OWL		BENGAL EAGLE OWL	5WHC02X
AFRICAN SPOTTED EAGLE OWL		GRY/PEREGRINE		BOOBOOK OWL	97AVD
BARBARY FALCON		GYR/PRAIRIE FALCON		COCKATIL	
BARBARY/SAKER		GYR/SAKER FALCON		COCKATOO	20P8M02V
BARN OWL x 5		GYR/SAKER/PEREGRINE		COMMON BUZZARD	8568W
COMMON BUZZARD		HARRIS HAWK x 21		COMMON BUZZARD	3591RR97W
EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL		KESTREL x 5		COMMON BUZZARD	IBR29433W
FERRUGINOUS HAWK		LANNER FALCON x 2		COMMON BUZZARD	IBR29838W
GYR FALCON		LANNER/SAKER FALCON		COMMON BUZZARD	IBR29957W
GYR/PEREGRINE		LUGGER FALCON		COMMON BUZZARD	9721DOEW
GYR/PRAIRIE FALCON		MERLIN		COMMON BUZZARD	
GYR/SAKER FALCON X 8		PEREGRIN FALCON x 4		COMMON BUZZARD	12693DOEW
HARRIS HAWK x 17		PEREGRINE/LANNER x 2		EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	IBR21792Y
HOODED VULTURE		PEREGRINE/PRAIRIE		EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	
KESTRAL x 5		PEREGRINE/SAKER x 4		GOSHAWK	21061DOEV
LANNER FALCON x 6		PRAIRIE/KESTREL		GYR/PEREGRINE	20578V 10193V
PEREGRINE FALCON x 6		RED-TAILED HAWK x 2		HARRIS HAWK	IBR19362W
PEREGRINE/BARBARY		SAKER FALCON		HARRIS HAWK	DAM30
PEREGRINE/LANNER				HARRIS HAWK	
PEREGRINE/SAKER x 6		FOUND x 52		KESTREL	IBR18436S
PERLIN		AFRICAN GREY PARROT	6GMF03V	KESTREL	IBR31460S
RED-TAILED HAWK x 5		AFRICAN GREY PARROT		KESTREL	UK79743
SAKER FALCON x 5		AFRICAN GREY PARROT	CFS120	LANNER FALCON	6930DOEW
SAKER/LANNER		AFRICAN GREY PARROT	AFUKR541	PARAKEET	BOF02J0422903
		AFRICAN SPOTTED EAGLE OWL		RED KITE	67 YELLOW
LOST x 90		IBR14439X		RED-TAILED HAWK	IBR31175X
AFRICAN GREY PARROT x 10		BARN OWL	IBR410U	RED-TAILED HAWK	12223Y
AFRICAN SPOTTED EAGLE OWL		BARN OWL	IBR9265U	SAKER FALCON	IBR10131W
AMAZON-ORANGE WINGED		BARN OWL	IBR19757U	SAKER FALCON	IBR28318W
BARBARY FALCON		BARN OWL	IBR26153U	TAWNY OWL	
BARN OWL x 3		BARN OWL	007DNB03U	TAWNY OWL	
BATLEUR EAGLE		BARN OWL	0511BC02U	UNKOWN BOP	0304Y
BLACK KITE		BARN OWL	13810A94U	UNKNOWN BOP	18021V
CARA CARA		BARN OWL	IBR34117U		
COCKATIL		BARN OWL	0873BC96U		

CLA 2004

Peter Eldrett

The CLA Game Fair has come and gone and was once again held in the splendid grounds of Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire. Attendance figures were up on last year and the weather was dry despite the forecast from the Met office, although it did pour down on Thursday night.

The falconry section was well represented by various traders including Ben Long, Martin Jones, KKK, DEFRA, Honeybrook Farm and artists Martyn Brook and Peter Bainbridge. The clubs that attended were the Welsh Hawking Club, Scottish Hawking Club, Central Hawking Club, British Falconers and British Hawking Clubs, South East Falconry Group and NAFA.

There was plenty of interest from the public around the mews area and mini arena where various demonstrations took place including a small parade of eagles where Charlotte Hill gave a talk on the birds being shown. The Eagles were a Bald Eagle, Tawny Eagle and Golden Eagle with Andrew Knowles-Brown being the resident expert, gave a talk to the onlookers in the mews about the eagles which everyone enjoyed. Geoff Dalton of the Cotswold Falconry Centre also had the public enthralled with his commentary and he had a great affinity with the younger members of the public.

The Campaign for Falconry and Hawk Borad was well represented by both Terry Large and Jim Chick, both of whom



Terry Large



Campaign stand

gave the demonstrations in the main and mini arena on all three days of the event.

Honeybrook Farm put on another splendid barbeque on Saturday night for the falconry stand holders and a big thank you must go to Nick and Lynn for their hospitality and hard work organising the party.

National Birds Of Prey Centre - 'Still with us'

The centre at Newent will not be closing after all. It has acquired new owners (Keith and Jackie Beaven) and a dedicated, keen team of falconers. After it's usual closing between November-January the centre will re-open on 1 February 2005.

As the new owner I realise what I have inherited from Jemima Parry-Jones; namely responsibility for the staff, birds and to make sure that the tremendous work done by Jemima is continued and built on in the years to come. For many falconers the centre holds a special place, many of them have learnt about birds of prey at the centre so, I'm sure they are behind the centre and wish it success. Of course we will be without Jemima's expert guidance but it is planned for her to return once or twice a year for special demonstrations and if I need advice she is at the end of a telephone or e-mail (a comforting thought).

There will of course be changes but nothing major. Most of them are cosmetic and involve the buildings and a little tinkering with the display area and the displays themselves. We are also opening a childrens pet corner and gradual refurbishment of the tea-room.

At the moment all the aviaries are completely roofed over and some might say a little clinical and spartan so we intend to change all of them.

The intention is to take off half of the roof over each aviary and rewire. Inside we will then install raised beds to take shrubs and plants (making sure not to

overdo it) that are appropriate to the intended inhabitants.

The plan is to build the aviary for a particular species installing plants and shrubs that would normally be found in their natural habitat and there they stay rather than be shuffled about. Hopefully, this access to sunlight or rain (as they so desire) natural foliage and fresh air will make for a more pleasant environment for the birds.

One of the other benefits of taking off half the roof is that in the summer heat can more readily escape, flies can get out and when it rains there will be some cleansing of the aviaries, you can also install a wider variety of plants and shrubs rather than just the ones which grow in shade. Of course there are some downsides to half roofs as Jemima will readily attest to, namely the vagaries of our climate and the health issues associated with that. Then there is the risk of external infections from wild stock perching on the top of the aviary, especially during the breeding season or dropped through the mesh, I will have to weigh up the odds over a period but can always revert. However, I have visited over nine different centers and zoos and most of them favour the open approach so it will be a question of watch this space.

The team and I will investigate the possibility of improving the display area with the provision of more and sometimes higher placed perching posts. Maybe build an area away from the centre to enable us to release some of the birds, i.e. the larger eagles who need more time and space to achieve height before they get to the display field, and for certain we will rebuild the pond in front of the

public seating area for us to display the Sea/Fish Eagles more naturally. I would also like to see us flying more than one bird at a time but until I have enough of the same species to do that it will remain a wish along with my wish list for new birds.

The intention is to carry on in much the same vein as Jemima did. Our rescue and rehabilitation work will carry on with a new hospital funded partly by the National Birds of Prey Centre Trust (Courtesy of Jemima), myself and possibly some Lottery Match Funding and there will be four new recovery aviaries.

With regard to conservation, I hope to work with the ZOO Federation, EAZA, Jemima and many others to continue the very necessary work that still has to be done for our raptor species all over the world.

When Jemima leaves on the 6/7 November I will loose many of the larger species of raptors from the centre but have already purchased some new stock, namely Bateleur and Steppe Eagles with some more in the pipeline being offered for loan or exchange so, there will still be plenty for people too see at the centre and with guidance from the above mentioned experts I will be steered towards what my contribution to conservation should be.

Of course education is a vital part of conservation and with this in mind I need to update the education room with projector, video machine, wall charts, taxidermy, desks etc (can anyone help with this?).

Finally catering and toilet facilities will be refurbished with toilets at top and bottom of the centre and increased facilities for the disabled (toilets and tarmac).

I am open to input from all falconers and willing to accept gifts! So, call in to see me any time at the centre (after 1 November) or contact me via kb@nbpc.co.uk or telephone 01531 820286.

Good luck with your birds!



Many of us have now seen the film *King Arthur* which was released earlier this year. *King Arthur*, also known as *Arthur of the Britons*, was a wise and honourable monarch. He devised the idea of the Round Table as he knew only too well that things could go wrong if individuals sat at the head of a table. He believed that all things went full circle and in this he was correct in many ways as we shall see.

At the recent CLA Game Fair and also amongst Falconers of clubs, I have heard comments and also laughter at the fact that one of Arthur's Knights was seen with a Harris Hawk. "They didn't have Harris Hawks then", "Couldn't they get it right

ORIGINS OF THE HARRIS HAWK

and use a Peregrine?" to name but a few.

The film was historically researched, more so than any other film or story about Arthur, and some interesting, previously unknown facts came to light. Found amongst ancient documents housed at the British Library, in the Durham Cathedral Records Office, and in the National Library of Scotland are parchment scrolls with irrefutable references to the existence of the Harris Hawk in Britain during the time of King Arthur. One of these is reproduced here for all to see.

Beginnings

The Venerable Bede, England's first historian, writing in 731, makes a passing reference to a Haryss Hawke given in tribute to a Pictish chieftain. He writes that "yea, a hawke was gifted to secure ye safe passage of the werrie ugle daughter of ye Lord Stefan de Frank" through what is now known as Dumfries. It is clear that this is *Parabuteo unicinctus* as the decorative illuminations on the parchment are clearly the tail feathers of a Harris Hawk. A shard of Roman pottery, found near Housesteads Fort, shows Harris Hawks in a cage, presumably destined for the Roman mess hall, not a hunting mew.

The Harris Hawk, in fact, originated in Great Britain. Eons ago, according to

carbon dating, what is now the Isle of Harris separated from the mainland and the animals and birds dwelling on it became a closed breeding pool. Just as the unique Kiwi developed on the island of New Zealand, and the Dodo on the island of Mauritius, so did a remarkable hawk evolve on this small island in the Outer Hebrides. The harsh living conditions on the island engendered the need to work socially with each other to survive, and this was not only true for the people living there but also for the hawks as well. Over time those Harris Hawks which worked cooperatively survived whilst those which chose to go it alone died off. Thus was the unique pattern of cooperative social behaviour developed and fixed in this species.

Black Peregrines?

There are no records of the Hebridean's using Harris Hawks for hunting, but having little except fish and wool to trade with the

mainlanders, some sharp rogue started trapping and selling Harris Hawks as "black peregrines". Without any Field Guides to the Birds of Great Britain to refer to in that era, people were suckered by the wily Hebrideans and the hawk was taken off the island in great numbers. References to the use of the Harris Hawk in this period are slim: not because they were rare, but because they were so common. No one thought to write about them as hawking was just a given. How many of you, today, write about driving to the shop to get your treacle tarts? You do it every day but never think to write about it. So it was with the use of the Harris.

The historians researching the background for the movie "King Arthur" were not mistaken about the use of the Harris Hawk by this ruler. Those laughing when it appears in the film are the ones who are mistaken.

The ideal table

It was, perhaps, Arthur's seeing a family of Harris Hawks arranged in a circle about a hare, sharing and eating it in harmony, which gave him the idea for the Round Table. The earliest depiction of such shows a black table with white edging, exactly what one sees when looking down on a circle of feeding Harris Hawks with their



tails fully splayed out. Merlin, Arthur's adviser, is almost always depicted wearing a dark black cape with white edging. If you open and spread the cape out flat it too clearly shows the decorative influence of the Harris.

Merlin was himself a falconer who flew a number of Harris Hawks. Research shows that he was a magician, a falconer and also an explorer. He was not famous for discovering new lands but he did visit them. On his journeys he always took with him his Hawks.

During one of the long journeys overseas a pair of these Hawks bred onboard his ship. On landing in the Americas he then released the parents and the four offspring into the wild. The trip had been an arduous one and he felt the parent birds would be better off not suffering the return trip. The released birds then freely bred in the wild and are now indigenous to the USA.

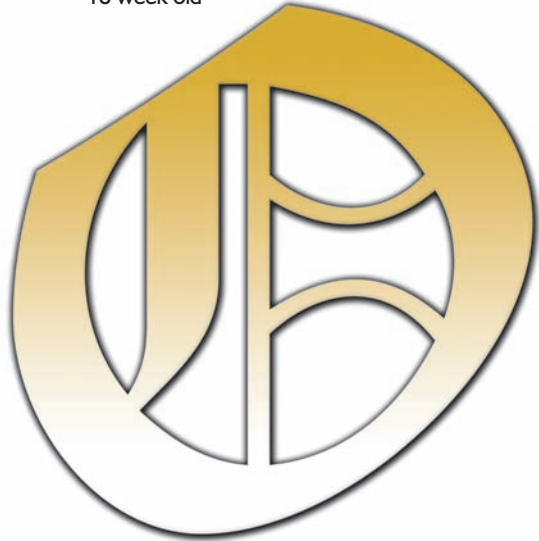
The plague

During Merlin's return trip which took many months a disease swept across Britain killing the entire population of Harris Hawks. It was known as the Brown Death. Today, in the 21st Century, it is known as Avian Flu.

The Harris Hawk was consequently lost to the Britons until about the mid 20th Century when a small number were brought here and sold to us, the descendants of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Wily American rogues started trapping and selling Harris Hawks to unwary Britons as "black peregrines". Without any Field Guides to the Birds of America to refer to, as people were spending their money on tickets to football matches instead, longwingers were suckered by the cunning Americans and the hawk was imported in great numbers. Initially they were used for Falconry but due to minor mishaps a few escaped into the wild. They are now free living and breeding in their natural environment as they were, centuries before. And so we come round table, or, as it is known today, full circle.

Pearl D'Uptep

Thinking of prats, we have always despaired of what we call prat month, the late September through October period when falconers are buying their birds and losing them. Why cast and equip a bird safely in the kitchen when you can do it in the garden and realise neither of you were holding the new 18 week old



harris; put the bird on the scales but forget to hold the leash; not latch the door properly; it flew over my head as I went in. My favourite was last year. The person had bought a bird but hadn't built his aviary yet. He put his bird on the handle of the lawn mower in the garden shed and was surprised when it had disappeared in the morning. He hadn't tethered the bird so it was able to fly to the ground and walk out through one of the many gaps in the shed.

We started the Independent Bird Register in 1994 when DEFRA stopped registering many of our birds.

We are now ten years down the line, older, wiser and definitely creaking at the joints. We have had so much fun and enjoyment finding birds making fantastic friends that it outways the few prats we have also come across.

Life changing achievement

We had no idea how big the IBR would grow and how much we have achieved in 10 years and it certainly changed our lives. We now have over 35 thousand birds of prey.

The first bird we got back was a kite sitting on a pub roof. We rang around and after seven phone calls we found the owner who was well chuffed and he promptly registered all his other birds and so did his friends. In the early days we cracked open a bottle of fizz for each bird back, but the

the internet and found our IBR website. I read his email and searched through our lost list on the computer. The one that stood out was a bald eagle but immature, so it hadn't yet got the distinctive white head. The farmer had enclosed a couple of digital photos and there was no doubt, it was a huge eagle. It was with great pleasure that I rang Chris at midnight to tell him where we thought his bird was. By 8am the following morning Archie had been reunited with his keeper, Paul, and was on his way back to Yorkshire.

nce upon
a time,
there was
a lost bird...

system worked so well we soon accepted it as normal but still have a feeling of pride when a bird is reunited.

We had started with the local club birds but the word got around. Philip and I travelled all over the UK to pubs and clubs, giving a talk about what we were doing. In those early days we clocked up a lot of miles and usually didn't get home till two or three in the morning. However, if we hadn't been inspected we wouldn't have been trusted. Two comments were "how do we know you will be here tomorrow" and "we'll wait and see if you are here next year". All understandable, but it took many years before IBR broke even.

One of those doubters had to change his mind when we got his bird back. A farmer on Holy Island off the coast in Northumberland e-mailed us very late one evening. He had been planting potatoes for two weeks and he had been watched by what he thought was a golden eagle sitting on a fence post. It appeared very interested in what the farmer was doing and didn't fly away, so he got on

We have over the years built up a huge knowledge of how not to lose birds and how to get them back. We have been a talking yellow pages for years and in 1998 we brought out the first IBR Falconry Directory, an A-Z of everything you could ever want that included article and tips. This definitely saved me hours spent previously telling everyone where to get a whatsit.

The RSPB passed a gentleman on to me recently. He had an owl nearby making a noise every night he had gone out and yelled abuse for three days but he needed sleep, could we help? It made a sort of pinking noise. I went through my imitations of barn owls, tawnys and little owls and in the end I asked a local falconer to have a look that evening. It only took him five minutes to find the fire alarm in the spare bedroom, the battery was low and it was making the occasional 'pink pink' noise.

Lost Sakers overseas

I love sakers and anyone who has flown one continues to breed or buy another. One of

the reasons apart from the fantastic flying skills is because they have lost the first one. If it wasn't for sakers the IBR would have time to go out and fly a bird. Sakers do wander more than most and our figures prove it. Apart from one adventurous lanner falcon that flew to Italy, it is only sakers and saker hybrids that we have found consistently going overseas, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Yugoslavia, Sweden and Denmark. We reunited one saker that had flown from mid Wales to north Wales and he groaned four weeks later when we said it had been found again. He didn't feel like to driving to north Wales again. We said we were pleased to tell him it wasn't north Wales but Denmark! The saker had landed on a fishing boat having caught a kestrel, the sailors handed the bird to the Danish harbour master who rang me because of the IBR telephone ring on its leg. We phoned a Danish falconer and the bird had to go into quarantine. It then took six weeks of organisation and paperwork to get the bird back and into Welsh quarantine.

The system works well and will continue working to find your birds. The reason it is so successful is that we believed 100% in what we were doing. Help and friendship has always been there from DEFRA, they have always shared their knowledge, but the main support was from falconers themselves. Word of mouth and the number of birds we have reunited has spoken for itself. We get back a bird a day on average, more than 365 a year.

We cover all birds of prey, not just IBR rung ones. Registration still only costs £10 for three years. If the bird does not have an IBR closed breeder's ring then we provide a split IBR telephone ring. It has a code number against the owner's details on the database. With mobile phones now being common, we can usually contact the owner immediately. Frequently while he is out on the moor still swinging his lure.

The system works

The IBR now has many birds registered overseas. They still use our paperwork and registration system but the difference is when a bird is found. The finder rings us and exclaims that it must have flown a long way. We inform him that it is a local bird, but registered with our unique recovery system. We then arrange for the falconer to retrieve his bird. The system works wherever the bird is found.

A lady walking her dog on a beach in Suffolk saw a falcon with bells being mobbed by seagulls. They probably would have killed it had it not been for her immediate action. She told the dog to sit and used the dog lead to swing a piece of seaweed. She had once

seen a falconry demonstration. She swung the homemade lure around her head and the saker immediately broke away from the gulls, came flying in over the sea and bound to the swung seaweed. She could not believe that it had worked as the bird was sitting on the ground looking for a pick-up piece. The lady then lay on the beach and read our 24-hour telephone number on the leg ring and phoned us. We were able to talk her through gathering up the bird and getting it into her car until we got the owner to collect it 30 minutes later. The saker had been out for 10 days and was wafer thin. That lady will probably never forget her experience and will hopefully always speak well of falconry in the future.

We recovered a female Goshawk that had been lost for three years. It had been caught by a piece of barbed wire through the pinhole of a flying jess! A very nice gamekeeper rescued the bird, phoned us and the bird was reunited later that day. Larsen traps have also caught a lot more than corvids. They are very successful with male harris hawks and goshawks.

We have many people to thank for the finding of our birds, not just the public. A huge amount of information comes from police, RSPCA and RSPB. They all pass our number on so we can then supply a falconer to collect or take in a bird until it is reunited with the owner.

Flying away and new owners

Ten years have passed and during the last year, Philip and I have decided to retire to Spain. We need to get away from desks, computers and phones and fly birds again, rather than just finding them for everyone else.

We have passed the IBR to Neil and Juliana Fowler, who have been falconers for the last 20 years. They have been learning all about the IBR for the last few months and previously ran a very successful bird of prey rehabilitation centre.

I know I have passed the IBR into the safest, most knowledgeable hands I could find. Not just on the falconry side but also on the computer side. Your birds' security is of paramount importance to us and I am happy that Neil and Juliana will continue to grow the IBR. The IBR is run by falconers for falconers.

Philip and I will be on the IBR stand at the Falconers Fair next May and we look forward to seeing you all again. Let us know how you are getting on. My email is now HYPERLINK "mailto:jenny@wraysinspain.com" jenny@wraysinspain.com



contact details

The IBR telephone is still 0870 608 8500 and the email is HYPERLINK "mailto:juliana@ibr.org.uk" juliana@ibr.org.uk The address is IBR, Tiercel House, 2 Falcon Close, Catterick, Scotton, North Yorkshire DL9 3RR.



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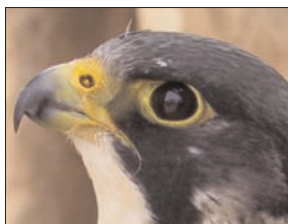
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FREETING THE JAIL-BIRDS

Maria Green &
Mike Nicholls



Behind bars at H.M.P Elmley on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent, lies the newest and most innovative education programme. It took two and a half years of blood, sweat and major grovelling skills, but on Saturday 21 June 2003 the Elmley Raptor Education Programme was finally officially opened. Raptors are birds of prey, but this is no ordinary bird of prey centre. Nor is the education programme for raptors, but to enable inmates at Elmley to gain key skills as well as expertise in managing birds of prey.



FREEING THE JAIL BIRDS



falconer, has written a course, which gives participants a recognised qualification in *Bird of Prey Care and Management* validated through the Open College Network (Kent and Medway). Just one year after the Raptor Centre was opened the education programme has been given approval by OCN. The course will be delivered in conjunction with the Prison Education Department who will ensure that the course units are used as a means of allowing prisoner-students to achieve basic and key skills, which will stand them in good stead long after they leave Elmley.

Those taking part in the training programme all realise that falconry and bird of prey keeping is a very demanding practice and that they probably won't be able to carry on with it on the outside. Also there is no guarantee of their being employed in the world of falconry after their release. Yet by learning to care for another living thing and taking responsibility for its welfare, they are also learning to care for themselves and others. In this way it is hoped that they will become more caring, responsive and responsible individuals who are less likely to re-offend or return to prison.

The Course Moderator is Alan Ames owner/director of *Eagle Heights* a well-known bird of prey centre in Kent. Alan is an experienced falconer and has been trained by Open College Network to moderate the assessment of people taking the course. Alan is so impressed by the Elmley Programme that he has offered to provide work experience for inmates after their release. It is hoped that a 'half way house' between Elmley and the outside world could be developed at *Eagle Heights*.

The aims and hopes of the Elmley Raptor Education Programme are to provide a sanctuary behind bars where staff can go and relax and where offenders can learn to care for and fly the birds in a controlled space. Unlike many other forms of bird keeping, the use of falconry techniques allows birds of prey to be flown free. The *Elmley Raptor Education Programme* is something of a metaphor for learning about falconry in which birds are trained to eventually fly free; the prisoners themselves are given training, which will help them once they are given their freedom. There is one difference though, unlike falconry, the aim is that the newly trained individuals do not come back!

*Less crime,
less victims*



This article is an up-date from the Elmley Prison story published in issue 54 of *The Falconers & Raptor Conservation Magazine*.

Senior Officer, Dave Green - a keen falconer himself - put the project in motion after meeting with an ex-prisoner who had taken up falconry and had since learnt to read and write. More importantly though, because of his love for the birds he had not re-offended for some 18 years. The first hurdle was gaining permission from the Governor to use a waste piece of ground within the prison wall. After this a business plan was put together which included a promise that most of the centre could be established at no financial cost to the Prison and would eventually become self-supporting. Permission was granted and work began.

A team of specially selected inmates were chosen to help build and organise the centre and a barrage of letters were sent out to companies, large and small. Many individuals within the hawking world were also asked for their help. Almost everybody who received a letter was more than generous and everything from the buildings down to the grass seed, to the incubators and the birds themselves was donated or given at cost.

The result of this hard work and goodwill is an impressive array of immaculate indoor and outdoor facilities including accommodation for the birds, mews, aviaries, an incubation room, tack room and freezers for food storage all of which are set in impeccably-kept grounds. The Centre now houses various hawks, falcons and owls, all of which have been donated by well-wishers.

However, this raptor education centre in itself is only a showpiece unless the principal objective, that of education, is achieved. This is where Dr Mike Nicholls a lecturer from Canterbury Christ Church University comes in. Mike who is himself a

What members of the team say about the Raptor Education Project and the raptor Centre...

Paddy – “I work here 7 days a week and it has a calming influence on me. I enjoy it and have learned a lot. If people have benefited like I have, then it’s got to be good for prisons”. “The credit for the Centre must go to Mr. Green”.

Lee - “It doesn’t feel like you are in prison when you are here. It creates a lot of conversation, as other prisoners don’t even know there is a Raptor Centre here”.

Alex – “I’ve only been here a few days, but it’s like an oasis in the rest of the prison. We are looking after the birds instead of other people looking after us. It makes me a more civil person. I had to work hard as a cleaner for three months to be allowed to work in the Raptor Centre”.

Denis – I’ve enjoyed being here, but I now know how time consuming it “(falconry) “is to take up as a hobby. I won’t be able to carry on with it when I leave here, but I enjoy it all the same.”

John – “To come here is a relief to get off the wing” (main prison block). “It’s a relief to look after something else, not just yourself”.

Mark – “My take on it is that I’ve always been interested in it” (falconry) but never got into it. When I get out of here I’ve got the know-how. I was given little Jessie, the little kestrel to train.

I feel a great sense of achievement in getting a bird to step up onto the fist”.

“Street cred”; the kids in prison won’t admit they can’t read or write. But if they do falconry here they can learn literacy and numeracy”.

Alan Ames – director and owner of *Eagle Heights*, a commercial bird of prey centre in Kent. “I think this place is superb”.

Talking about careers with birds of prey: “Running a bird of prey centre isn’t the dream job people think it is. It’s running a small business and very hard work.”

Senior Prison Officer Dave Green – “The people coming into the raptor education scheme, they have never had a chance in life. All they’ve known is snot and grime”.

Officer Jamie – “Some people will say that prisoners are here to be punished, but how bad would people be if they hadn’t had a chance like this? You can start with ten ‘scoats’, but maybe you can end up with ten decent lads”.

Dr. Mike Nicholls – “I’m terrified of being shut up in a confined space. If the course can help people not to re-offend, and so not be locked up again, then it must be a good thing. Like in falconry, we want to train people to fly free; but unlike falconry, we don’t want them to come back!”



helping hands

Despite the fact that it was very, very many years ago, I can still remember just how hard it was to get help and advice when I first set out to become a falconer. It was almost as if the sport was a closed shop and those that practised it wanted to keep it exclusively to themselves. There was only one person offering courses at the time and that was the late Philip Glasier down at The Falconry Centre, as it was known then, in Newent.

I was fortunate that I did eventually meet up with a couple of falconers who were happy to guide me in the right direction and were always on hand or at the end of a phone if I needed them. I am sure I still made plenty of mistakes but these were kept to a minimum and my first falcon did not suffer as a consequence of any of them. Training might not have been as quick as it was supposed to be and early attempts at hunting would have no doubt proved

unsuccessful without the generous help I received.

But more importantly my own confidence grew quickly knowing that I had a fund of back up knowledge should I need it. The one mistake I know I have not made is to think that you stop learning. There is always something new to absorb and others around you who have more knowledge and practical experience. Those who think they know it all are fools.





I am not a great believer in falconry courses. I know there are many reputable people out there giving first class courses and whose primary consideration is the welfare of hawks and trying to ensure the practice of ethical falconry

Giving advice

Now that I have been practising falconry for quite a few years I often get phone calls or letters asking for advice on everything from how to get started in the sport right through to behavioural problems in trained hawks or falcons. Where I have direct knowledge and personal experience I help as best I can. When the subject matter is one I am not familiar with I try and guide the enquirer to someone who can help them. After all if someone phones me for advice on Lark Hawking with Merlins there is no use me sounding forth - I have never done it. I have spectated many times but have not actually practised this particular branch of falconry. Therefore I forward the enquiry to those who have. Much better to be honest than to waffle on for the sake of your own ego. But where the subject matter is one I am familiar with I like to try and help whenever I can.

A couple of years ago I answered a knock at my front door to be confronted by a young man who asked if it might be possible to have a chat about falconry. Apparently he and his brother had been considering taking up the sport for quite some time and were seeking some advice on the subject. Andy and Ian, the young men in question wanted to try and find out if the sport was really for them and did they have sufficient time to practise it properly. What did impress me was that they

were determined to explore every avenue open to them and thoroughly research the subject before making a final decision about taking up the sport. To this end they wanted to know about courses and how I would recommend that they both got started with learning the sport.

Getting started

I am not a great believer in falconry courses. I know there are many reputable people out there giving first class courses and whose primary consideration is the welfare of hawks and trying to ensure the practice of ethical falconry. But I also believe there are a number of unscrupulous course givers whose only consideration is swelling their bank balance. From some conversations I have had it is more than obvious that some course givers know little or nothing about the sport.

I used to give courses myself but they never sat comfortably with me. Eventually I gave up running them and tried to encourage would be newcomers to actually go and see real falconry in the raw.

My advice to Andy and Ian, as it always is nowadays, was to join a reputable club and meet with practising falconers and try and go out with them and see different hawks and falcons in action. This is the real way to see what is required to hunt a hawk or falcon properly and also the falconers themselves

would be able to impart much useful information. A much better and balanced method of seeing first hand whether or not the sport is one that can be pursued.

I explained to them that in my opinion the best way to learn is by going out hunting on a regular basis with a practising falconer. This way they would get to see the downs as well as the ups and would also see the not quite so glamorous side of things - cleaning mews and weatherings, preparing food, etc, etc.

Andy and Ian asked me if I would be willing to help them get started and teach them the basics of the sport. I must be honest and say that, probably like a great many others, I do the majority of my hawking on my own and quite like it that way. But I thought that it was time to put into practice what I preached and so I agreed to take Andy and Ian under my wing, at least for a trial period.

Help from various falconers

The brothers joined a club that I belong to and the members of which were very helpful towards them. They were invited out regularly on field meetings as well as privately on numerous occasions. I also introduced them to a friend of mine who runs a small falconry centre and he took them hunting with Goshawks quite a number of times. Things worked out that practically every

helping hands

weekend they would be out hawking with someone. It was good that other falconers rallied round and were as helpful as they could be.

This initial approach from Andy and Ian had come at a time when hunting hawks were deep in moult. But the display season was still in full swing and so the learning curve for all three of us tentatively began. I say for all three of us because it was a long time since I had gone back to real basics and given consideration how best to impart information to others. But we got on with the process and, in my opinion, made very good progress.

Because I still had my display team going the brothers were able to see a number of hawks, falcons and owls worked each day. They saw the day-to-day management, weighing, food preparation, equipment checks and renewals, and of course all the cleaning jobs. They saw telemetry used both in practice situations and for real a couple of times. Because a whole team was working as

present lists were almost exclusively falconry orientated. The lads were not only investing their hard earned cash into their future sport but also all their spare time and energy.

I decided to lend them one of the male Harris Hawks that they enjoyed flying so much. So seven-year-old "Dodgy" had a new, albeit temporary, home. By borrowing this hawk they would at least be able to spend the winter hunting and the hawk was probably experienced enough to make up for any basic mistakes they might make. At first I always accompanied them when the trio went out hunting. But soon it was clear that they had a clear grasp of what was required and hunted in a sensible manner. So I left them alone to get on with things assuring them that I was at the end of the phone if they needed me.

Whilst helping me in the summer with the display team Andy and Ian had spent many evenings knocking on farmers doors and seeking permission for hunting ground. They

Andy and Ian soon had her flying free and concentrated on getting her fit ready for the coming season. It was probably from this point on that their true falconry careers began

opposed to an individual hunting hawk they managed to pack a lot of learning into a relatively short period.

I will say that I was very impressed by the fact that the not so nice tasks they were given were tackled with as much enthusiasm as the much more pleasant ones. The thirst for knowledge was very obviously a genuine one.

Experienced hawk

Two members of my display team are male Harris Hawks and the brothers took a shine to these and handled and flew them at every given opportunity. It was a female Harris they were originally thinking of getting if it turned out that falconry was a sport that they felt would be suitable to them and their circumstances.

It wasn't too long before the brothers decided that they would get their own hawk and they immediately started to get things sorted for the following season. First of all a mews and weathering were constructed. Then all the equipment needed was gradually gathered together. Birthday and Christmas

took many knock backs, which is only to be expected, but were persistent and by the time I lent them "Dodgy" they had several different farms lined up over which they could hunt.

A couple of ferrets had been acquired in the meantime and "Dodgy" had worked happily with ferrets previously, so all looked good for a first seasons' hawking.

Enjoyable day's hawking

The hawk and brothers all thoroughly enjoyed a winters' hawking and some good flying was enjoyed by all. The number of rabbits killed mounted steadily and in March my hawk was returned to me in good feather and as fit as a fiddle.

I am fortunate in that I get offered hawks all the time and very soon managed to find Andy and Ian a female Harris of their own. But unfortunately this hawk turned out not to be suitable. It had been mild mannered and even tempered with its previous owner but it simply loathed anybody else. Despite persevering for a couple of months the hawk



eventually had to go back to its original owner.

Andy and Ian were a little disillusioned and felt that perhaps they had been to blame for the behaviour of the hawk. But I reassured them this was not the case and very soon after the grumpy Harris had gone back to its owner another opportunity to acquire a female Harris arose. A deal was done and "Myra", a three-year-old Harris Hawk, came to stay.

"Myra" had much better manners and her behaviour patterns were more like those you would expect from a Harris Hawk. Andy and Ian soon had her flying free and concentrated on getting her fit ready for the coming season. It was probably from this point on that their true falconry careers began. Andy has a conventional office job and Ian is a student, so between them they can manage to get out with the hawk almost every day.

Full bags

The first full season of hunting together saw a good number of rabbits brought to bag as well as the odd pheasant and a duck. More important to me than the number of kills attained was the manner in which the hawk and the quarry were treated. The hawk is always in excellent condition. Her equipment is always in first class order, beak and talons coped properly and her feathers are in good order. There are one or two little tips that have been rubbed off, but these are as a result of tussles with quarry, so no dishonour there. Quarry caught is always despatched as soon as humanely possible and good flights, whether they result in a kill or not, are always rewarded.

The only element missing from the equation for perfect hunting at the moment is a dog. But circumstances don't allow the housing of a dog as well as the hawk and ferrets at the moment and the hawk does not see enough canine activity around her to be happy going out with mine. So for the time being sport will have to be without one.

From my point of view it is very pleasing to see another generation of falconers starting out in the sport with the right sort of attitude. Andy is exceedingly happy with "Myra" and hopes to enjoy many years of sport with her in the future. Ian hopes to fly a female Red Tailed Hawk one day. I am confident that both Andy and Ian will be a credit to the sport and fly their chosen hawks well.

Bob Dalton

MY OWLS

Chris Harper



For the last six years owls have fascinated me and the more I learnt about them the more I realised that I just wanted to spend as much time as possible working with them, so this year I decided to take a big step and work with my own owls on a permanent basis. For the last two years I had turned down jobs with my own birds so many times and things had become very stressful for me where I was. I am at my happiest when I am out with my owls and talking to people about them. With the help of my husband Tom, who has supported me all the way, there have been school visits, talks to groups and organisations and residential homes. Now that I'm becoming known, private and corporate work is also coming in. The owl evenings and owl experiences I do are proving very popular and are very well supported, if there are any regrets it's that I left the decision so long in the first place but, in the end, circumstances finally helped make up my mind.

A question of history

After a talk someone usually asks me how I got started with the owls and I have to do my best to make a long story as short as possible. I have worked with animals for most of my working life and have always had an interest in wildlife. When I left school, much to my Dad's dislike, I went to work on the farm; in those days it was very hard work with little comfort. When I left school I got my first dog, a German Shepherd who was my constant companion. I have never had any other type of dog and still have two who share my life today. My dad insisted on a well behaved dog and following on from that I eventually decided to learn to train dogs myself. I became a professional dog trainer and worked my own dogs in working trials with great success for many years. There is nothing more rewarding than working as a partnership with any animal.

My life took a downward spiral after a serious road traffic accident, which left me with severe back injuries, not my fault thankfully, and I spent the next few years in a state of depression most of the time and once again animals came to my rescue in the form of a chinchilla. I joined the National Chinchilla Society and started breeding and showing Chinchillas, again with a good deal of success.

After a Chinchilla show one day we went back with some friends to their house for a drink before going home. After looking at the Chinchillas we went out into the back garden and there sitting in an aviary was the most beautiful bird, a Barn Owl. I was smitten. I asked my friend if it was possible to own one and what

advice could he give me; although he had been given the Barn Owl and did not fly it he told me that it was possible to own one and to train it to fly to you for food.

As with all the animals I have owned I started to learn all about owls and how to look after them. I know now that a Barn Owl is not a beginners bird, and certainly the one I started with was not hand reared properly, it came out of the box hissing and shrieking with feet ready for action. Being told that I would never train it made me all the more determined and in the end I won. I still have Barney and he flies to me for his food quite happily. This is in part due to my life long friend Pat and her husband Gordon who has birds of prey and who pointed me in the right direction.

I have come a long way since then and have a collection of owls to be proud of. This year I have hand reared four young birds that are now starting to come out and about with us.

Relaxed birds and people

Imprinting and hand rearing an owl is the most important step to a well behaved bird that will be happy to be with you and the people you visit. I am now in a position to be able to spend as much time as I need with my owls and I am reaping the rewards.

I have plenty of patience with the owls, much more than with humans, and you do need it. Training an owl starts from an early age, I hand rear mine from ten days old and

when you consider that a European Eagle Owl can live to be sixty plus in captivity if it is very lucky this is a lifetime commitment, in fact some of my owls might see me out.

When the baby owls are ready to go outside life seems quite dull for a while. I have had four young owls practising their take offs and landings and their hunting techniques in the living room, flying from one curtain rail to the next and pouncing on the back of the chair, and of course you can't house train an owl so a good supply of carpet shampoo, kitchen rolls and baby wipes are needed not to mention towels to cover the chairs with! I find that the babies will have what I call their naughty half an hour then sleep for a few hours; I have even been heard to say, "That's it, no more owls in the house, never again".

Some people will say to me, if I take the owls out during the day, shouldn't that bird be asleep? We thought owls only came out at night. They are the night hunters of the bird of prey world but most owls will come out during the day if necessary. In fact, some do hunt during the day naturally but it is very hard to spot them as they are so good at blending in with their surroundings. If you know where to look and you are patient enough you will be lucky enough to see one. Barn Owls like to hunt at dawn and dusk and what a lovely sight this is. One of the things I now have time for is to sit quietly along the lane and watch a resident Barn Owl quartering the field in search of prey. Like most owls they have a silent flight and can



catch food just by listening for it. One of the things that concerns me is that the Barn Owl has struggled for years to survive mainly due to intensive farming and barn conversions. Most of the farmers I speak to want to encourage this supreme rodent catcher back onto their farms, it's so much better than using poisons which are not selective. The Barn Owl is known as the farmer's best friend for a good reason, they get through a large amount of rodents during the year especially when feeding young. Sadly Barn Owls have started hunting on the grass verges by the road side and this is a dangerous place for them, a lot are being killed by cars, but hopefully with set aside land and headlands being left unplanted this will change soon.

Talking about Owls in the wild

I always include the situation of owls in the wild when I give a talk and I am very lucky to be involved with The Wildlife Trust. This work is very rewarding and I find that lots of people want to do their bit for owls in the wild and I am hoping to play a bigger part in this side of things myself in the future.

Due to the success of the Harry Potter films owls are looked upon as soft, cuddly pets by children and even some adults. I am always quick to point out that they are very powerful predators and can do serious harm to those who do not respect them and know

I do believe that I have a bond with my owls but this is because of the hand rearing and the time I spend with them. At the end of the day the more you put in to something the more you will get out of it

how to look after them and they are certainly not pets. I do believe that I have a bond with my owls but this is because of the hand rearing and the time I spend with them. At the end of the day the more you put in to something the more you will get out of it.

I have watched a lot of different people fly birds of prey over the last few years and enjoyed a good many of the displays but I have to agree with the gentleman who wrote an article in the International Owl Society Magazine last year who said that he was fed up with hearing that owls were thick and had little intelligence. You do need a sense of humour when flying owls but they are wonderful in their own right and should not be compared to falcons and hawks.

All of my owls have their own personalities and although I haven't really got a favourite, if I'm honest my European Eagle Owl, Icarus, comes close. He is a very gentle, well mannered bird and will sit on my fist for hours if I let him. He is just happy to be with me.

A lady from Surrey bought her mum an owl evening for her eighty-fifth birthday and she fell in love with "Ikky". He sat on her fist so patiently and the look on her face made my night. She had just moved into a home after losing her husband. I sent her a picture of "Ikky" which is on the wall in her room and she enjoys telling her friends all about him, it's nice to bring such pleasure into other people's lives and makes what you do worth while.

Lost birds

Everyone who flies birds loses one at some point and last year I lost two owls, Casper, a very special Canadian Great Horned Owl, who flew off one evening and although he didn't go too far from home we never seemed to get close to him after a sighting. The village I live in is a very close knit community and most of the villagers spent their spare time looking for him. Tom and I spent every night walking the fields but sadly he was found two months later dead in a farmer's barn not very far away from home. Bandit, a European Eagle Owl, disappeared a few months later after someone threw a firework into the garden as we were putting him away for the night. He was spotted frequently for a while but has not been seen as far as we know since this Easter. I still look for him and keep hoping that he will turn up but the problem is that he does not like men very much due to his past so is unlikely to go to just anyone.

I was given a Great Horned Owl last year by a friend. This bird proved to be a great challenge as she has previously been flying free for six months after escaping from the aviary. Now twelve months later, and after lots of time and patience, she is flying to the fist and she went on her first visit three weeks ago where she behaved perfectly. I never thought of giving up with her and stood out in the field one night for an hour and a half just waiting for her to get up the courage to jump to my fist.

Support

I have had a lot of support from my family and friends over the last few months and I certainly couldn't have done it without them. Apart from my family I would like to thank Oxfordshire Owls for all their help and support, Keith Jones from Fir Tree Falconry who is a very genuine person and has become a great friend, and my friend Mark who comes out and helps us whenever he can and is brilliant with the birds. Terry and Howard for the wheel cover for my jeep and CMF for all the carrying boxes that they have donated to me as well. I would also like to thank my vet, Steve, who treats all my wild rescue owls free of charge and last but not least all the volunteers who help with the birds for the pleasure of being with them and expect nothing in return.

Owls are fascinating creatures and I hope that I will be working with them for a long time yet. Most of the children I talk to have never seen an owl close to and the care of all our wildlife lies in their hands for the future. It would be very sad indeed if we lost these wonderful birds. My relationship with my own owls is very much based on trust and is very unique and as most people tell me I am a very lucky person, I totally agree.



Schedule 4 Update DEFRA

Periodically all Government Departments undertake reviews of legislation to make certain that it is still applicable to the circumstances that prevail at the time. Birds listed on Schedule 4 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act are required to be ringed and registered with Defra and the last major review of this list took place in 1994. This review concluded that a number of species should be removed from the requirement to ring and register them with the Department.

On 9 September 2003, Defra organised a symposium as a start to a new review of Schedule 4. The meeting was attended by a number of interested parties including Dr Nick Fox of the Hawk Board and Aeron Williams of Parrot Society. The meeting agreed the criteria to be used in deciding whether species should be included on Schedule 4 and then went on to consider the scope of species to which those criteria should be applied.

The three criteria are set out here :

- (1) A species is known, or is believed to be subject to illegal taking or illegal trade or is likely to become so, and;
- (2) The illegal taking from the wild is at a level which would or is likely to have a detrimental impact on the wild population(s) of the species, or;
- (3) The wild population is so small that even the taking of a very few individuals would have a detrimental impact on the wild populations.

For inclusion on Schedule 4 a species would have to satisfy these criteria.

The species that these criteria would be applied to are :

- (1) All native and non native species including non-native invasive species.
- (2) Species of conservation concern identified in the Red and Amber list of UK population status of birds.
- (3) Globally threatened birds (from a list collated by Birdlife International).

The Department commissioned its scientific advisors, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to conduct the review . The provisional findings of the review were presented to the full committee of JNCC on the 29 September. These suggest that not only should some species come off the Schedule, but that others, including a number of parrot species should be added. The current position is therefore that these provisional findings were endorsed by the full committee of JNCC and are their final advice to the Department. The Department has however, not yet accepted them.

At the Symposium, it was agreed that once the report was ready, the group would reconvene to discuss the report before Defra undertook public consultation. This would give everyone involved a second opportunity to bring out any issues they felt would merit further discussion before the proposals go to consultation.

It is planned to start of the formal consultation early in the New Year, and it will last for a minimum of 12 weeks, when all those interested or have a stake in the decisions to be made by Ministers, will have an opportunity to comment and put forward their point of view.

We will send a copy of the consultation document to every current keeper of a Schedule 4 bird, plus the representatives of other species that are new to list and any other person or organisation that requests a copy. The document and the study will also be available on-line. Full details of how to contact the us will be given at the time of the consultation, but any comments or representations should be made in writing.

HOW THE NEW SCHEDULE 4 MAY LOOK

If all the recommendations are accepted these are the species that will be listed on Schedule 4.

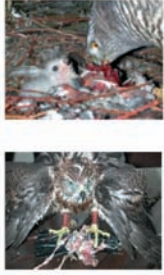
<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Scientific name</i>
Amazon, Red-tailed	<i>Amazona brasiliensis</i>
Bunting,	<i>Cirl Emberiza cirrus</i>
Bunting, Snow	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>
Buzzard, Honey	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Chaffinch, Blue	<i>Fringilla teydea</i>
Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
Cockatoo, Red-vented	<i>Cacatua haematuropygia</i>
Crossbills (all species)	<i>Loxia spp.</i>
Eagle, Adalbert's	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>
Eagle, Bonelli's	<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>
Eagle, Golden	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
Eagle, Great Philippine	<i>Pithecophaga jefferyi</i>
Eagle, Imperial	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>
Eagle, White Tailed	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
Falcon, Eleanor's	<i>Falco eleanori</i>
Falcon, Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>
Harrier, Hen	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Harrier, Marsh	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Harrier, Montagu's	<i>Circus pygargus</i>
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
Kite, Red	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
Macaw, Blue-throated	<i>Ara glaucogularis</i>
Macaw, Hyacinth	<i>Ara hyacinthinus</i>
Macaw, Lear's	<i>Anodorhynchus leari</i>
Macaw,	<i>Spix's Cyanopsitta spixii</i>
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Redstart, Black	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
Sea-Eagle, Steller's	<i>Haliaeetus pelagicus</i>
Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
Shrike, Red-backed	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Starling, Bali	<i>Leucopsar rothschildi</i>
Tanager, Seven-coloured	<i>Tangara fastuosa</i>
Tit, Bearded	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
Tit, Crested	<i>Parus cristatus</i>
Warbler, Dartford	<i>Sylvia undata</i>
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>
Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>

Any bird one of whose parents or whose ancestor in its recent lineage was a bird of a kind specified in the above list.

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'Black Jess' was taken from an eyrie in Pembrokeshire, South Wales by the late Kim Muir. He trained and flew her at grouse and partridge in the period before the Second World War. He was a close friend of George Lodge, who was also a keen follower of falconry, but sadly, Kim Muir was killed while serving with the 10th Royal Hussars.

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For further details or to order a copy, contact Paul Beecroft.
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Black Jess
(Intermewed Eyass Falcon)
by
George Edward Lodge

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*Avian and Exotic Animal
Medicine and Surgery*

Clients of Lansdown Vets in Stroud should know by now that Neil Forbes, Dr Petra Zsivanovits and Debbie Monks have moved the whole avian and exotic department from Lansdown Veterinary Surgeons in Stroud to Great Western Referrals in Swindon.

The new department is still headed by Neil Forbes who started it back in 1984. Neil has a long history with falconry and has been an active participant in the sport since he was introduced to it by his grandfather. After running the department for the last 20 years it has grown to a size where it simply ran out of space at Lansdown.

“We simply reached a point where we needed more space at Lansdown and it just wasn’t available”, Neil said. “After the decision to move was made we set about designing a purpose built facility so that we could offer the best treatment for birds of prey and finding a location close to major roads to make it easier for clients to travel to us.”

The three of them, accompanied by all their specialist equipment, full diagnostic laboratory and specialist nurses have joined specialist vets in other disciplines at Great Western Referrals. The new facility has easy access from junction 15 of the M4 and been under development for over a year prior to its opening on the 2 August this year. “Ease of access was important, based in Swindon we can be easily reached down either the M4 or M5”, Neil said.

On a tour of the facility Petra and Debbie said, “we see all our birds in a separate area of the building, away from the areas where cats and dogs are treated, we have our own pharmacy, operating theatre,



Photo left to right - Debbie, Neil (who would have guessed it?) and Petra in the avian treatment room at Great Western Referrals

NEW VET PRACTICE:

Avian and Exotic Department moves from Lansdown, Stroud to Great Western Referrals, Swindon

X-ray room, treatment room, endoscopy room and three wards, each containing cages that can be individually heated as required enabling us to give the highest possible standard of care for your bird.”

Neil became a Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Specialist in Zoo and Wildlife Medicine (avian) in 1992, then a Fellow of the RCVS in 1996 in Exotic Bird Medicine and finally a European Veterinary Specialist in Avian Medicine and Surgery in 1997. As a specialist Neil has been able to establish a residency program to enable him to help train other avian vets to become specialists.

Petra has previously studied with Dr David Remple at the Dubai Falcon Hospital and completed her doctorate in 2001. She has just completed her residency under Neil and passed all her exams so that she will soon become a European Veterinary Specialist in Avian Medicine and Surgery.

Debbie joined the department in 2002 from Australia having already gained

membership of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists (Avian Health) in 1999 and seeing birds as a vet for over seven years. Debbie recently obtained her Certificate in Zoological Medicine and is due to complete her residency with Neil in the middle of next year which will enable her to become an Australian and European Specialist in Avian Medicine and Surgery.

“Helping train Petra and Debbie has been one of the most rewarding parts of my work in the last five years. They are both extremely competent avian veterinarians and I believe that they will have great success as avian specialists in the near future”, Neil said.

Further details of the facilities, services and future courses can be seen at the new web site www.gwreferrals.com and an open day for avian and exotic animal owners will be held later in autumn. In the meantime if Neil, Petra or Debbie can be of assistance please don’t hesitate to call them on 01793 603 802.

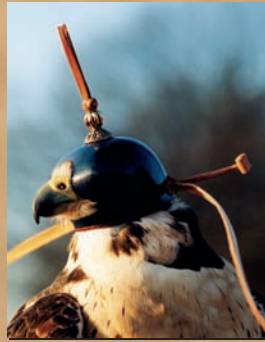


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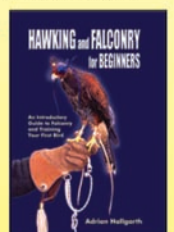
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A visit to Huxley's Experience is always a joy. Set behind Hilliers Garden Centre south of Horsham, Sussex, the minute you walk through the entrance you can feel a good atmosphere about the place.

The landscaped centre is well kept and the different plants around the grounds are well worth a look. A lot of thought has gone into the design and owner/falconer Julian Ford, his wife, Stephanie, along with their staff, have worked very hard and are dedicated to keeping the grounds and birds in tip-top shape and condition. This is not surprising as Julian is a trained horticulturalist and has been flying birds of prey for quite a number of years.

My wife and I caught up with Julian and Stephanie one day in August for a quick chat. Here's what Julian had to say:

Can I start by asking you how you first got involved with birds of prey?

That's a long time ago – I've been in it nearly 40 years now. It started off when I was keeping budgies and British finches, and things like that, and somebody brought me in a kestrel they had found in the road. They'd heard I kept birds and in those days there wasn't any training as such and it was a challenge to take on this injured kestrel. Next it was a barn owl that got brought in and so it went on from there. Gradually my collection of parrots which I'd had for many, many years were taken over by the birds of prey. So, it just went on from there – it was something I just became interested in because I was handed one in to look after.

So when did you decide to become professional?

I don't know if one ever does become professional in this. About 11 years ago I gave up a good job in estate management to do this full time. It got to the point in the estate management job, which was a lovely job and fitted in well with my birds of prey, where I had 80 birds as a hobby – and anybody who knows about birds of prey will know that's a little bit too much. I had to make a decision either to give up the job or give up the birds. So, I became redundant as it were and I decided to do this full time.

So where did your love of plants begin?

I'm a horticulturalist generally – I trained at Wisley and gained National Diploma of Horticulture. I was a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society and it sort of went on from there with the gardening. What I wanted to do when I first set up Huxley's was to have the landscape garden with the aviaries – not just aviaries like concrete blocks stuck around. I wanted it to all fit in together.



Julian Ford

A visit to...

Huxley's

experience

And obviously with the collection of tropical plants, I've managed to really do everything I wanted to do. So it's worked.

What about expanding in the future?

We do have more ground to expand on to, but finance, staff and all that sort of thing does tend to keep that down a bit. But being here now for 11 years, it's got to the point where the first aviaries are falling down – 10 years is an average life. So, we're doing a total rebuild at the moment – everything will be replaced. I don't think there's anything that's going to be left standing without being replaced. We're rebuilding the aviaries at the present time, going right through the new entrance, new shop, new mews – because we want to

higher the mews to accommodate some of the plants over winter, as well as the birds. So, there's a lot going on, as time and finances allow.

How did you actually find this ground in the first place?

Pure luck. I got friendly with Jonathan Tate and one of his management team who owns the big garden centres and Tate's car centres, and they heard that I was looking for somewhere to start up a business with the birds. The house had been empty for 12 years before I moved in, so that was in a state of disrepair, and we got the ground, which came with the house. The main problem then was that they said 'Yes Julian you can use

that no problem at all' – and then we had the problem of getting the planning permission to do it all. Even though they are temporary structures as far as I am concerned, we had to have planning permission for every single aviary we built. But we managed it in the end and we got a zoo licence to operate.

And long may it continue...

I hope so – things are happening now. My wife, Steph, and I are pushing it more – we are doing our very, very best to get noticed, promotion-wise, advertising-wise, whenever and wherever we can. And obviously we do a lot of the big shows and that helps – at places like the South of England showground we do get noticed, people come and ask us to do extra work, whatever it might be. So, yes, we're getting noticed.

How many birds have you actually got?

Too many, dare I say it. No, seriously, we've got about 100 at the moment. I keep saying we've got far, far too many birds but it's like anything – you get given birds, although we are very careful what we say yes to now; buzzards and barn owls we say, sorry, we can't accommodate – it can't be done. You can't afford to take everybody's problems on and try and solve them all yourself by keeping them and feeding them. We do get extra birds – the most recent, of course, is the Bald Eagle – a gorgeous, third-year bird, just beginning to change to the white head and in

heavy moult at the moment. That's the sort of bird that people like to see, as well as all your small birds. People love to see a barn owl flying and that sort of thing. So we've got a nice selection of birds and on the centre itself (rather than the off-site birds) we do have about 70-75 birds at any one time, which is more than enough to look after.

What about breeding birds?

We breed the regular species – such as Harris Hawks – we've got youngsters again now – in

Have you got a favourite species of bird?

If you've looked around the centre, you will know that I like hybrid falcons – we do have a lot of straight species, but I do like the hybrids. Out of all the birds, I suppose I do enjoy flying the falcons most – ones like Megan, the Saker/Lanner, and Asha, the Barbary/Lanner, they're great fun to fly and I enjoy flying them – especially when they get it together and they're flying as a team. So, yes, I think probably the falcons out of all of them and like I say I do like the hybrids.

So we do breed quite a lot of different birds - we've got the Steppe Eagles put together now, which hopefully by next year they will almost certainly reproduce

fact, coming into August we've got a second clutch hatching now. We've got Harris Hawks, we breed Sakers, we've got a couple of pairs of Peregrines which didn't manage it this year – they had eggs and sat on them religiously, but didn't hatch but we're not too concerned. We did move them at the wrong time of the year, (end of March/early April is the wrong time to start moving birds like that) but they had to be moved so it did put them off a little bit, but hopefully next year they'll be fine. We breed Black Kites, which is great, and we fly a couple of young Black Kites. And we breed the Ferru-tails, the cross between the Ferruginous and the Redtail – a natural hybrid, so we're pleased with those. So we do breed quite a lot of different birds – we've got the Steppe Eagles put together now, which hopefully by next year they will almost certainly reproduce. This year they've already built a nest and gone through all the motions, so I think by next season they should get it together and produce for us, which will be rather nice and we'll be able to fly one of our own youngsters.

Having said that, with a Bald Eagle coming along now hopefully to be trained this winter then I could find the Eagles taking over a bit in the favouritism but at the moment I'll stick with the falcons.

How do you feel about those people who are against hybrids, and prefer pure species?

Each to their own. Hybrids have been a big part of falconry over a number of years, particularly in the States, of course. You can get some beautiful birds and, at the same time, it can work the other way and you can get some bad birds.

When Marian and I were at Huxley's, there was a lot of building of new aviaries going on and a new entrance and gift shop was being constructed. When all of the work is finished the grounds should look a picture once more.

If you know Juilian at all, you will know that the building work will be of the highest quality.

You can find Huxley's Experience on the A281 Horsham to Brighton Road. Telephone 01403 273458 for more information.



Stephanie Ford



In 2002 a party of four falconers, John R. Swift, Vicki Swift, Natalie Nicholson and Peter Devers, all associated with the Archives of American Falconry visited Britain to attend the Falconers Fair in Shropshire. As a humorous conceit it was then decided to fashion the rest of their British stay visiting the graves of renowned 19th century falconry authors. This foray was jokingly dubbed the “Dead Falconers Tour 2002”. Several weeks were spent travelling around the country searching for dead falconers wherever they might be hiding. The goal set was to find the last resting places of Salvin and Brodrick, Harting, Freeman, Sebright, Burton, Sherley, Lascelles, Michell, Fisher and others. Many of the graves found were well tended and in good repair and respects were paid to these falconers of the past whose books and writings are enjoyed to this day. Two graves however, left them shocked and dismayed.

Grave in a bad state

The last resting place of Gerald Lascelles, in Boltons Bench Cemetery at Lyndhurst, Hampshire was a wreck. The marble palings of his plot had all but sunk out of sight, the marble column was broken and had fallen to one side of the grave and was so covered in tall grasses that it was almost missed. Mould and algae obscured most of the inscriptions, and in many cases the leading in the letters was gone. What had once been white marble was now the colour of the darkest black gyrfalcon. For his grave to look so abandoned was heartbreaking. Research found that the direct descendants of Lascelles are now many generations removed and quite possibly none of the family has visited the grave since he was interred. It was realised that if the memorial was to be cleaned and restored it would have to be carried out by Lascelles ‘falconry descendants’ and it was decided to form a joint UK/US committee to do just that. Paul Beecroft in Great Britain and Peter Devers in America became chairmen of the restoration effort.

With the assistance of Reverend Peter Murphy in Lyndhurst, the firm of Hoare Banks Stonemasons in Lymington were engaged to undertake the restoration of Lascelles’ grave. The generous donations from falconers in Great Britain and

FALCONERS’ MEMORIALS

America succeeded in restoring dignity to the last resting place of our famous 19th century “ancestor”.

The grave of Edward Blair Michell, reputedly in Wyke Champflower, Somerset, was not found to be in terrible condition – it was not found at all. Shortly after the Dead Falconers Tour party departed, their search fruitless, Brian Bird, a falconer local to Wyke Champflower, arrived on the same quest. He too failed in his search to locate the missing falconer. And so began a joint UK & US project to pinpoint the last resting place of E.B. Michell and honour his memory with an appropriate memorial. Brian Bird of the BFC and John Swift of NAFA became joint chairmen for this endeavour.

Parish records were consulted but could not definitively place Michell in the churchyard at Wyke Champflower. It was not until Brian had the insight to consult the local newspaper that Michell was finally located. The newspaper wrote of his interment in the Wyke cemetery in no uncertain terms and was quite exhaustive in detailing the service, the mourners, and the tributes. With there now being no doubt of his burial there, the Wyke Champflower churchyard was graced with a memorial tablet designed by Brian to commemorate the life of this great falconer.

Re-dedication

On Saturday, 1 May 2004 a re-dedication ceremony took place at Boltons Bench Cemetery. Falconers attended from the United States of America and throughout the United Kingdom to honour this Falconer from our past. The ceremony

opened at 11 o’clock with the haunting strains of *The Dark Isle* played by piper Alex Anderson dressed in formal highland kit. The conversations of those gathered stilled as he drew near to the white marble monument, newly resurrected from the broken and sunken parts that we had found only a year ago. Even the eyes of the falcons carried by Roger Upton, Graham Wellstead and Clive Palmer seemed locked on the Reverend Camilla Walton as she opened the Ceremony.

She spoke first of Reverend Peter Murphy who sadly was too ill to attend but how excited he had been about this project. She told us that it was a privilege and honour to be with us and how impressed she was with the incredible work and dedication it has taken to restore this monument to its now impressive and worthy state. She finished with the words, “For me it’s wonderful that Falconers from the United Kingdom and the United States of America have shown such tenacity, goodwill and strong relationship to unite and carry out this restoration work”.

A prayer said

A short prayer was then heard offering thanks for the life of Gerald Lascelles and for his achievements. The Ceremony then continued in the tiny Chapel nearby. John Swift took charge of the proceedings and spoke of The Dead Falconers Tour, the history they had learnt, and how sad it had been to find the grave of Lascelles in such a bad condition. John also made mention of why Americans had been involved in the restoration of a grave in England and it was the simple fact, ‘We all have the same

Left to right: Graham Wellstead, Roger Upton, Clive Palmer



roots'. He went on to say that American Falconry really started in the 1920's following an article in the National Geographic which was about British Falconry. Lascelles' book, along with Michell's, was the chief falconry texts used by Americans. It was therefore important for the monument of Gerald Lascelles to be restored because of these roots. He then introduced Mike Seddon, the current Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest.

Lascelles remembered

Mike told us that Lascelles came to the New Forest as the Deputy Surveyor in 1880 and had lived at King's House in Lyndhurst which is still in use today as the Forestry Commission's Office. He spoke of Lascelles breadth of interest in the land he was put in charge of and his desire to keep the place he was responsible for as a thing of beauty. He spoke also of the fact that perhaps Lascelles should best be remembered for his obvious affection for his staff and inherent desire to care for his workers and in particular his efforts to improve the standard of workers cottages. Mike also made mention that it had been 89 years since Lascelles finished his Deputy Surveyorship and he had started his own. During that time there had been 11 other occupants of the post revealing an

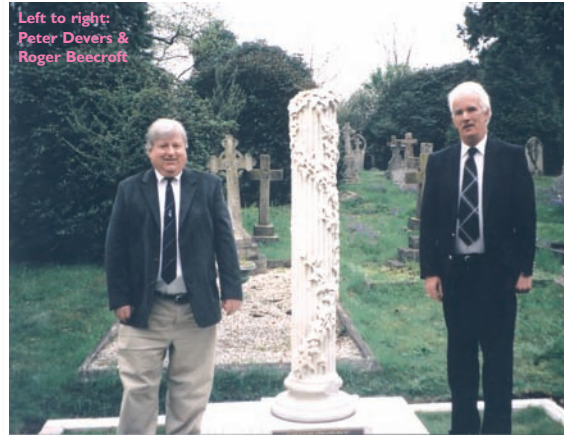
average of eight years for each occupant of the post. The fact that Lascelles held the post for 35 years was therefore, truly remarkable.

The next speaker introduced by John was falconer Paul Beecroft. Paul spoke of Lascelles early years of flying a Kestrel at Eton and the keeping of a trained hawk in his room at College. He spoke of Lascelles being instrumental in reforming The Old



Hawking Club, becoming The Manager and Hon. Secretary a position he was to hold for some 44 years. His commitment to the club was 100%. During this time he was also an author, contributing to *Coursing and Falconry* in 1892, and chapters in *The Hare*, a Fur & Feather series book of the same name in 1896. In 1971 the falconry section of *Coursing and Falconry* was reprinted on its own with the title *The Art of Falconry*. Paul spoke of Lascelles concerns that the art of falconry was dying out apart from a

Left to right: Peter Devers & Roger Beecroft



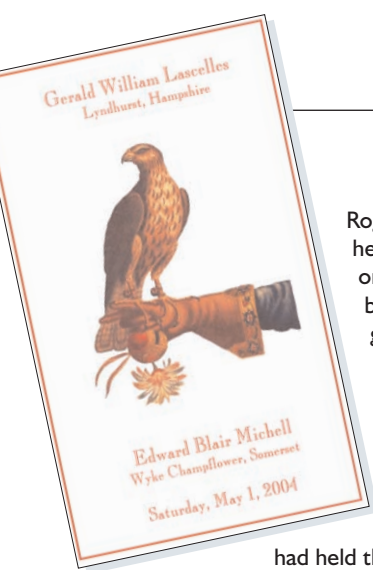
small band of enthusiasts and that it was idle to dream of a 'revival of falconry' but he hoped that the veterans were in error in these thoughts. Paul concluded by saying, "Well Sir, those veterans were in error and it was not idle for you to dream of a 'revival of falconry'. Because of you and people like you, the art of falconry is alive and well, some 76 years after you left us. Today, on the eve of the Falconers Far, we have come together here, Falconers, to honour you and to thank you for the contribution that you made to falconry and you may rest, in the knowledge, that falconry continues and will continue." And, like you, I

too, am thankful that the tinkle of a falcon's bell is generally to be heard in my garden as well".

More memories

John then introduced Roger Upton, a well known British Falconer with more than a keen interest in Falconers from the past.





Roger told us that he had dedicated one of his own books to three great Falconers, one of whom was Lascelles, who had ensured the survival of Falconry. Lascelles

had held the Old

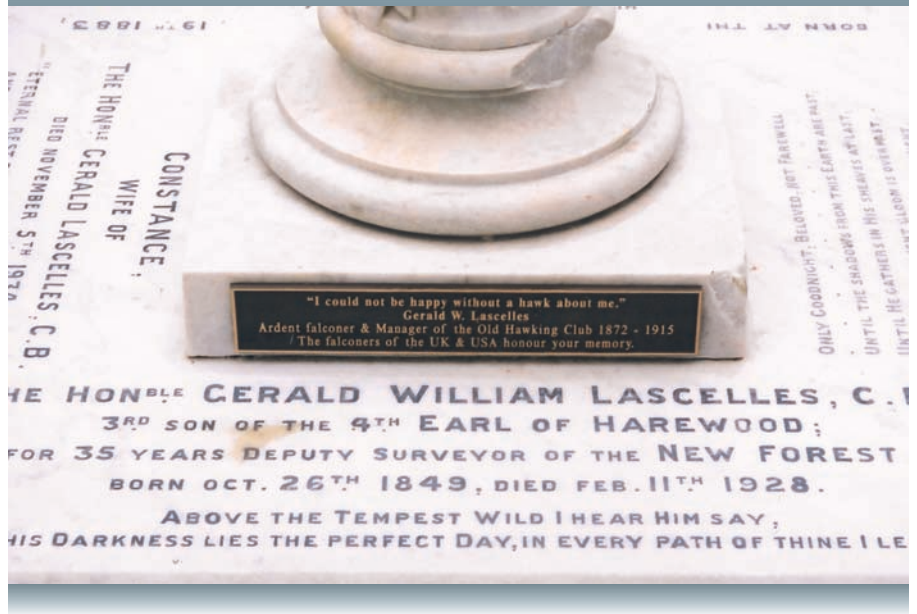
Hawking Club together and that had been no mean feat. He mentioned the high standard of Game and Rook Hawking in the days of Lascelles and also the problems they had encountered, one of which was poisoned Rooks which affected the population. He concluded by telling us about the incredible respect that people had for Lascelles.

Kent Carnie, the Curator for The Archives of American Falconry, was then introduced. Kent thanked everyone for being there and also for allowing them (Americans) to participate in something that was so important. Kent explained that American Falconry was so deeply rooted in British Falconry that it was almost unreal. He told us of the first American Falconer that they knew of who had come from Britain in 1622 bringing with him his lures and hoods and then the catching of a Tiercel Peregrine. He further explained that the influence that is profound in American Falconry is the literature of British Falconry. In their early years there were no American books on the sport, and they relied on British works, in particular that of Gerald Lascelles. His name is held in great respect by Americans and his understanding of passage hawks was very important to the development of falconry in America. He told us that the Archives is very proud to hold in trust for all falconers Lascelles' personal copies of 'Thirty Five years in the New Forest and 'Coursing and Falconry'.

The Ceremony then returned to the Graveside. The Reverend Camilla Walton said prayers and a blessing with the words, "Gracious God, we give you thanks for the dedication and love shown by the Falconers of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. For the unity and strength of the bonds that tie them together, revealed in this work of honour and respect".

Piper Alex Anderson then closed the Ceremony with the haunting sounds of Amazing Grace.

Following a delightful lunch at the Forest Lodge Hotel, many of the participants drove north into Somerset for the 5:30 dedication of the new memorial tablet commemorating the life of E. B. Michell.



The Rededication Service

Gerald William Lascelles, C.B. 1849 – 1928

Perhaps no man was more at the centre of 19th century British falconry than Gerald William Lascelles. Around him were tightly circled the members of the Old Hawking Club whose dedication to the sport is legendary. Their exploits on the Salisbury Plain and on the moors of the north brought the art of falconry to pitch not seen in many years. Through his books and numerous articles on the sport he extended his reach to sportsmen worldwide.

Gerald Lascelles, the third son of the 4th Earl of Harewood, was born in Goldsbrough, Yorkshire, on 26 October 1849. One of the great families of the north of England, the Lascelles trace their ancestry back to John De Lascelles of Hinderkelfe, County York (now Castle Howard) in 1315 during the time of King Edward II. Lascelles began his falconry career as a young boy with a sparrow-hawk under the tutelage of Sir Charles Slingsby of Scriven. At age 17 (1866) he was invited to spend his Easter holiday on the Salisbury Plain with Cecil Duncombe, a member of the Old Hawking Club. The beauty and finesse of rook hawking thrilled him and his heart was set on training longwings from then on. While at Cambridge he actually kept a Merlin in his rooms!

In 1871, with the death of Clough Newcome, the Old Hawking Club broke up. Several of the former OHC members chafed at the loss of the club that had been an important part of their lives, and in 1872 the club was reconstituted with Gerald Lascelles as Manager and Honorary Secretary. He held this position for 44 years, until 1915, when declining health forced him to resign his responsibilities. For thirty five years he was Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest and for most of those years villagers in Lyndhurst could watch young peregrines at hack flying about their precincts.

Today we principally know Gerald Lascelles through the books and articles he authored. In 1892 the Badminton Library book *Coursing and Falconry* was published, with Major Harding Cox the author of the first part and Lascelles the author of the second. This complete edition was reprinted in 1899 and 1901. In 1971 the falconry section of "Coursing and Falconry" was reprinted on its own, and to this the publisher gave the title *The Art of Falconry*. This has also been reprinted several times and is still available today, much admired and much referred to by falconers a hundred years on.

In his book, *Thirty-five Years in the New Forest*, Lascelles wrote of his fears that the sport of falconry would die when he and his generation of countrymen passed from this earth. He also wrote of his hopes that he was wrong in this, that "better and younger men will carry on what has been well described as 'the noblest sport in which man has ever indulged'...after I have ceased to take a part in it."

Those of us who contributed to the restoration of this monument honour the memory of Gerald Lascelles, and indeed know that Gerald Lascelles' part in our sport did not cease with his death in 1928. It carries on today when we take guidance from his writings. He is among us still.

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