

Your Favourite Falconry Magazine

Issue 65

£4.25



ISSN  
0967-2206

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# The *Falconers*

*& Raptor Conservation Magazine*

Paradise  
in Andalucia

We Were  
Falconers

Hawking  
in Peru

# DUTCH FALCON FAIR

23-27 AUGUST  
2006

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for Birds of Prey



**Falconiformes**

Spring 2006 / No. 65

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**Subscriptions:**

UK & Eire: £16.50 / Europe: £20.00  
Airmail: £28.00

Send your details to our Subscriptions Department:

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Cheque/Postal Order payable to: **PW Publishing Ltd.**  
For more details and for **credit card payment**,  
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**Front Cover:**  
Photo courtesy of  
Bob Dalton.

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It's that time of year again when the Falconers Fair is upon us. The venue is the same as last year, Chetwynd Park, Shropshire, and I hope that as many of you can attend as possible; although some of the breeders may miss out. If you do go, come to the *Falconers Magazine* stand and say hello.

In this issue we have articles from around the world. Peru, USA and Spain are all represented, as well as stories from home. Also, in this issue, we have the usual Hawk Board News page, which I hope you all read and take note of its contents. Don't forget that the Hawk Board is there for you, the falconer and bird of prey keeper, so please give as much support to the board in every way possible. There is also part of a report of a symposium that was held last year in United Arab Emirates and my thanks go to Gary Trimbell of the IAF for providing the words.

I hope that the varied mix of articles are to your liking but if you want to see anything else that may not have been covered in previous issues, please contact me and I will endeavour to obtain the necessary articles for your enjoyment.

In the meantime, have a good read.

editorial

# Falconers

## news and products

Send all your news and product information to [peter.eldrett@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:peter.eldrett@tiscali.co.uk)

### The Pick of the Litter

Looking for puppies from top class working dogs is often a tricky business. In HPR's there is a trend to produce litters that have a high proportion of show dogs in the pedigree on the misunderstanding that they are dual purpose Gundogs and consequently, they should be capable of doing a good day's work. Noticeably German Wirehaired Pointers have not got the division of field type and show type; hence it is often confusing from the buyer's point of view if they are looking for working lines.

Top working litters are bred from only the highest performing dogs and bitches in the field and they don't come with better credentials than the litter from Bavarian import Erle vom Alten Berg. Erle, who is owned by the President of the GWP club Diana Durman-Walters, has produced a litter sired by a son of one Diana's earlier imports. His career as an outstanding shooting dog made him an ideal choice. He had been bred from a field trial winning mother on whose side she had some of this country's top field trial dogs in her pedigree.

Erle came into the UK as a bitch with one of the highest scores in an open field trial, which in Germany is designed to test the ability and skills of the top dogs from every province. Dogs that have achieved this level of skill and attainment in the field without doubt give their puppies more than a head start. The litter is predominantly pure German bloodlines and have all the qualities of excellent working dogs in falconry, deerstalking and shooting.

For those looking for a quality GWP puppy Diana can be contacted on 01267-229159 or you can e-mail her at

[D.M.Durmanwalters@btinternet.com](mailto:D.M.Durmanwalters@btinternet.com)



### CLA Game Fair 2006

The CLA Game Fair returns to Romsey in Hampshire once again this year and *The Falconers Magazine* will be in attendance. The Fair will be held from 28 to 30 July and the falconry section is always popular with falconers and the general public alike.

Demonstrations in the mini arena and the main arena are held each day with various birds on display, both static and flying, with education being a big part of the displays.

Equipment suppliers and artists will also be there to relieve you of some of your hard earned money and the stand holders will always have time to talk to you.

### Harris Hawk Master Classes

Bob Dalton, in conjunction with Thrumster Estates, Scotland, is to run four one week falconry courses each season devoted entirely to training and hunting with Harris Hawks. Each course will take a maximum of three students and will last a



full week. Accommodation will be in a delightful cottage set in the grounds of the estate with mews and kennel facilities on hand.

The courses have been set up in response to the constant requests that Bob has received from people wishing to further their knowledge and improve their hunting technique with this superb and unique raptor. For those wishing to obtain more details Bob can be reached on 07774-267790 or you can e-mail him at [bobdalton@falconleisure.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:bobdalton@falconleisure.fsnet.co.uk)

### Day course at GWR

Peter Eldrett

Great Western Referrals was the venue for a one day course called Management of Raptors for Health and Longevity which took place in February this year.

Hosted by vet Neil Forbes, the course was attended by approximately 30 falconers, would-be falconers or bird of prey keepers and what an excellent day it was. Many topics were covered including aviary building, nutrition, what to look for if a bird is ill, parasites and tick related diseases were all covered.

Preventative measures rather than cure was the word of the day and with both slide illustrations and 52 pages of notes, it brought home to all those present how important it is to look after your bird. Making sure that your housing is properly erected and kept clean is paramount to make sure that any parasite infestation is limited.

The afternoon was partly taken up with a hands-on session concerning first aid in the field. We were shown how to crop tube a bird and bandage a bird which has had a damaged wing. Then, we were put into groups so that we could practise what was needed on deceased pheasants which were the 'volunteers' for this part of the day.

This one-day course was a big success for all those who attended and it is hoped that GWR will run another course in a similar vein in the near future. If they do, don't hesitate to book a place and attend. Keep a look-out on the web site:

[www.gwreferrals.com](http://www.gwreferrals.com)

## Bird of Prey keeping award seeks assessors prior to May launch

After a year of careful deliberation, the Hawk Board initiative to create an officially recognised *Award* in bird of prey keeping has moved to its penultimate stage.

Derek Hartshorne, the Lantra executive responsible for this cooperative venture was delighted with the progress. "We now have a draft 'candidates workbook' ready for critical appraisal by the Hawk Board and its member clubs. Our plan is to launch at the Falconry Fair in May and we have already received unqualified support and a queue of falconers who want to take part," said Hartshorne. "But we need to appoint assessors before we launch."

Assessors will be experienced falconers or bird of prey keepers prepared to meet with candidates and approve their receiving the *Award*. It is in two parts with part one covering Bird of Prey Management and Husbandry. The second, Falconry Basics, assesses training up to moment of free flight but not beyond.

Hartshorne says that a great deal of discussion went into deciding what makes a suitable assessor. "We eventually came up with some key questions: How long have you been keeping and flying birds of prey? What are your areas of expertise? Do you have any educational experience, which can be either traditional or falconry related? There are other questions on the application, but these are seen as the essentials."

"Finding good assessors is critical to the future of bird of prey keeping," emphasised Hawk Board chairman, Jim Chick. "These people will make a huge difference to the welfare of all birds of prey and obviously to falconry, so I urge you to apply. Every day people

are attracted to falconry, but not all receive good advice. In the old days you might find a mentor, but despite the increase in popularity this is not so easy today. The *Award* will help breeders to vet their customers and falconry clubs qualify new members."

The Hawk Board and Lantra expect to appoint assessors throughout the country to minimise travel costs and work load, but as Jim Chick pointed out when the project was first conceived: "With the Animal Welfare Bill now being debated in parliament falconers face two choices. You can either manage bird of prey welfare from within, or have it forced upon you by others. There is no question which I prefer, and I have no doubt others will feel the same." He also made the point that under the new COTES regulations it falls to the breeder to ensure that a prospective buyer is sufficiently competent to look after the hawk, and if not the breeder could become liable. "This *Award* will encourage responsible breeders only to sell to capable falconers," added Chick.

Falconers who would like to register an interest in becoming an assessor should contact Lantra (Rachel.powers@lantra.co.uk or telephone 02476 696996) and request an application form, which will be ready shortly. Derek Hartshorne, a new falconer himself, stressed that potential assessors should not be put off by a belief that they lack educational experience. "We can provide this," he said. "What is much more important is that they want to promote and secure a future for falconry."

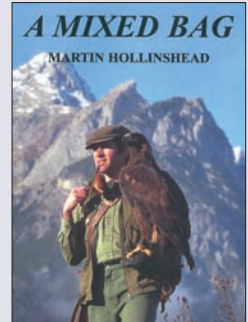
For more information contact: **Nick Kester, HB Communications Officer on 01267 281448.**

## book review

### A Mixed Bag

By Martin Hollinshead

Reviewed by Ben Crane



It's a well known fact that falconry in the UK has undergone huge changes over the last few years. It will undoubtedly be twisted through even more radical ones in the near future.

So, sometimes it is good to look back through a book collection and pick over the various texts, attempting to glean a new nugget of information. One book I return to regularly is *A Mixed Bag* by Martin Hollinshead (Fernhill Press 2004). This book is an amalgamation of articles written over a period of years for various falconry and raptor magazines in the UK and America.

The book is roughly split into two sections, the first comprising technical information concerning the falconer's craft, the second is more or less story led.

The thorough manner of the information within the first section provides a framework on which anyone can build an improved Harris Hawk performance. Take the use of the lure for example. Many people do not equate its use with a Harris, as received knowledge dictates that the *Para-Buteo* will not stray too far. But quite rightly, the author is talking about the fit and well motivated Harris.

We now turn to one area that most *Para-Buteo*ists shy away from; the use of the hood. Personally speaking, I cannot understand how the use of the hood has caused so much trouble. No matter, as the author gives a complete and accorded account of what the benefits really are. But whatever your position, the arguments for its use far outweigh those against, and the author knows this implicitly.

Without doubt the most thrilling essay in this excellent little book is on the 'why's' and 'wherefore' of slope soaring. The author describes the perfect conditions needed and the correct terrain to achieve a soaring kill in style. He also outlines the type of quarry and adventure any would-be soaring falconer can expect to encounter during the hardest won and most rewarding flight the Harris Hawk achieves.

The physics for such extreme flying are often discussed, but the realities of the complex balance needed to really succeed are always some how missing from most other texts. Thankfully, Martin Hollinshead knows this and goes into pleasing detail, setting the record straight and offering up snippets of guidance. A cross reference with that other Harris Hawk bible, *Desert Hawking* by Harry McElroy, will be all that is needed to get going on those blustery hills in deepest darkest winter.

The second section is mostly anecdotal or informal, writing around the subject of the falconry adventures the author has had over the years. Apart from one or two interesting essays about photography and the artist Vadim Gorbатов, this section feels more like a good conversation around a pub fire after a grand day's hawking.

All-in-all this is an excellent book of balance between the 'how's' and the 'whys' of falconry. So, if you want to up the ante of your game while revelling in the stories of a modern day adventurer, you could do worse than buy and read a copy of this book during the quieter months of the moult.



**Nick Kester**

Communications Officer

## SO WHAT IS GOING ON?

**Beginning Falconry - an Award:** The Hawk Board and LANTRA are hoping to launch their beginners award at the Falconry Fair. In two parts covering basic management and then training to the point of flying free, this exciting project can do nothing but good for the future of falconry and bird of prey keeping. A Candidates Workbook is in draft form and a call for assessors will be put out very soon.

LANTRA say they will provide training to become an assessor but it would really help if you already hold some form of vocational assessment qualification. If you are able to contribute to raising our standards then please contact your club's Hawk Board Rep.

**Bird Flu:** Don't panic, because at the moment nobody knows what to do. We have more questions than answers: how will it affect breeding projects, display givers, hawks in moulting chambers and ultimately, if it drags on that long, what our prospects are for next season? There is currently an import ban, but no restrictions on movement inside the EU. However, the disease is in France and may well end up in

the UK carried by migrant birds – although most of our over-wintering species are leaving and the summer visitors have yet to arrive. Jim Chick, HB chairman, is in close touch with DEFRA. One might easily speculate that the government is being wound up by the media. A vaccine is being developed but, according to recent reports, it seems to only protect the vaccinated bird and does not prevent it being a carrier. We will keep you informed.

**Antis:** In the west of England the League against Cruel Sports has recently stepped up a campaign against falconry. The reason why is uncertain but they have featured our sport on BBC local TV news and BBC Radio Cornwall suggesting the falconers steal from the wild, keep their hawks in poor condition and delight in setting one animal upon another (what we call hunting). It might be that they are irritated by hunts using birds of prey to get round the Hunting Act, or it could be one local activist who has set his target wider. Thankfully most falconers are winding down their seasons. Misuse of film is a potential Achilles Heel, so be very careful if asked by someone you do not know if they can film you out hawking. Much gets taken out of context in the editing and a seemingly slight remark can be the focus of disapproval by the antis. If asked by the media to appear or comment on falconry it is best to say you cannot talk at present but take a number and contact name. Find out what the angle is and promise someone will get back to them as soon as possible. Then phone or e-mail me (01267 281448 nk.quattro@zetnet.co.uk) or your HB Rep. so that we can field the issue.

**Activity:** We, the Hawk Board and the Campaign for Falconry, will be at the Falconry Fair and the CLA Game Fair and the Campaign will be at many smaller events carrying our message and helping to raise money. Hawk Board co-ordinator, Mike Clowes, will once again have discounted CLA tickets, so if you are planning a visit to Broadlands over the last July weekend contact your club Rep. First come first served.

**DEFRA:** We have excellent relationships with our government department and we strive to get closer to the MPs who make the laws DEFRA have to put into practise. Our work on the pre-consultation of the

Animal Welfare Bill has meant that falconry is unlikely to be affected in the primary legislation, but the many codes of conduct could impact on us at any time. This is why we are working up a bird of prey keeping award with LANTRA because three areas of falconry will fall within the new act: the keeping of birds of prey; performances with birds of prey; and centres (rehab and educational). The key civil servants are sensitive to our needs but that is not to say we won't have a fight to keep opposing lobby groups at bay.

If you consider that it was going to cost £60 for an Article 10 for a hawk or falcon and we have managed to reduce that to £20 (rising to £25 next year) for an application (which could mean several falcons) you will see that concerted pressure does bring dividends. It now falls on the HB to keep this pressure up and to ensure that the revised registration fees are kept within reasonable bounds. This was also proposed at £60 so we have a fair amount of debating still to undertake. We will also be piling pressure onto JNCC (who decide which species need registering) because we believe the peregrine should come off the list as it is no longer an endangered species in the UK. They are already suggesting the gyrfalcon come off so that will mean no registration for the majority of falcons flown in the UK. Next stop, the hawk species. But our opponents, including the RSPB, have rather greater resources and differing views!

Finally, a huge thank you to each club that does its bit to keep the Hawk Board and the Campaign funded. Recently we had to take a lawyer to a meeting which cost a couple of thousand pounds for just a few hours work. Outrageous, you might think. But actually it forced those on the other side of the table to take notice and not play fast and loose with our views. When we consider new legislation it involves endless meetings with bureaucrats and expenses have to be paid. So keep raising the money, please. Our job is to protect your sport; your job is to enjoy falconry. The two are inextricably linked so your continued support is vital.

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**If you have areas of concern about falconry, remember this is your Hawk Board and you can raise issues with us by contacting me or any other member of the board.  
My E-mail is:  
nk.quattro@zetnet.co.uk.**

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**SWAROVSKI**  
OPTIK

# Paradise in Andalucia

## but not a rabbit to be seen!

In December 2004 my wife and I left West Sussex and moved to Southern Spain. We now live in a spectacular mountain location North East of Malaga. We brought with us our two Harris' Hawks, a ten year old male called Jake and his five month old daughter, Jodie. Jake had reared Jodie alone from when she was seven days old following the tragic death of the female parent. (See Issue 60, page 38). Both hawks had been flown in England during the Autumn of 2004 prior to our departure. The birds coped very well with the 1,645 mile road journey, in special travel boxes, without any problem and we were able to fly them within days of arrival here.

Although we were anticipating warmer January/ February weather in Spain, compared to England, we were shocked to experience the coldest local winter conditions for 85 years. Avocados and almonds were decimated by the frost as were the local potato crops. Although we live some 2,000 feet above sea level, locals told us that the winter weather was exceptionally cold, and snow and ice prevailed for some weeks in our valley. When Spring arrived it turned out to be the driest for 40 years, leaving the reservoirs low in water levels and seriously short of much needed rainfall.

Prior to leaving the UK, I realised that a regular hawk food supply would be vital and fortunately Honeybrook Foods were able to recommend Ibertec, a Madrid based source that offered a 48 hour delivery service. I made contact with them from the UK and sure enough they were able to help.

### Mountain Living

As I am living in the mountains I decided to order 1,000 DOCs from Ibertec, and asked them to deliver them to a local Bar/ Restaurant as no-one would find my home



**Doug with his Harris' in Spain.**

in the hills to deliver door to door. However, and amusingly, Ibertec delivered within 24 hours not 48 hours, and announced to the Bar/Restaurant that they had 1,000 frozen chickens for them. This was greeted with great shock by the co-owner who had not been on duty when I arranged the delivery. He certainly did not want 1,000 chickens. In due course and after a few phone calls we overcame the problem! The word had got around that a falconer was coming!

Hawking in tee shirt and shorts became the normal routine as we enjoyed the Costa del Sol sunshine. As the temperatures increased so the lizards became increasingly active and the hawks often plunged into bamboo thickets and brambles after them. On one outing the male Harris' plunged into a bramble thicket and killed a large rat near the top of the bushes. Before I could make in, he dragged his victim deep into the thicket making it impossible for me to retrieve him. I had no alternative but to sit down, relax and wait! We expected a long wait as the male has taken to sleeping after feeding irrespective of what time in the day it is. This could mean he would be out for the night I speculated. My wife went back to our villa

to fetch me water and some food. I would sit and wait until dark if necessary. By now the hawk was well into his meal and although I could not see him his bells told me he was eating and deep into the thicket on a very steep rocky slope. I decided to sit some 80 yards away on the opposite side of the dry river bed. I settled down at a height on the bank of the river level with where I believed the hawk was eating.

### No Prompting

After two and a half hours and without any prompting or calls from me, the hawk came out of the undergrowth and flew straight towards me alighting on the ground a metre away. I offered him a tit bit and he jumped onto my gauntlet.

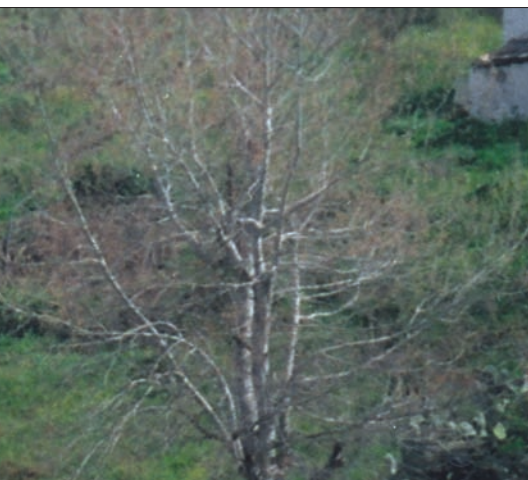
We walked the half mile home, both contented. He had a full crop and I had got my hawk back safely on the glove.

The moult began in April and we loose lofted both birds until August. The intense heat of June and particularly July speeded up the moult of both birds and to my surprise they spent long hours in direct sunlight despite the heat of the sun.

The Harris' are now being flown daily and have become powerful in flight. We are lucky to live in an elevated location with



two river valleys converging below us and this provides excellent easy to follow flying terrain. The valleys are terraced with grape vineyards and olive groves with wide areas of grassland slopes on which the local goat herds graze. The hawks at times fly some 300/400 feet high above the river bed and seem to favour the stony terraced walls of the olive groves, rather than trees, from which they can view everything below. On



breezy days we are often treated to breathtaking soaring as the hawks fly high above us.

Unfortunately, this idyllic situation has one main problem from a hawking point of view and that is a drastic shortage of the rabbit population. Myxomatosis and rabbit haemorrhage disease combined with habitat loss and over hunting and poisoning have brought the rabbit population in Spain to as low as 5% of population estimates 50 years ago. The Iberian Lynx has declined in numbers and is now believed to be just 100 adults in the wild. The Iberian Imperial Eagle, another rabbit specialist predator, has declined to around 100 pairs in the wild.

### No Change in Rabbit Numbers

It is unlikely that we shall see any noticeable change in rabbit numbers in the short term, despite efforts by conservation organisations. Existing measures lack sufficient political and financial support, and are not widespread or co-ordinated.

This is a huge disappointment and

means that we shall have to concentrate our hawking tactics on what quarry is available in our locality such as black squirrels, rats, snakes, jackdaws and wood pigeons. The wild partridge are very scarce and rarely seen and pheasants are non-existent. Despite the two small river beds below us in the valley, I have not seen a duck or moorhen since we arrived!

It has been said to me that because of the importance of the local wine, the ground hugging grape vines have been protected in recent years by poisoning and shooting, contributing to the demise of the rabbit. Calls have been made for the rabbit to be reclassified under the IUCN Red List of threatened species, given that it is currently classified as of Least Concern!

In many countries the rabbit is regarded as a pest, but in Spain it is the keystone of the Mediterranean ecosystem. At least 39 predator species rely partly or exclusively on the rabbit, and rabbits are also important for many invertebrate and plant species. But around here, there isn't a rabbit to be seen.

### IBR Lost, Found, Stolen, Reunited birds of prey from 8th December 2005 to 14th March 2006

#### STOLEN x 4

Ref	Species	Ring #
47926	HARRIS HAWK	3987W
45080	BARN OWL	IBR34715U
45081	BARN OWL	IBR34691U

#### REUNITED x 97

AFRICAN SPOTTED EAGLE OWL		
BARBARY FALCON		
BARN OWL	11	
COMMON BUZZARD	5	
EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	4	
GOSHAWK	3	
GYR HYBRIDS	10	
HARRIS HAWK	37	
KESTREL	4	
LANNER FALCON	3	
PEREGRINE FALCON	2	
PEREGRINE HYBRIDS	4	
RED-TAILED HAWK	7	
SAKER FALCON	4	
STEPPE EAGLE	1	

#### LOST x 54

Ref	Species	Ring #
7450	BARN OWL	??659??
19932	BARN OWL	??1896??
23040	BARN OWL	??1997??
47748	BARN OWL	??215??
40288	BARN OWL	??3481??
48245	BARN OWL	??75BC0??
26225	BARN OWL	??399??
15630	EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	??1468??

48215	EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	??1L0??
4992	EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	??254??
47979	GOSHAWK	??541??
48053	GOSHAWK	??862??
47533	GYR/PEREGRINE HYBRID	??9029??
48068	GYR/PEREGRINE HYBRID	??383??
40547	GYR/PEREGRINE HYBRID	??549??
48442	GYR/PEREGRINE/SAKER	??195??
47899	GYR/SAKER FALCON	??507??
47994	GYR/SAKER FALCON	??177??
48094	GYR/SAKER FALCON	??828??
48302	GYR/SAKER FALCON	??096??
48448	GYR/SAKER FALCON	??748??
48457	GYR/SAKER FALCON	??745??
41182	GYR/SAKER FALCON	??580??
40966	GYR/SAKER FALCON	??869??
28102	HARRIS HAWK	??2464??
47317	HARRIS HAWK	??4730??
15039	HARRIS HAWK	??KBC0??
48268	HARRIS HAWK	??ELLS1??
13236	HARRIS HAWK	??330??
24241	HARRIS HAWK	??409??
26976	KESTREL	??1955??
48606	KESTREL	??741??
12142	LANNER FALCON	??1900??
32803	LANNER FALCON	??2942??
48597	LANNER FALCON	??522??
48471	MERLIN	??058??
48082	PEREGRINE FALCON	??778??
48173	PEREGRINE/ BARBARY HYBRID	??4496??
33035	PEREGRINE/ SAKER HYBRID	??2954??
26591	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID	??153??
32192	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID	??374??
48080	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID	??312??
28520	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID	??512??

48166	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID	??471??
19941	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID	??217??
47835	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID	??633??
48539	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID	??486??
24613	RED-TAILED HAWK	??1945??
33873	RED-TAILED HAWK	??119??
37426	RED-TAILED HAWK	??786??
47929	SAKER FALCON	??UEB05??
47976	SAKER FALCON	??059??
47988	SPARROWHAWK	??453??
48088	TAWNY OWL	??DMB0??

#### FOUND x 15

Ref	Species	Ring #
45847	LANNER FALCON	??OE29??
47980	HARRIS HAWK	??425??
48064	INDIAN EAGLE OWL	??PDC0??
48084	HARRIS HAWK	??BM??
15478	HARRIS HAWK	??403??
48211	HARRIS HAWK	??GT0??
48134	RED-TAILED HAWK	??CL9??
48324	BARN OWL	??IOU9??
1408	BARN OWL	??013BE??
48309	COMMON BUZZARD	??738??
23770	RED-TAILED HAWK	??1943??
48511	BARN OWL	??22BC9??
32488	HARRIS HAWK	??2936??
48517	SAKER FALCON	??10DO??
48618	HARRIS HAWK	??BM??

The IBR would like to thank all those people that helped to reunite and look after found birds.

# Independent Bird Register

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# Falconers Fair 2006

Once again the British Falconry and Raptor Fair is almost upon us and the May Day bank holiday weekend will see

falconers from all over the world converging on Chetwynd Park, Shropshire. This annual event has quite literally become the international gathering that falconers just do not want to miss. It draws visitors from every continent and the number of foreign exhibitors grows each year. There really is no other event like it anywhere in the world. The fair is not just an opportunity to buy equipment or art work related to raptors but a genuine social event where like minded people can meet and exchange views on the sport they hold dear.

Once again the main sponsors of the event are Honeybrook Animal Foods, a company whose reputation for excellent products and superb customer service is

second to none. I am sure that most people connected with the raptor world have had dealings, either directly or indirectly, with Honeybrook and are fully aware of the quality and caring service they offer. This family owned firm, which has been established for more than 10 years, is run for falconers by falconers. The organisers of the Falconry Fair are delighted that the directors of Honeybrook Animal Foods have decided to continue with their long standing connection with the event.

## American Veteran

The opening of this year's Falconry Fair will be in the safe hands of veteran American falconer Kent Carnie. Kent needs no introduction to the majority of falconers, as he has been a participant in the sport for more than 60 years. His enthusiasm for falconry was first fired up at the tender age of 10 when he saw a neighbour with a falcon. Aged 14 he obtained his first hawk and has never looked back. Despite obtaining a university degree in zoology he embarked on a successful career in the US Army, retiring in 1972 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Much of his time in the army was spent with the focus on Middle Eastern affairs and this brought him into contact with many varied forms of falconry.

Kent joined The North American Falconers Association at its inception and served the organisation in various elected positions, including vice president. In recognition of all he has done for falconry in the United States NAFA eventually made him an honorary member.

For six years Kent also served on the board of directors of the Peregrine Fund and founded the Archives of American Falconry, which in 2004 became the Archives of Falconry to more accurately reflect the truly international nature of the unique collection. Kent has been a

regular visitor to the Fair over the years and is always willing to share the enthusiasm he has for the sport of falconry. It would be hard to find a more fitting person to open the event.

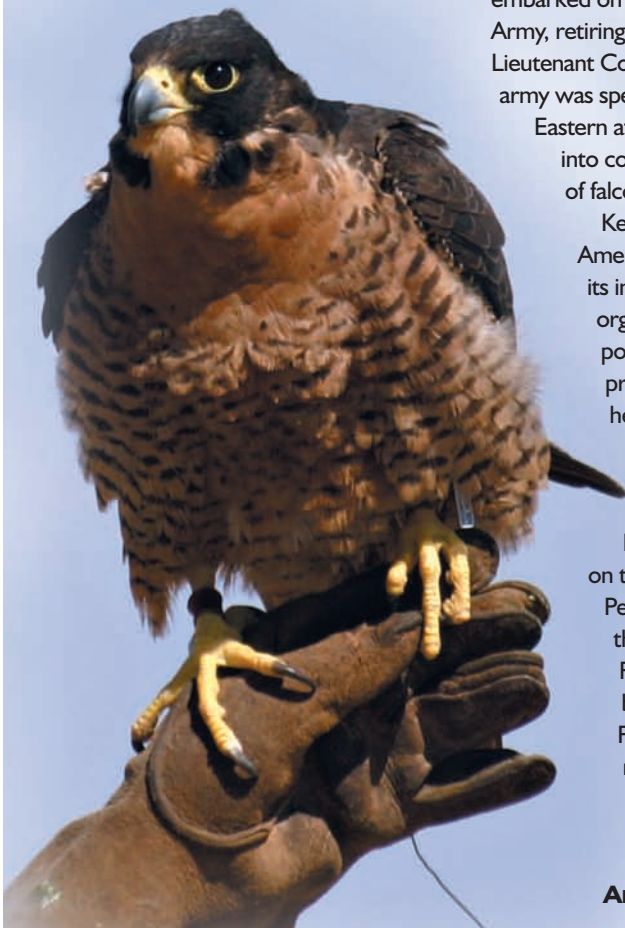
## The Flying Displays

Last year we saw Dr. Nick Fox give a somewhat different display in the arena with members of the Northumberland Crow Hawkers. This year the flying displays return to a more usual format with various participants taking spots throughout the day. Amongst these will be Adrian Hallgarth and his Phoenix Falconry Services and our old friends from the South East Falconry Group. The South East group kindly gave up their arena spot last year to allow other events to take a turn and it has to be said they were sorely missed. There will be several flying displays throughout the day and the variety of hawks and falcons being flown should mean that there is something for everyone.

The weathering ground will be up to its very high standard and again an extremely full and varied range of trained raptors will be on show. Members of the Central Falconry club will be on hand to man the weathering and keep a watchful eye on things. One thing they and all the security people related to the event will be involved in is keeping an eye open for uninvited hawks. We say it every year that if you have not been specifically invited to bring a hawk or falcon then please do not do so. But with the threat of a bird flu outbreak and all that such a disaster could imply this year the rule will be adhered to more strictly than ever. If you turn up with a hawk and you have not been invited by the organisers to do so then you will be turned away. There will be no leeway or discussion on this matter.

## Falconers from Holland

One group of falconers that are bringing hawks and falcons at the invitation of the organisers is the Dutch breeding concern known as Falconiformes. They are taking a large marquee all to themselves and will have on display a selection of the hawks



Anatomefalco peregrinus falcon.

and falcons they breed as well as falconry equipment and artwork. They hope to bring, amongst other things, such delights as a Bonelli's Eagle, a Gyr Falcon, Aplomado Falcon, White Goshawk, Chanting Goshawk and several other unusual raptors. Their display promises to be of the highest quality and well worth a visit.

The event has always attracted a very large contingent of visitors from Europe and the number of exhibitors from the Benelux countries in particular has always been strong. But visitors are coming from further and further afield each year with a small group coming from Peru this year, as well as groups from South Africa, Japan, Canada and the USA.

### Art Marquee and More

A feature of the Fair that always goes down well with the visitors is the fabulous Art Marquee hosted and organised by one of the country's leading wildlife artists, Chris Christoforou. Each year Chris gathers together a combination of new and well established talents to exhibit their work. It

is a mix that always works well and covers most tastes and preferences. I myself always vow not to spend money in the marquee and fail miserably in my resolve every year. But with the likes of Martyn Brook and Carl Bass exhibiting their work it is hard not to come out having spent more than you intended.

Another exhibitor returning after a successful debut last year is the wildlife photographer Steve Magennis. His stunning images of both wildlife and falconry subjects just have to be seen to be believed. I know he has recently spent a week in Scotland with falconers taking new images specifically with the Falconry Fair in mind. His stand will certainly be worth a visit.

As normal all the major falconry clubs, as well as a sprinkling of the regional ones will be well represented and those manning their stands will be willing to offer help and advice to those that seek it.

What would the fair be without the backbone of the event, the equipment vendors? These range from those that have been to every single fair from its inception



Aplomado falcon.

all those years ago, just two vendors believe it or not, to the very latest newcomers to the scene. The range of things to buy will be as mind numbing as ever. There really will be something for everyone at this year's event so make sure you are a part of it.

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*The phone rang and on the other end was Steve Chindgren, falconer extraordinaire and good friend, asking me if I could bring my three year old male golden eagle out to his cabin in Farson, Wyoming. Apparently, the National Geographic Society was coming out to film Steve's falcons hunting sage grouse and they wanted to film a golden eagle hunting white tail jack rabbits. Well, Steve, let me think about that for about one second – yes, I'll be there.*



**Being interviewed. Cameraman Neil Rettig, Soundman Keith Highly and Director John Rubin.**

# Farson or Bust

**I**f I had realised just what would be involved in such a trip, I might not have said yes quite so quickly. You see, from my home Farson, Wyoming, is fifteen plus driving hours away – no easy Sunday drive. Other than short day trips I had never travelled overnight with my eagle. I have travelled long distances many times with my falcons but an eagle poses different concerns, safety being the primary objective. My truck is set up in such a way that I can carry two dogs, up to four falcons and one eagle all safely in the back. Having a golden eagle in the back of the truck, however, does rule out any additional storage space. This was solved

with the addition of a roof storage system that allowed me to store things like dog food, block perches, bath pans, and a bunch of other necessary stuff.

With things pretty well set for the actual trip there was one slight little problem that still remained – my eagle had never hunted in sage brush or ever flown at white tail jack rabbits before. Clearly, I was not going to drive all the way to Wyoming and fly my eagle in front of the film crew from National Geographic, at game he had never seen, in an environment he had never hunted in before, without making some preparations. That might be asking just a little too much.

### Have Golden Eagle Will Travel

Jack Hammer is the name of my golden eagle, JH to his friends. To say that JH lives up to his name, Jack Hammer, would be a great understatement. He is very good at flying off the fist and catching black tail jack rabbits in wide open fields. He is extremely fast and large, flying at 8lbs 4oz, almost a full pound heavier than any other male eagle I've flown. In Farson we would be hunting in sage brush about knee high and that would require some adjustment. To further add to the difficulty, the white tail jack rabbits are under constant attack from wild golden eagles so they are very skilled at survival. I felt that I needed to hunt JH at least once ahead of time in sage brush, and the nearest sage was two hours away in Minden, Nevada.

My wife, Cordi and I loaded up JH and as much camera gear as we could find and set off. The camera gear was another attempt to condition JH to what he would see in Wyoming. In Minden, with the help of a fellow falconer, we went to a field with sage brush and black tail jack rabbits – not white tails but close enough. The difference between white tail jacks and black tail jacks wouldn't be an issue for JH, as he is very gamey and will launch off the fist at anything flushed in front of him.

We entered the waist high sage brush wondering how JH would adjust to this new challenge. We had gone no more than 20 steps when a jack flushed from out in front of us. JH launched off the fist and, just as quickly, the jack disappeared! JH flew around in a circle and landed, looking a little bewildered and, I'm sure, wondering where the jack went. We continued hunting and flushed another jack. JH was off and closing on this one as well, but the flight took him up and over a small hill, out of my line of sight. I could tell from the seriousness of his flight that he was on the rabbit, but had no idea where he went. I started walking in the direction I last saw JH and, cresting the hill, saw no sign of him. I kept walking in the same direction and came upon a sage bush with tufts of jack rabbit fur on it. There, on the back side, was JH, plucking fur from a high desert black tail jack rabbit – not a white tail, but close enough.

The next week, after over 15 hours



### Joe with his wife, Cordi.

of driving, we arrived in Farson, Wyoming, like a small circus coming to town, with four dogs, two gyr-peregrines and JH. After all the introductions were made we called it a night and would begin filming at daylight the next day. And then the pressure would be on. The plan was to film the grouse hawking first thing as that was safest for Steve's falcons; golden eagles are less active in the early morning hours and therefore less likely to go in on a falcon that is sitting on a sage grouse. That would give me time to weather JH and do some duck hawking with my two falcons before the film crew would be ready to film JH. Farson, Wyoming is known for wind; in fact, along one of the major highways is a huge electric sign that gives up-to-the-minute wind speeds. In my mind, that is not a good sign! Every day started out the same – dead calm in the morning and by noon the wind was blowing 15-

30 miles per hour (mph). Wind for JH is 5-10 mph and he has flown quite often under those conditions, but 30 mph? I figure if a golden eagle cannot stay on my fist because the wind is that strong, I might want to rethink things. But hey, I drove 15 hours to get there and was going to fly, regardless of the wind. And it's not that JH can't fly in wind or that I was worried he'd take off, it's just that the quality of off-the-fist flights would be compromised.

Everyone gathered around at the end of our truck to discuss a game plan for the day's shoot. The plan would be to have the camera crew go out into the field ahead of me, I would hunt up to and beyond the crew, and then they would reposition themselves and start the process over again. I was asked to remove all logos I had on my person, like the Marshall Radio Telemetry hat I had on (dang, I was hoping to squeeze them for some free stuff in exchange for the publicity). Apparently, copyright is a big

thing in the movie industry! I was then wired for sound, which meant that every single word I mumbled would be heard by the sound man and crew – so, when JH grabbed me in the leg, that meant I'd have to watch my language, I guess.

### Setting the Scene

Let me try and describe the scene for you. First off, Farson is a very small town, two bars or pubs or watering holes, depending on where you're from, and a gas station/grocery/ feed store, all in one, providing all the comforts one needs. On all sides of Farson is sage brush, as far as you can see in any direction, and you can see 100 miles on most days. It is an

my right were three fellow falconers who were helping flush white tails. As I walked out into the sage someone flushed a white tail jack, JH launched off my fist and immediately fighting the wind, pulled off the jack and returned to the fist. We were walking up a slight grade and up to this point had flushed just three white tails; however, JH seemed to be getting closer with each flight. Up to this point all the jacks we saw were still brown with white flanks and, of course, the white tail, but eventually they would turn pure white with black tips on their ears. I was walking away from the camera crew in a zigzag pattern when something big and

went in on the running jack and, thinking he was going to grab his first white tail, we were all surprised to see the jack leap into the air and JH go skidding underneath. We hunted for another hour or so and did not flush another white tail. The white tail jack rabbit, although very plentiful, can be hard to find. In some areas they are under every sage bush, and in other areas there might be only one jack per mile. With the wind picking up and the temperature dropping, we called it a day. Tomorrow we would look for a different area and hopefully have better luck.

Our second day in Farson greeted us with strong winds and near freezing temperatures. We went out and attempted to hunt and film but the conditions were such that we gave up after a short time.

### The Third Day

From the moment the sun came up, day three promised to be a better day – less



### Filming Joe with Jackhammer.

ocean of sage brush, overwhelming in some respects but, none the less, powerfully beautiful. All the wildlife depends on the sage brush, providing food and protection from predators and from the weather which can be very harsh.

As we entered the field the wind was blowing 25mph and JH was having a little trouble staying on my fist. In front of me was the crew which consisted of director, John Rubin, shooter (cameraman), Neil Rettig, equipment man, Bob Anderson, and sound man, Keith Highley, and Cordi with our camera, filming the entire process. Off to

white caught my eye..."What the heck was that?" I said, running in that direction, not realising that, yes, some of the jacks had already turned all white and not remembering that, yes, I was being filmed with sound – oops! We continued up and over the top of the grade where I stopped for a moment to watch my flushers when one flusher gave an "I see something" sign! JH saw the same thing and was off, flying hard and building speed, going downwind and down a slight hill. As I watched JH closing in on something, which we all presumed was a jack rabbit, I could tell he was getting close because he was looking more like a falcon than an eagle by his flight style. JH suddenly made a quick adjustment and

wind and warmer temperatures. Last evening, over a fine dinner of sage grouse and a few glasses of wine (OK, a lot of wine, but it was good wine!) we had come up with a plan to find a better spot that would hopefully produce more slips on white tails. I must say, the plan sounded much better while discussed over a glass of wine than it did the next morning getting ready to go. The plan was this; Gary, a fellow falconer, felt he was somehow connected mentally to the white tail jack rabbits and felt he could lead us to where they were. See what I mean, the plan sounds better with wine! However, having no better plan and, knowing that Gary did have extensive knowledge of this area, we loaded up and started to drive out into the sage.

After driving about 3 miles Gary said, and I quote, "This place looks good". "Why this place?" I asked. It looked the



same as all the rest of the miles and miles of sage brush. "Because", he said, and I quote once again, "I can see a white tail jack rabbit standing right over there!" As we all piled out of the trucks, white tails were flushing everywhere and it was all I could do to wait until the film crew was in position so I could start hunting. As the crew walked out into the field, jacks were still flushing everywhere. Finally, I was given the signal and I started hunting, working in a crosswind direction. Even though the wind was less than the day before, with less being just a matter of degrees, at least today JH could stay upright on my fist.

### Quarry Flushed

I don't think I had walked more than twenty steps into the field when a jack exploded out from a sage bush on my right. JH launched, quickly made some adjustments to the wind and closed on the brown and white rabbit. Coming in hard and fast, JH followed the jack as it



Typical flying terrain.

made a slight turn to the left. At that point JH slammed into a sage bush but came up with only dust for his effort. Not only was JH adjusting to the wind, he was adjusting to the white tails. Instead of looking for close slips, his attention turned to slips much farther out, in fact 600 to 700 yards out. Apparently, JH could see jacks flushing way out in front of my helpers and by taking such a long slip he could eliminate the wind factor, making for some very impressive flying. Oddly enough, his first kill turned out to be a close slip. I had been standing on the uphill side of the area we had been hunting, keeping slightly upwind of Gary and Steve, my two flushers, while they worked downwind of me and JH.

I needed to change my position and walked right in front of the camera, not more than 20 feet, when a jack flushed

and JH launched, going into the wind, flying up and over my shoulder to head downwind, and was instantly over the running jack, slamming it into the ground! We all cheered, knowing how difficult the hunting conditions had been and in recognition of how hard JH had worked. Naturally, wanting to get a close-up shot of JH on the kill, the cameraman moved in and this did not go over well with JH. While having only one foot wrapped around the still very much alive white tail jack rabbit's head, JH just started to walk away, dragging the large, unwilling jack along with him. Someone in the crew remarked, "Well, you don't see that everyday – an eagle walking off with a white tail that is still trying to escape, like it's nothing". Indeed you don't! I moved in and tried to help JH but he was not really interested in my help and things got a little awkward. In time JH settled down, stepped off the jack and we continued to hunt for a short time, but soon called it a day. Tomorrow's game plan would be a simple one, go back to the same spot and hunt.

Even though JH did catch a white tail jack off the fist, it still wasn't the speed-on-speed flight that JH is known for. Back at home JH can fly down the speediest of black tails with little effort and that is what I was hoping to see. The next day, with the film crew in position on the very slight uphill side of this quite large expanse of sage covered ground, we began to hunt. The conditions were not great. The wind was blowing 15-20mph and the temperature was dropping once again to near freezing – but JH was dialed in and I could sense his readiness to hunt. JH had made three clear adjustments hunting in these extreme conditions. First, he more than tripled his slip length; many were 700 yards out or more. Second, he started using the wind to his advantage instead of trying to work against it. With each day, JH got stronger and stronger, so, by the third day, the wind was no longer a factor.

### Showing Patience

The third adjustment was tracking the white tails as they ran in and out of the

sage, showing some patience, waiting for the right time to get a foot on one. As I worked my way towards the camera a jack flushed and JH launched, closed fast and slammed into a sage bush, just missing the jack. I tried to keep the wind at my side, hoping for a downwind or, at the least, a crosswind flush, but that was not to be. As I was walking in a zigzag pattern a jack flushed off to my right side and went straight into the wind. Moving out fast, JH was off in a heartbeat and was deadly serious, flying with deep powerful wing strokes, eating up the distance between himself and the jack rabbit. The jack tried to slip behind a sage bush but JH was too fast and overtook the white tail rather easily. That was a great flight and the one that I came to see – speed-on-speed doesn't get any better than that! JH stepped off the jack and we continued to hunt.

Another jack flushed and JH was, again, off in a heartbeat. This time sage grouse began flushing from everywhere and he had to dodge a few as he flew. JH went in on a jack running at high speed but missed cleanly. Carrying a tremendous amount of speed from the long downwind slip JH pitched up in the air, came over the jack rabbit as it ran and, with a quick wing-over and stoop, caught his third white tail jack rabbit of the trip.

### Well Worth the Effort

I could not have been more pleased with the way JH flew given all the unknowns that had to be dealt with, the least of which was the film crew following him around every step of the way.

I wonder what the local folks in Farson thought if they by chance spotted us out in the sage. Here was some guy with an eagle on his arm and a film crew, complete with tripods, microphones on booms, people with headphones and a director with a make-up bag, yes, a make-up bag, following him around. I said to Cordi as we headed back home that I was disappointed that I had not taken more photos because people back home would find this all a little hard to believe. To which she answered, "You were being filmed by National Geographic the entire time, what more proof do you need!" It was quite an experience and one that was well worth the effort!

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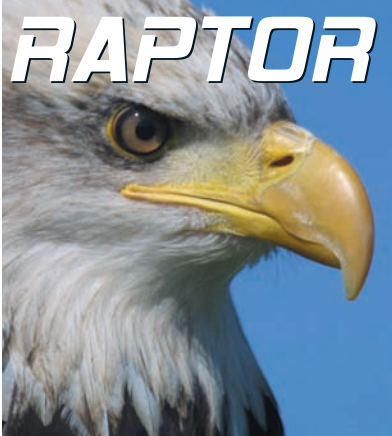
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The bird is ready.

Taking a swab.



# Sexing by DNA

## making the right sample choice

**M**outh swabbing is a new sampling approach now available that presents further choice to bird owners and breeders looking to have their bird sexed by DNA.

It is common practice to use the services of a commercial laboratory to determine the sex of a bird. The laboratories use a technique called PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) in order to amplify a specific area of DNA. This area is selected for amplification specifically where the sex chromosomes differ between male and female birds.

There are three established methods for taking the sample to submit to the lab for DNA sexing analysis. These are blood, feather and egg membranes. Mouth swabbing is a new technique that is now also available, complementing the existing approaches and in some instances offering significant advantages to the bird owner and the bird itself.

Taking blood samples is normally recommended to be conducted by a veterinary surgeon, or by clipping the birds toe nail. It is self evident that this process

may cause some discomfort and stress to the bird and bird owner. For this reason it is often considered as the least desirable means of obtaining a sample for sexing.

Feathers can present a better solution than blood. Plucking at least three newly emerging larger feathers normally provides the necessary follicle cells and feather pulp for the DNA sexing procedure. Whilst this approach is often considered preferable to taking blood, again it has its drawbacks in that clipped, molted or mature feathers that easily fall out are not normally suitable. In addition, birds must be a few weeks old before a suitable feather can be plucked, presenting a problem when there is a requirement to sex hatchlings and chicks.

In more recent times egg membranes have become an established technique, particularly common with commercial breeders. The DNA is acquired from the egg membrane, which can be submitted to the lab as part of the shell (if it remains attached), or by carefully scraping it from the inside of the egg. This approach is often considered the method of choice, as no stress or trauma is caused to the hatchling in the sampling process. However, there are

drawbacks to this approach, in that it is only suitable for newly hatched birds, and the egg membrane may well be eaten if the owner is not particularly vigilant.

The new mouth swabbing approach is now available. The sampling procedure involves ensuring the bird has no food in its mouth, by waiting several hours from the last feed and rinsing out with water. This mitigates the presence of any 3<sup>rd</sup> party contaminating DNA to levels that will not affect the test result. Then a special sterile soft pad (similar to a cotton bud) provided by the laboratory is used to rub the inside of the bird's cheek for a few seconds. Cells from the cheek lining containing the bird's full complement of chromosomes will then be attached to the pad, which the laboratory then extracts for DNA testing in the normal manner.

Sampling by mouth swabs is considered less traumatic for the bird than plucking feathers and collecting blood. The technique is appropriate for all ages of birds, and is particularly useful for sexing chicks where egg membrane is no longer available, and feathers will not be suitable for several weeks.

Further information available from Biobest Laboratories Limited.

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Aplomado falcon.



**A**fter our trip to see the Ballestas Islands it was at last time to get down to several days of serious falconry. Not that I hadn't enjoyed all that had gone before, I wanted to see some decent hawking – I was getting withdrawal symptoms! We would be moving just a few miles further down the coast to the Guanera region.

Here we would be the guests of José Luis Gagliardi Rios for the next couple of days. José Luis runs a commercial hunting ground for people that like to hunt game with shotguns. His clients come to him to shoot pheasant and partridge over English Setters and Pointers. Large areas of scrub and cover have been planted and each year significant numbers of game birds are released onto the property. They are then fed and encouraged to stay in exactly the same way as on a shoot here in Britain. What made the whole thing particularly remarkable was that this planting took place in a desert environment. As soon as the artificially planted cover ended there was nothing but sand surrounding it. The whole landscape was very reminiscent of Dubai.

#### **Dogs and Hawks**

One of the first sights that greeted us on our arrival was the large kennel of Setters and Pointers. The blood lines are from the very best European and American stock

# Hawking in Peru Part 2

and to be surrounded by such dogs made me feel instantly at home. Having spent some considerable time looking at and discussing the dogs, it was time to look at the hawks that would be providing the sport over the next couple of days. José Luis said he had two shaded weathering lawns and on the first were his everyday hawks and on the second the 'Ferrari' team.

The everyday hawks consisted of an Aplomado Falcon, a female Bi-Coloured Hawk and a male Harpy Eagle. Like them or not Harpies are certainly magnificent creatures and there's a hint of menace about them that no other eagle seems to have. This one was a twelve year old imprint that had been lent to José Luis by José Antonio. It was flying free and had been taken out a couple of times looking for foxes. But no foxes had been seen although a stray cat, presumably from a neighbouring farm, had made the mistake of picking that particular moment to hunt one of the partridge on the shoot of José Luis. Needless to say it will not be hunting anything else ever again. But that was the sum total of the hunting carried out by the Harpy so far. Weighing almost

five kilos it's not a hawk I would care to carry round for too long.

The Aplomado and Bi-Coloured were both very experienced in the field and were catching quarry on a daily basis. The Aplomado, apparently, was a particularly brave falcon. It seemed to prefer to hunt larger game and despite only weighing 350 grams in flying condition its favourite prey was cock pheasants. I have to admit I found this hard to believe but was willing to be convinced otherwise. The Bi-Coloured was adept at catching quail but José Luis was hoping to take partridge with her. She had grabbed a couple in the previous week but had failed to hold onto them.

### Ferrari team

We moved out to the second lawn to look at the Ferrari team. This consisted of three Peregrine Falcons. Two passage Cassinni Falcons of the season and a once intermewed passage Tundra Falcon. One of the Cassinni's had only been trapped 15 days previously and was still being trained to get fit. She had already been flying loose for five days and was extremely steady on the block. According

to our host Cassinni Peregrines are much more laid back than Tundra Falcons and therefore make progress very rapidly. I know full well from my own experience in Mexico that Tundras tend to be nervous and quite slow to respond to training.

Due to the pressure of time the Harpy was just flown to the fist each day so as we could get a chance to see it on the wing. And an awesome sight it is. What was most surprising was the turn of speed this eagle can produce. It flew far more like a large accipiter than an eagle. The next couple of days would be spent hunting with the Bi-Coloured, the Aplomado, the Tundra and the more experienced Cassinni. The other Cassinni would be given a training flight before the start of the day's more serious proceedings.

### Peruvian Laws

Laws are different in Peru than in the UK, the Peregrine was trained to go up by means of pigeons. On the first day we went out to train the freshly taken Cassinni and an incident occurred that could have led to disaster. The young



Bob Dalton and new friend.



### Freshly trapped peregrine.

assistant falconer let go of the falcon when she bated with hood still on and swivel still attached to the jesses. The only redeeming feature was that the braces had been struck on the hood. The falcon flew off a couple of hundred metres before settling down on the sand. It then promptly hooked its hood off and took to the wing again. But very fortunately it responded to the whistle and came into the lure. After a tentative couple of minutes the falcon was safely back on the fist and hooded up again. She was given quarter of an hour to compose herself and then flown as originally intended. She mounted well and took her pigeon very efficiently.

Next up to fly was the Aplomado Falcon. This particular female flies at 350 grams and is generally hunted from the fist. A pointer was cast off and started to quarter a game covered crop in front of us. Very soon we had a solid point and the falconer approached with Aplomado on the fist. A cock pheasant was flushed and the tiny little falcon gave chase. Not only did it give chase but it successfully flew down its mighty opponent and somehow managed to hold onto it until the falconer arrived to give some help. The Aplomado was taken up off of the

pheasant and given a suitable reward whilst the pheasant was released.

After a short break the pointer was sent on again and soon we had another solid point. This time a quail was flushed and the Aplomado forced it down into some tussocks of long grass. No matter how hard we tried we could not dislodge the quail from its hiding place and eventually had to move on. The next point was on a partridge which, when flushed, the little falcon flew down and bound to. Having spent many happy days flying Aplomados in Brazil and Mexico I can appreciate what gutsy little falcons they are. But I have never come across one with the aggressive attitude of this one. It is a fantastic hunter.

### Flying a Tundra Falcon

Next up to fly was the intermewed Tundra Falcon. She mounted up nicely over the point and it was obvious she knew exactly what she was doing. When she had attained her pitch and was in a good position a cock pheasant was flushed. The falcon stooped hard but the cock managed to reach the safety of some cover and drop in to it before the falcon could make a telling strike. Immediately the falcon made her way

back up to her pitch and as she did so the pointer was cast off again to find her another quarry. Almost instantly we had another point and this time it was a partridge that was flushed. This time the stoop of the falcon was deadly accurate and she bound to the partridge right in front of me.

The passage Cassinni was next and we changed pointers in order to give the first one a rest. Within a few minutes we had another point and the falcon was allowed to take to the wing in her own time. She mounted well and stayed close to the falconer. A hen pheasant was flushed and the falcon struck it a tremendous blow at the end of her stoop. The pheasant fell to the ground and as it hit the earth the falcon was on it in an instant. For a young relatively inexperienced hawk she had showed an excellent understanding of what it meant when the dog is on point.

Last but not least for the day was the Bi-Coloured hawk. We moved to another piece of ground where quail and partridge abound. The pointer was soon holding point and the falconer walked in. Two quail sprang up and took flight and the hawk was after them instantly. But the quail baled out into some long grass and again we could not pin point them or shift them. The pointer was run again and got us another point. The falconer walked in again and another pair of quail broke. This time the hawk got on terms with one of them before it could make the safety of cover and took it in the air. The Bi-Colour is just like a sparrow in everything it does, only the colouration differs.

And so a very successful day drew to a close and it was time to go and find an hotel for the night. The choice was extremely limited and again I shared the night with an assortment of large insects and some rather attractive blue Geckos that preyed on them.

The following day followed the pattern set the day before and we started with the Harpy being flown to the fist and then a dragged lure. The only way to describe a Harpy in flight is awesome. Its power and speed have to be seen to be believed. When the Harpy was on the lure it showed its aggressive nature and actually threatened anyone other than the falconer who came within twenty



Peruvian falconer.

feet of it. Once the eagle was safely back on the fist the falconer expressed the opinion that in fact the eagle could be so aggressive as to be giving him cause for concern. It had bated at his young son a couple of times and was constantly bating at the pointers and setters. It was somewhat reluctantly decided that this eagle should go back to the facility of José Antonio and be put in an aviary.

First up to fly with serious intent, after we had all enjoyed a pleasant lunch, was the Aplomado Falcon. Instead of being flown from the fist she was allowed to cruise round whilst one of the pointers worked some likely looking cover. We soon had a point and a cock pheasant was flushed. The Aplomado gave chase and eventually flew the pheasant down and a tremendous tussle on the floor ensued. The tiny little falcon doing its best to subdue its huge opponent. But before any of us could get to the aid of the falcon the pheasant broke free and made good its escape.

The dog soon provided us with another point and this time a partridge was flushed on command. The Aplomado was slightly out of position at the moment of flush but never the less flew down the partridge and bound to it in the

air. A short struggle occurred when the pair of them came to the ground but the partridge had been despatched by the time we arrived. I have never known such an aggressive little falcon.

Next to fly was the Tundra that immediately on leaving the fist mounted up nicely over a point. When she was in position the dog was sent in to flush and a cock pheasant exploded into the air. The Tundra stooped and hit the pheasant with such force that it crumpled to the ground dead. The falcon whipped round and landed on her prize and was happily pluming it as we arrived. Like all falcons that understand the principals of waiting on and have a little experience under their belt she had made the whole thing look incredibly easy. In fact it was almost possible to mistakenly believe that the pheasant had no chance at all.

### **The Cassinni's Turn**

The passage Cassinni Peregrine was next and she too mounted nicely over the pointer but tended to drift just a little as she was reaching her pitch. The partridge that the dog was pointing to decided to make a break for it as the falcon was out of position and took off at top speed. The falcon instantly

responded and started to put in a long shallow stoop. But it was too late and too far away, the partridge made good its escape.

The pointer was encouraged to run on and as it did so the falcon remounted. When the dog froze again the falcon was at her pitch and nicely placed. This time things went like clockwork when a hen pheasant was flushed. The falcon turned over and stooped almost vertically and the pheasant was cut down dead in mid air.

With all the falcons flown it was time to get some hunting done with the Bi-Coloured Hawk. The light was starting to fade and we ran two pointers in an effort to get a flight as quickly as possible. We had two short dashes at quail which both ended in failure and then a flight at a partridge. The partridge flew out from the cover into the desert area with the hawk in hot pursuit. Eventually both hawk and quarry landed on the sand a few feet apart. After a couple of minutes the partridge took off again and the hawk gave chase. The partridge was heading back for the vegetation but the hawk bound to it before it could reach cover. A real struggle then followed as a partridge is a good sized quarry for a Bi-Colour.

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But the hawk held on till the falconer got there and so the day ended with all the falcons and the hawk being completely successful again.

### Trapping Peregrines

Having enjoyed two very good days hawking with José Luis it was time to move on and meet up with Oscar Beingolea and trap some Peregrine Falcons. The Peregrines are trapped so as they can be banded and Oscar is licensed to carry out such work. What followed was two days of sheer bliss. That is if you are a person that likes Peregrines. We saw Anatum, Tundra and Cassinni Peregrines. The latter are residents, the other two sub species are migrants. Most of the trapping took place along the coast which runs parallel to The Pan American Highway. The majority of the Peregrines we caught were in fact Tundra Peregrines and they were caught on open beach areas. Whilst working the shoreline looking for passage Peregrines we were, on several occasions, fortunate enough to see family groups of Dolphins fishing close to the shore. We also saw Pelicans in large numbers as well as small groups of Sea Lions.

The whole process of trapping is a relatively simple and straight forward one and usually means that if we spotted a Peregrine and it didn't have a crop then within five to 10 minutes it would be in our hands. As the whole process of trapping is illegal in the UK, I will not go into detail of how we caught the falcons. But once caught the handling process is done as quickly as possible so as to keep the stress to the falcon to an absolute minimum. Certainly within five minutes they are on their way again unharmed.

I have been lucky enough over the years to have been on many trapping forays and it is something I really do enjoy. To see a wild falcon wheeling overhead and then to have that same falcon in your hands a few minutes later is fantastic. It is a thrill that I will never tire of. Those falconers that live in countries where it is still possible to legally fly passage hawks and falcons have no idea of just how fortunate they are. It is often said that there is no difference between a captive bred falcon and a wild one. In the case of a captive eyass and a wild taken



### Tundra falcon.

eyass then I would totally agree. But a passage hawk is another matter. I can only assume that those that make such statements have never been privileged or had the good fortune to fly passage falcons. No doubt a captive bred falcon will eventually become as good as a passer. But it will take several seasons to attain the standard that the passage falcon displays in her first. After all she has been taught by nature and if the lessons were not well learnt then the falcon would have long since expired.

### Return to Lima

All too soon the trapping session was over and it was time to head back to Lima. We would be based here for another week and various hawking trips had been arranged. The hotel that was being used as a base was in a district of Lima that houses most of the foreign embassies. The Russian Embassy was literally just around the corner and in a group of trees in their grounds, next to the road, was a Harris' Hawk nest. We would often sit on the balcony of the hotel and watch the Harris' Hawks hunting the local pigeons and doves.

Some excellent hawking was enjoyed throughout the remainder of our stay and the highlight of this was joining a falconer called Marco who flew two

passage Cassinni Tiercel Peregrines. He flew them as two individuals as opposed to together in a cast. These tiercels were great fun and were flown at morning doves which are incredibly fast. We flew in a hilly area of scrub and desert and the only concern was that this area held a large number of Grey Buzzard Eagles. A tiercel on a kill would be a very great temptation to one of these eagles. Accordingly we always ensured that someone got either of the tiercels, if they made a kill, as quickly as possible. We did see these eagles on several occasions and always treated them with the respect they deserve. If a tiercel was on the wing and one drifted over the tiercel was immediately brought in to the lure.

All too soon the trip was at an end and it was time to head back home. The hawking had been thoroughly enjoyable and the wildlife was, at times, spectacular. I was very glad to have visited Peru but it would not rate as one of the places I would be desperate to go back to. I prefer to hawk in Mexico and was consoled on the flight back to the UK that seven weeks later I would be heading for Aguascalientes. Here fellow falconer Dale Fairbrass and I would be joining some of my Mexican friends to fly passage Peregrine Falcons at ducks.



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# UAE Symposium Report

## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR FALCONRY & CONSERVATION OF BIRDS OF PREY

**T**his symposium was held with the gracious support of the government of the United Arab Emirates and was organised with the assistance of Profalcon Breeding Project and the Emirates Falconers' Club who invited prominent falconers, academics, conservationists and other specialists from around the world to make presentations on behalf of falconry. The speakers had been selected for specific reasons. In some cases they were delegates from IAF member countries and in others they were scientists or academics selected because of their known expertise in a particular field. A lengthy list had been proposed by IAF, CIC and FHT and by Profalcon. The final selection and decisions rested with our hosts and the speakers all worked very hard to adapt their knowledge for use in presentations that were relevant to the aims of this project - UNESCO recognition of an intangible aspect of falconry as world heritage.

In his introductory speech, HE Mohamed Al Bowardi, said that recognising falconry as a world heritage was an issue that has been considered to be of utmost importance. "Today we are all gathered here to accept some responsibility and commit to doing something," he said. "Having an obligation to dedicate our efforts to the conservation and preservation of falconry, several symposiums on falconry have already been conducted in Abu Dhabi. Every symposium has resulted in more knowledge, a deeper awareness, strong initiatives and an outstanding contribution of expertise from those passionate about falconry."

Dr. Gadi M Gomezulu, Director of the Division of Cultural Heritage of UNESCO led a UNESCO delegation. He lectured on the 'Prospects of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage' on the first day of the three-day symposium and gave his expert opinion on many issues over the course of the event, explaining convention ratification and submission procedures and clarifying many difficult points, including the fact that submissions must be made by individual countries. He said: "We are waiting for member states to complete the ratification of 2003 Convention under the criteria set in the UNESCO programme for the proclamations. The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has been adopted in view of globalisation and social transformation, which pose grave threats of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of the intangible cultural heritage".

Dr. Benno Böer of UNESCO's Doha, Qatar office also gave a presentation and said: "It is not only the convention on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage that can assist the art of falconry, but also the establishment of world heritage sites, which could then have sustainable hunting with falcons as an element within them."

From all this it was concluded that a submission (as yet in unknown form) should be prepared for mid-2006. The IAF officers present confirmed IAF's enthusiasm for the project and explained how IAF can encourage countries: it can offer

information, advice, and encouragement, but cannot force a country if the falconers there do not want to do the work needed towards making a submission.

The definition of "intangible heritage" could vary from country to country and may not be the only way UNESCO can help falconers. IAF can help in identifying these things and be active in representations to UNESCO and continue correspondence between falconry nations (both IAF and non-IAF) to keep up the impetus. We can make contacts in non-IAF countries that will or may benefit from the project and we can look into other ways the tangible and the semi-tangible could be used to present falconry's heritage as part of a Planned Programme.

The collection of information from countries proposing a future submission will be instrumental. The Archives of Falconry and the two web-based virtual archives, the Falconry Heritage Trust and the Archives of Iberian Falconry in Valladolid, can use their "semi-tangible" and "tangible" evidences to present the "intangible" to the convention and to the world as part of a Planned Programme. It is clear that we will have to document living heritage and culture and

not just history. Therefore, although historians have a major part to play, this is by no means the whole story. Those people assisting in the

### *IAF - preservation of the cultures and traditions of falconry wherever they exist*

collection of information (the working group co-ordinators) at this stage will primarily be building up material for storage in preparation for each submission. The doors also remain open to anyone else who wishes to contribute.

In a newspaper interview shortly after the symposium Dr. M Gomezulu said the project was being seriously considered, it would be one of the important entries and could well be adopted under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. "Quite likely this will begin with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among all concerned parties to be produced and hopefully signed very soon." He said several meetings had been held to proceed with the UNESCO project among the concerned parties: UAE as submitting country, International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF), International Council



for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), the Falconry Archives and the Falconry Heritage Trust.

### IAF/CIC Working Group for UNESCO Submissions

After hearing the presentations made over the three days of the Symposium, those members of the IAF/CIC Working Group who were present, other contributors and the UNESCO officials asked and answered questions and clarified some important points. It ended with a workshop entitled: "The Way Forward" in which the Working Group Committee and the WG members worked with UNESCO in finding the best way forward towards recognizing Falconry as part of the World's Cultural Heritage. A report of the Abu Dhabi symposium (on which the above version is based) was presented to the Council of Delegates at the IAF Annual General Meeting and received the approval of the meeting to proceed as planned. Until now all mention of IAF's involvement in the project has been kept vague. There have been no specifics, except that we offered our help and would organise a Working Group to gather information towards a conference in Abu Dhabi. We did all this and are now at the stage where we can be more specific.

### Success of the Abu Dhabi Event

One of the great successes of the Abu Dhabi event was that we now have a better idea of the wealth of knowledge and information we have available to us in physical collections, museums, galleries, archives and manpower and we have a good idea as to how we will use all this, the tangible or semi-tangible aspects of falconry's traditions to help us present and preserve the intangible. We know falconers have been successful in conservation projects and through this have been very much involved in turning around a negative attitude in many non-falconers. The main aspect of falconry that is not assured for future generations is the intangible cultural aspect - that which is passed down through families, mentors and personal contact with other falconers, that which cannot be learned from a book.

### *Abu Dhabi Symposium: "Falconry: a World Heritage" 13-15 Sept'05*

### The IAF Annual General Meeting

IAF held its 2005 AGM at the Annual Field meet of the Czech Falconers Club in the beautiful and hospitable village of Opopno in Bohemia. The Advisory Committee meeting was held in Prague the day before and lasted the full day. At the Council of Delegates Meeting 62 delegates represented 25 countries from 4 continents and the meeting went on from 9am to 7:30pm. The hospitality of our Czech hosts was exemplary and extended well beyond the two days of meetings. Delegates were royally treated to the best of hawking for another three days.

### New IAF Members

One new Member Nation joined IAF at the AGM - Serbia and Montenegro, who will be represented by Ars nobilis Udruzenje Sokolara Srbije i Crne Gore, the Falconers' Association of Serbia and Montenegro. Other new member organisations that were accepted were the World Falconers' Club of Japan and Nihon Takajou Kyokai, the Japan Falconers Association. Delegates also formally welcomed as a supporting member the United Kingdom Hawk Board, who had signed a memorandum of understanding with IAF in May of this year.

There was considerable discussion on protocols for new clubs seeking membership of IAF. In some cases breakaway clubs applying for membership in opposition to their existing national club in order to gain recognition. In other cases the breakaway club forms because its members are not satisfied with the representation they are receiving. The situation is particularly difficult in countries where a small number of falconers are divided into many tiny clubs. These problems always have to be carefully addressed. It should also be noted that at this year's AGM the Council of Delegates accepted fewer than half of the associations that had applied for IAF membership.

### Presidential Report

In his report President Patrick Morel said: "On behalf of IAF, I would like to express our sincere thanks for the outstanding organization of the Czech Falconers Association and especially to Petr, Bohumil,

Jana and Marcela. I would like also to thank the Hunters Association and especially Mr. Broukal and Mr. Kralicek. Their friendly attitude towards the IAF delegates and the patience they showed during the visits resulted in feeling like "a visit to old friends".


The official social evening in Prague was memorable. We appreciate the work of the Czech hunters, who take care of the small game; it would be impossible to practise the art of falconry without their work and care. Thanks for your support to Czech falconry as a living part of Czech hunting and for your help to falconry during the complex legislation process in the last period. We were also surprised and delighted with your pleasant presents and gifts."

President Patrick Morel went on to pay tribute to prominent friends from the falconer's community who had died in the past year. He paid tribute and asked for a minute of silence in memory of HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan - UAE; Ron Hartley - Zimbabwe; Givi Chovogadze - Georgia; Will Shor and Morley Nelson - USA

He stated 2005 had been a busy year for the IAF. He thanked both vice-presidents for the superb job they are undertaking and especially Frank who was finishing his second term as VP for the Americas. Hermann Döttlinger and Lorenzo Machin Acosta expressed their wish to leave the Advisory Committee. He thanked both of them profusely for their invaluable advice and welcomed new AC member, Alexander Prinz from Germany. Later in the meeting the delegates also welcomed unanimously Frank Bond as a member of the Advisory Committee.

He described problems on the European front; we had to deal with problems related to falconry in Slovenia, UK and Spain. On the Asian front, we had to deal with problems in the Middle East (Houbara bustard), Japan and in the Ukraine where falconry was questioned. He spoke on a Memo of Understanding, which had been signed by IAF and the UK Hawk Board whereby both parties agreed to "...cooperate closely on all national and international levels to conserve birds of prey and to safeguard falconry, and also to promote falconry as an integral part of sustainable use and conservation of wildlife".

He also spoke about the Falconry Heritage Trust, describing its objectives and he encouraged delegates to join with it.



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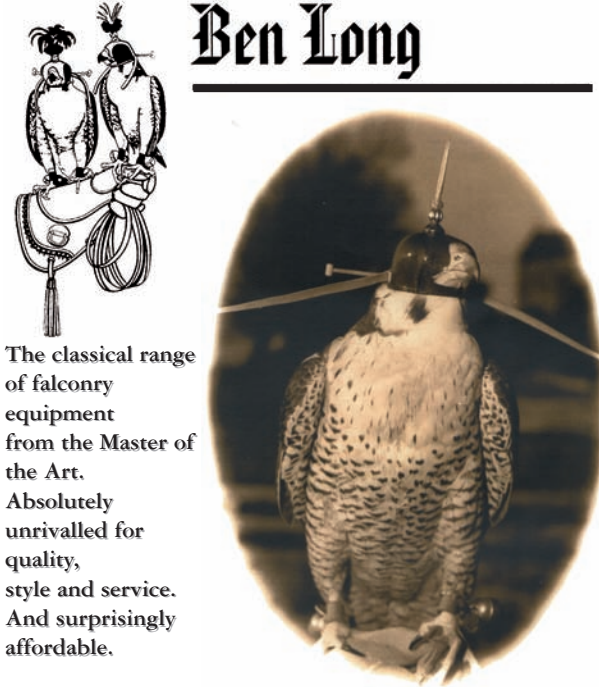
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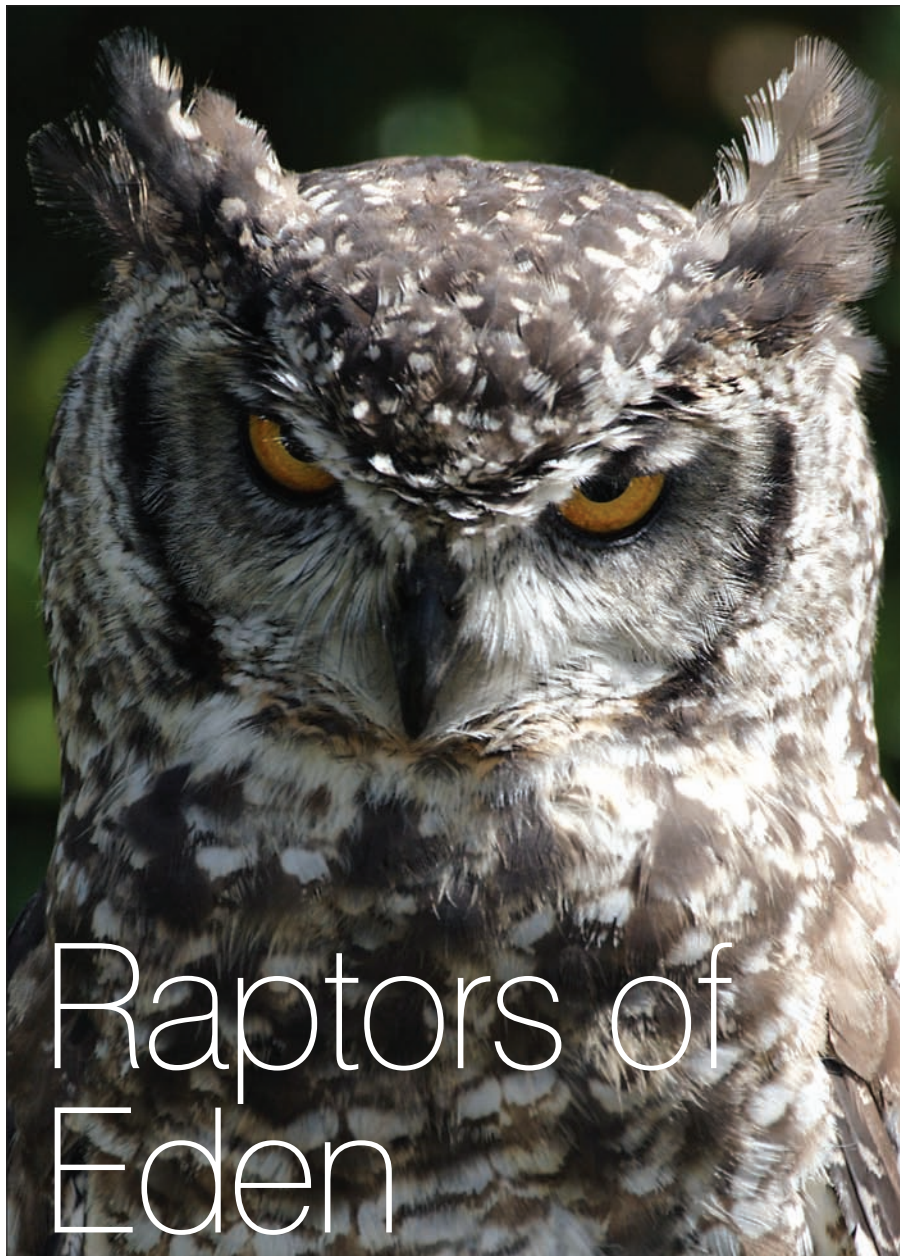
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# Raptors of Eden

**S**outh Africa's Garden Route is well known for its tourism and places of interest. One of the latest attractions to open is the Garden of Eden Raptor Centre just outside Plettenburg Bay. This is an educational facility where rehabilitated raptors can be introduced to visitors and where the plight of raptors in South Africa can be addressed through the donation of a portion of proceeds to protecting and maintaining wild raptor habitats.

Raptors of Eden is a sanctuary for birds of prey that can no longer survive in the wild. It is not a rehabilitation centre but rather a safe haven for retirement. The centre, the only one on the Garden Route, situated next to

Monkey Land, was officially opened on 13 October 2002 and it was originally thought that it would be difficult to source birds from various rehabilitation centres. The staff were shocked at how many of them are in need of a good home. As raptors are very specialised, special care and knowledge are obviously essential in the daily care of birds of prey. At a weight of only 60 grams the Pygmy falcon is the smallest bird of prey in South Africa and weighing in at up to 5.5kg the Black Eagle is the largest.

Raptors of Eden is a facility that can house 20 birds. Not only are the birds fed but also they are exercised on a daily basis. This is done by using standard falconry methods to train and

fly them. You will be surprised to know that some of the centre's birds that were kept as pets have never developed the ability to fly and have to be taught how to do so.

The need to generate money for this project from the public, as this is a private initiative, is done by charging a small cover fee for shows. These are done where the general public have the opportunity to participate in handling and flying the raptors. Getting this near, the birds can be studied at close quarters. This also helps members of the public in not only understanding but also in identifying birds of prey in the wild. Birds of prey are probably the most difficult of all species to identify in the wild, as they have two forms or colours and most are brown as a juvenile, changing colour as they become adult birds.

## Lucky birds

It is all well and good for these few 'lucky' birds that are housed and taken care of but what about the wild birds of prey still out there? That is where the raptors at this centre contribute a big part by educating people in the plight of all raptors. It is a known fact that 50 – 70% of raptors around the world die in their first season. Starvation is probably the main reason, as their habitat and food source are destroyed at such a rapid rate. Man-made obstacles could be the next one. The centre tries to educate people by way of showing them what magnificent creatures these birds of prey are and not to use poisons and insecticides indiscriminately.

The head falconer, Cobus, has been involved with birds of prey for 30 years and has been a falconer for almost as long. "Being a falconer involves more than just knowing birds of prey or keeping one. You have to have a lot of dedication and time for it. Falconry is not just a sport but rather a way of life. I have decided to open Raptors of Eden to make people aware of the plight of these animals and just maybe save the few we have left. In using my knowledge of falconry, I train the birds that are handed to the centre and give displays to the public."

Seeing these creatures in free flight remains one of the most incredible

One of the latest attractions to open on South Africa's Garden Route is t



**Peregrine Falcon**

**Jackal Buzzard**

experiences ever. Man has been watching them closely for centuries and has tried copying their way of flight without success.

The staff at the centre are so

enthusiastic and willing to give information on the various birds that you can easily spend hours there admiring them, watching the birds being flown as they ambush a lure, swooping through

the bushes at the centre at incredible speed and striking with amazing accuracy. This really is one attraction that cannot be missed on a trip to South Africa.

**Jackal Buzzard** – *Buteo rufofuscus*

**Distribution** Endemic to Southern Africa. Often found in grassy areas of hilly countryside, it favours short vegetation.

**Diet** Small rodents, and mammals like Dassies, birds such as Francolin, reptiles insects & carrion.

**Black Sparrow Hawk** – *Accipiter melanoleucus*

**Distribution** Endemic to Southern Africa, found mostly in dense growth, forest and plantations of exotic trees

**Diet** Small birds - especially doves, as well as small mammals and insects.

**Lanner Falcon** – *Falco biarmicus*

**Distribution** Found in Africa, the Middle East & Southern Europe. In varied areas from woodlands to deserts, most commonly found in mountainous regions.

**Diet** Small/medium birds, mammals and reptiles.

**Rock Kestrel** – *Falco tinnunculus*

**Distribution** Endemic to Africa and Eurasia. Most commonly found in mountainous grasslands, Karoo & fynbos areas (Cape).

**Diet** Small mammals, birds, lizards, snakes & insects

**Spotted Eagle Owl** – *Bubo africanus*

**Distribution** Found in Southern Africa & south of the Sahara.

Commonly seen in varied environments, from rocky outcrops, woodlands and deserts to urban areas.

**Diet** Small mammals, birds and arthropods.

**Forest Buzzard** – *Buteo Trizonatus*

**Distribution** Endemic to Southern Africa, is found mostly in indigenous forests & plantations of exotic trees.

**Diet** Small rodents, and mammals, birds, reptiles frogs and insects

**Black-Shouldered Kite** – *Elanus caeruleus*

**Distribution** Found in Africa, Madagascar, Iberia, tropical Asia. Most commonly seen in grassland and fynbos areas.

**Diet** Small rodents, and birds, reptiles and insects.

**Yellow Billed Kite** – *Milvus parasitus*

**Distribution** Found in Africa and Arabia. Occurs from desert areas to forest areas. Most commonly found in dense rural areas that are inhabited by humans.

**Diet** Small mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs and various invertebrates.

**Peregrine Falcon** – *Falco peregrinus*

**Distribution** Found throughout the world except in Antarctica. Most common to mountainous areas and gorges.

**Diet** Mostly birds, especially doves caught in flight.



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Marion with her bird, Briar.

# The hunt for good ground

**M**y husband John and I own a female Red Tailed Hawk named Briar. She is nearly 15 years old and we had been looking forward to another successful flying season. We did have a great piece of flying ground not far from where we live, which is kept and holds pheasant shoots throughout the shooting season and we'd had permission to fly Briar there for several years. Then a new gamekeeper was installed and we were told that we couldn't use that piece of flying ground any more. So, we tried various other venues, but there were always dogs and people around – and Briar particularly dislikes dogs.

This year we tried going further afield to ask if we could fly but it was always the same answer: "No". Then we happened to go to a game fair at Losely Park and asked around. This time we struck lucky, we got talking to a man who owns a gun shop and he gave us a name and telephone number of someone who had some ground that we could use. We got in touch and, yes, there was a piece of ground with plenty of quarry and, yes, we

could fly there. We went to see the piece of land and it was great – a wood, open land and plenty of rabbits – brilliant! There was only one drawback – the area was flanked by the M4 on one side and a railway line on the other.

It took us a long time to get Briar's weight down to her flying weight (as one falconer said to us, Redtails can live on fresh air!). Anyhow, the day came to take Briar out and she took to the new ground with relish. In seven days she took a number of quarry and she really enjoyed herself.

On the last day that we flew her, she went pelting off after a rabbit, with John in hot pursuit. Unfortunately, the rabbit that Briar was after went through a wire fence, which was covered in long grass that had grown up it. Briar didn't see the fence and crashed headlong into it. John said she bounced about two feet off the fence, staggered, then picked herself up and flew onto a post and roused, whereupon a primary feather fell out. She seemed unaffected by her fall from grace and we carried on flying for the rest of the day.

However, by the next day we

discovered all her primaries from one wing plus one secondary feather had fallen out. We took her to our vet who x-rayed her wing and found a lump, which he said could be a growth or even wing-tip oedema. We felt we needed a second opinion and so took her down to Gloucester. After a further examination, they attributed the loss of feathers to trauma. We were told that the feathers should grow back, but there is a chance that they may not – we will just have to wait and see.

This incident highlights the importance of safe hunting ground. John and I would so much like to find a good piece of hunting ground again; somewhere where there are no obstacles like pylons, rivers, cattle, major roads, railway lines and, of course, wire fences. Those of you who have access to wide open spaces with a good supply of rabbits are really lucky.

I have been upset at not being able to continue through this season but, as John says, at least Briar is alive and well. We just have to hope and pray that her feathers will grow back and we can continue hunting with her next season.

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# Only Idiots Lose Harris Hawks?



Photos by Sue Johnson.

Unfortunately, some falconers lose a bird but will try their hardest to get it back no matter how long it takes.

**A** friend of mine recently split up from her husband, a local farmer, and needed a temporary home for her female Harris Hawk. She has three small children, which obviously takes most of her time, however, she had put a lot of work into this bird and when I first took her she was three years old and had been very very well manned. However, she had not hunted with her.

Late last season I had got her going OK on rabbits. She had some success and was always keen and committed but was really just learning. She struggled to cope with the wind and was clumsy in and out of trees – at three years old she was a typical first year bird.

My friend took her back at the end of the season to put her down to moult in the hope that her circumstances might change and allow her to fly the bird she had invested so much time in and indeed a bird that she loves. Unfortunately, having moved off the farm, if anything her spare time became less. And come the new season, she didn't want to see her bird sit inactive when she could be flying each day, so she asked if I would take her again until she was in a position to do her justice.

With the ever present potential for disaster (illness, stolen, lost etc.) I don't like flying other people's birds. But among other reasons, I had enjoyed seeing her develop last year and because she'd been so well manned she was a nice bird to fly. I agreed to take her on.

I started with her quite early this year and very quickly it was apparent that her experiences last season had made their mark. She was much more confident on the wing and many have remarked how stylishly she flies.

Quickly she was back hunting and this time with much more success. Initially we were taking walked up rabbits but with the land I fly full of pheasant and partridge very soon she was "mugging" the odd pheasant and getting more and more keen on them as a result. Success breeds success and pretty soon she was taking them on from further away and as she got fitter, staying with them for longer.

## Enthusiasm Restored

The flight that re-enforced this enthusiasm was a few weeks ago when she tail flew a pheasant downhill, with the wind, over a copse and out of sight. I rushed to get into the other field expecting to find her either marking the spot where the pheasant put in or in the open having bailed out and waiting to be called back. But there was no sign and no sound. I walked up the hedge line they were most likely heading for and found her at the base of the hedge on her pheasant. She was sitting very tight and very silent, but at the time I was just delighted that she'd tail-chased it over 100 yards and been successful. We would really have some great slips now.

Sure enough I had some fantastic hunting following this. She was taking on pheasant and the odd partridge from anywhere and really trying over long distances. What's more she remained instant to the fist, each time if unsuccessful she would return the whole distance of the flight and would start again. There was never any sign of her self hunting. However, as a precaution I did change her bell to a new louder one and put a second bell on her other leg.

I was having some of the best day's hunting I can remember. We would spot pheasant sitting tight in a field and she'd soar out at tree height and fall like a stone on to the rising birds and on a

couple of occasions she stooped out of a tree and hit the pheasant in full flight. The number of pheasant we caught was few but the hunting was really enjoyable.

Although I was able to fly her almost every day, at the same time I was flying a first year male Harris Hawk and would hunt one after the other. On one particular day I flew the male first thing in the morning and we'd had a great time but without success and we finished at about 11.00am just as the wind was beginning to get up a little.

I decided that I wouldn't hunt with the female, but would just give her some flights to the fist rather than just feed her and put her back into the travelling box. I took her out of the car and cast her in to a tree on an island in the middle of a field put down to beet.

This mound sometimes holds a rabbit or the odd pheasant. So almost instinctively I gave it a bash and she instantly dived down near the edge of the mound. I just caught sight of a rabbit as it shot down a hole. As she got back up the wind gusted and blew her about 50 yards away. When I called she was instant but struggled to make headway against the wind and only got back to me in two flights with a sit down on the way. This made up my mind that I would only fly her short distances to the fist, feed her up and go home.

I put her up a low tree and walked into the field to call her. She hesitated, which is not like her and then set off in my direction but didn't head straight towards me. Instead she drifted about 10 yards past me out into the field. She then momentarily dropped a wing as if she was going to drop on something but straightened up and glided on into a tree on the perimeter of the field bordering on a neighbouring estate.

She turned back to me in the field then powered down in earnest. She hit the ground and instantly a cock pheasant took to the air, carried by the wind, whipped up and over the hedge line on the perimeter of the field, very closely followed by my bird.

I ran the 30 yards to the hedge to look through and call her back and as I did so I caught out of the corner of my eye what looked like her being harried by some crows about 200 yards away to the left of where she'd flown. This was in the direction she'd been blown on her first flight. I called a few times where I'd seen her go and having got no response I then ran towards where I thought I'd actually seen her.

Very soon I knew I was in trouble. Was that her I'd seen or had I been distracted to the wrong place by a phantom sighting? I will never know. Needless to say by the time I came back to the original path of the flight there was not sight nor sound of her.

It was now 11.40am and the wind was getting even stronger. I spent the next four hours covering every inch of the possible routes she may have taken. It's strange but if



you want something enough, your eyes will invent it for you. At about 3.00pm I was sure I saw her sitting on the wind in a gap in some trees. I could even make out jesses, the relief was wonderful. I ran to the tree line and called; nothing. I then scrambled over a barbed wire fence and brambles to get to the side she was on, but there was no sign. In hindsight it was almost certainly a Buzzard. Not the last time I'd make that mistake.

### Crow, Buzzard or Harris?

Finally, defeated and resigned to the fact that she'd be out overnight I set off back to the car. Walking across the original field of beet, I saw a big dark shape sitting in the tree on the island in the middle of the field. By then I wasn't willing to believe it was a bird, but as I got closer it moved slightly and I couldn't stop myself getting excited she'd made her way back to this spot. I started calling and moving closer and at about 50 yards the huge black crow flew off. Very dejectedly I walked back to the car.

How can anybody mistake a Buzzard or a Crow for a Harris Hawk? With the sun in the right direction or at dawn or dusk with a totally willing heart you'd be surprised.

I then set off to try to inform all the local landowners that I'd lost a female Harris Hawk and here is the only good bit of my story – to a man (woman) they were fantastic. Usually, if you want to speak to a landowner or a keeper you can never find who to speak to or catch them at home. I was lucky enough to meet almost every single person that mattered on that first day and the husband and wife owners of the neighbouring estate, were wonderful. Their keeper could not help enough. The keeper of the next estate was also extremely helpful. Everyone gave me their permission to access their fields to the most likely spots where she might have ended up. All promising to keep a look out and wishing me luck. The last estate I needed to talk to was at the end of the valley and as I arrived at the electric wrought iron gates, the lady owner pulled up in her brand new silver Aston Martin. I don't know why, but as I got out of my Land Rover I was suddenly very conscious of the fact that I'd fixed the broken zips on my wellies by stylishly wrapping them around with sellotape. First impressions? Not great. Despite

this she was lovely. She'd flown falcons in Scotland and could not help me enough, promising to call a number of key people locally. The only person I couldn't get hold of was my friend's ex-husband who farms about two miles to the South of where I lost her.

It didn't help me sleep any sounder that night but knowing you've got that many knowledgeable eyes on your side certainly made me feel a little better.

### Murphy's Law

This all happened on a Wednesday and 'Murphy's Law' kicked in. I had a meeting arranged for 10am the following morning and the person I was to meet was

## Only Idiots Lose Harris Hawks?

travelling down from London on an early train and the meeting was really important. I had no way of re-arranging it so I couldn't get out first thing to look for the bird.

I went to my meeting and with my mind very much elsewhere, I tried to feel positive. I was still very confident I'd get her back. She was such a biddable bird at the right weight in a location I knew well. My meeting finished at 11.30am and as I said goodbye my mobile phone rang.

It was the owner of the neighbouring estate - she felt sure she'd seen the bird flying near the house. She didn't see any jesses or hear any bells but knows her local birds and this wasn't one of them. Unfortunately, she was just going out and I was some distance away. I'd already loaded the car with a change of clothes, bag, glove, wellies, binoculars and assorted hunting gear. She'd said that the bird had flown onto a large oak tree near to the house.

As I pulled onto the gravel drive and looked about me, out of a large Oak tree near to the house flew a big dark Buzzard. Wrongly, with hindsight, keen to start searching closer to where I'd lost her, I assumed she'd made a perfectly reasonable mistake and I didn't stay there very long. Later that day after more hours fruitlessly searching I decided that there was as likely a place as any, for her to drift to. And in the absence of any other sign I spent most of the next week close to the spot where she may have been spotted.

### Chicken Magnet

Quite close by there was a large free-range chicken enclosure and whilst I couldn't believe she would have taken one if she were in the area this would act as a magnet. The chicken farmer was also very good - "she would be more than welcome to one if it meant me getting her back". (Where are all these great people the rest of your life?).

In the week that followed, I had only one more phone call, near to dusk on the same estate, but again I didn't see her. About this time I had one very helpful text from a fellow falconer. It just said, "Paul are you missing a bird?" I got really excited. Hurrah, she's been found. No, he'd just heard from a friend that a falconer in the area had lost a bird and thought it might be me. Again, with hindsight he hadn't worded the text that badly, but at the time I could have killed him.

By Sunday (fourth day) I was beginning to lose faith and the time had surely come to ring my friend and tell her I'd lost her bird. Standing in a field feeling dreadful I called her and told her the sorry story. "Don't worry, it was always a possibility, at least she's been having a great time, I'm sure you'll find her". A fantastic response, that at least took some of the pressure off me.

After five days I had my only sighting. I was walking dejectedly on the edge of a field about one hour before sunset. When 70 yards along the side of a wood flying away from me through a gap in a hedge was a bird much bigger than a Buzzard with, I was sure, one

jess hanging down. "That's her." I ran calling and throwing food, but when I got near the spot there was no sign. Never mind, it was near to dusk and she would roost close by - I just needed to be there at first light.

### The Search Continues

Dawn found me a rabbit carcass and a pheasant lure freezing to death on the edge of the trees where she'd put in. I was 90% certain that I'd seen her. By 12 noon I was 100% sure I hadn't and I continued to search for her all day, every day.

Eight days after losing her at 8.00am I got a call from the free-range chicken farmer. He thought he'd seen her near some farm buildings. The same procedure as before, into the car and race to the spot. He met me there and was sure that he and a colleague had seen her in **that** tree. The usual search, the calling from suitable vantagepoints the widening of the search area. Then whilst I was trying to assess the quality of this sighting I got a call on my mobile. My friend was on the phone and her ex-husband had called from his farm - he's got a Harris Hawk in a bush near his yard, is it one of Paul's? She'd been found.

I was there in about two minutes and sure enough it was her, ten feet up with the farmer trying to coax her down to a piece of meat in a multi-coloured gardening glove. (He'd already

nearly succeeded with a tea bag). I put four chicks on my fist and she jumped down almost instantly. I could have kissed the man.

### Eight Terrible Days

When you first lose a bird you go over every detail of what happened, time and time again playing out a number of different scenarios. When a very responsive and experienced bird disappears, one scenario, which keeps cropping up is "She flew into a fence or a power line and is dead. Indeed I spent one day just looking at the base of wire fences and electric pylons. The other most likely scenario was that she must have killed with that first flight or soon after and just sat very tight.

The thing is I'll never know what actually happened. However when I lost her she weighed 2lb 5 1/2 oz and when I got her back she weighed 3lb 3oz. So even factoring in the four chicks she wasn't starving.

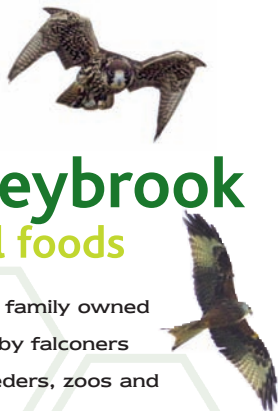
I considered myself to be very lucky to get her back and maybe only idiots do lose Harris Hawks. If so I put my hand up to being an idiot. But I really can't imagine a set of circumstances where I could hunt as I do and not run the same or similar risk. So, as I don't want another eight days (or longer) like that again, over cautious though it may be, I will not hunt any bird in future without telemetry.

So, if you see a bird with a ring on each leg, two bells, a dog tag with my phone number on it and a transmitter, flying with difficulty six inches from the ground, its probably mine.





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## ■ George Blackall-Simonds



**O**n a winter's evening in November 1927 a group of friends gathered together to enjoy a sumptuous game dinner. Items on the menu were a lure of oysters, Michell Soup, woodcock, pheasant and hare. The friends were all falconers and this was the annual 'Falconers Feast', instituted many years earlier by Edward Blair Michell. The Feast was always celebrated in London on St. Martin's Day. George Blackall-Simonds invited a number of his fellow falconers to this feast with a special purpose in mind. He called for the forming of a new falconry club.

The famous Old Hawking Club had withered away in the face of the ravages of The Great War and the death of many of its strongest adherents. A new association was called for, said Simonds and his proposal found

acceptance all around. That night Simonds was chosen as the first President of this new organization. Following his acceptance speech all rose and a toast was given: 'Hood, Lure and Leash', (changed the following year to 'Hood, Leash and Lure') and so began The British Falconers' Club.

### Second Son

Simonds was born in Reading, Berkshire on October 6 1843 and was christened George Simonds. The 'Blackall' was to come later. He was the second son of George Simonds Senior who was the Director of H & G Simonds Brewery, now part of the Courage Group, located in the town of Reading. The Simonds family were also important landowners in Berkshire and it is principally over these grounds that Simonds flew his hawks.

In 1852 George was a pupil at St. Andrews College, which was later to become Bradfield College. He was the 19th pupil entered at this school, his elder brother Blackall having the honour of being the first. By the time he was 15 years old he had left the college and was in Dresden studying sculpture. He took to it with a passion! From there he went to the Academy of Brussels and in 1864 travelled to Rome where he lived for the next 12 years. It was in Rome that he was to meet his future wife, Gertrude Prescott, an American.

By the time he was 23 Simonds was

# We were Falconers

George Blackall-Simonds  
1843-1929

George was the second son of George Simonds Senior who was the Director of H & G Simonds Brewery, now part of the Courage Group.

## ■ Blackall-Simonds in 1874.

exhibiting his sculptures in the Royal Academy and over the years he was to show some 44 pieces there. His sculptures received many favourable reviews, and with the passage of time have lost none of their power and grace to enchant or to awe.

### Sparrowhaks in Rome

George Simonds was also a falconer. It is not known exactly when he started practising falconry but he was certainly hunting with Sparrowhawks whilst he was in Rome and possibly flew a Gyr as well. In a letter written to him by Captain Salvin on April 29 1872, Salvin says:

*My Dear Sir,*

*I am much obliged for yours of the 22nd which was very acceptable. I suppose you got the Icelander from Mr Corbet (Ireland) and I hear they have not done much with them on Salisbury Plain.*

*I am puzzled to know what you can do with so many Sparrow Hawks! ONE is as much as any one can manage. I suppose you fly the Sparrow Hawk at Quail which they catch splendidly. I am glad you use varvels. I like them. I should like to know more about your short leash. How is it fastened onto the palm of your glove? It's a good idea I fancy. Damp either indoors or out and draughts cause kecks. I have never found a little rain to be injurious. I am bringing out, along with Mr Brodrick, a second edition of Falconry in the British Isles. Van Voorst, Pater Noster Row, is our publisher. The colour plates promise to be a success. Now, I am up on Bells and if you will kindly send me one of your make and instructions thereon I shall be greatly obliged. If I find it good may I mention it and the inventor?*

*You promised not only to write to me about your hawking in Rome but you said I should have a photograph of your Falconer Bronze. If you remembered your promise and sent it, it never reached me. Did you finish this bronze statue and did it please you?*

*Believe me yrs very truly, F H Salvin*

From this letter it appears that Simonds had 'invented' a type of bell but it is unclear as to whether or not Salvin received it and, if he did, thought anything of it. The 'Falconer Bronze' mentioned by Salvin is undoubtedly his most famous piece, one that perfectly married Simonds' love of falconry with his love of sculpture.



'The Falconer' is a bronze that lives and breathes the romance of our sport. The statue is one of great drama and movement, depicting the moment when a youthful falconer of the 14th or 15th Century casts his falcon to the winds. The clothing is more Italian than British, but as Simonds was sculpting in Rome at the time this is understandable. Italy had captured his imagination and several of his pieces from this era reflect his admiration of the classic old country.

The original bronze, life size, was first exhibited in Vienna in 1873. Following the exhibition it was packed up and shipped to Trieste, Italy, where its exhibition was so well received it was purchased for the city's museum. The bronze was also rendered in marble and was placed on view in London, at the Royal Academy, in 1875. This statue now resides at the Shipley Art Museum in Gateshead. Several smaller versions in bronze were later created, one still with the Simonds family. The most famous version of 'The Falconer', however, stands proudly on a rocky precipice in New York City's Central Park.

While on his Grand Tour in 1870 Irish-American merchant prince George Kemp saw Simonds' plaster model of the piece and commissioned the monumental statue that now graces the park. When first placed on exhibit, in May 1875, the park was largely treeless and the handsome falconer was appropriately seen casting off his falcon over a wide expanse of open downland and meadow. Now, however, trees have almost completely surrounded the statue. The youthful falconer nevertheless still has a blaze of hope and pride in his eyes that his falcon will bring down her quarry even in so inappropriate a hunting countryside. After all, there are pigeon eating peregrines nesting on the skyscrapers! The well known Central Park Redtail, Pale Male, lives within eyesight of the statue.

### Imagination Captured

About 1912 the statue in Central Park captivated the imagination of a man named Robert Evans, a native of New England, who was mending body and mind in a city hospital nearby. He secured permission to have a copy made and it too graces a public park,

■ Statue in Central Park,



this one in Evans' home town of Beverly, Massachusetts.

The statue in Central Park attracted not only admirers but also vandals. It was removed from view in 1957 when thieves cut off the arm and falcon. Finally, in 1982, the arm and hawk were recast and the statue was put back on display. It is one of the handsomest in a city known for many exceptional public bronzes.

Following his success with 'The Falconer', Simonds married Gertrude Prescott in London in 1877. He had by this time set up his own studio in Buckingham Palace Road, moving on to St. Johns Wood in 1888. During the years 1884-5 he was the first Master of the Art Workers Guild, which he helped to found.

During his career most of the major sculptures he is celebrated for were placed in the town where he was born, Reading, in Berkshire. The most famous is The Maiwand Lion which stands to this day in the Forbury Gardens. It celebrates the valiant last stand of the Royal Berkshire Regiment at the Battle of Maiwand in Afghanistan in 1880. It is one of the world's largest bronzes, at 31 feet in length with a weight of 16 tons. It took two years to design and complete. The statue

was unveiled in 1886. The following year he created the statue of Queen Victoria to celebrate her Golden Jubilee. It stands to this day outside Reading Town Hall.

### More Statues

The town of Reading, well known for the Simonds brewery, was perhaps more famous for its biscuits made by none other than Huntley & Palmer. In November 1891 another statue by Simonds was unveiled in the town centre, this of George Palmer of that company, also a mayor and member of Parliament for the town. In 1930, due to the changes in transport, it was moved to the aptly named Palmer Park.

In 1903 Simonds decided to retire from working at sculpture as he felt it was time to join the family business. He was to spend the rest of his life involved in brewing.

In 1905 his brother Blackall, who ran the brewery, died. In his will he stipulated that George, as his heir, should take the Blackall name. He thus became George Blackall Simonds. Shortly after that he became the Chairman of the brewery. His official portrait as Chairman, by society artist Oswald Birley, depicts him in the garb of a falconer holding his peregrine Althaea.

In 1908 Gilbert Blaine, with whom the Simonds family hawked on occasion, records a lovely gift from the brewer of Reading: *Sunday 27 September. Received a fine Red Falcon caught by Edwd. Dwyer of Thurles, Tipperary, in his plover nets, as a present from Mr. George Simonds. She is a large powerful light plumed hawk, and feeds well through the hood.*

### Tragedy Strikes

In 1914 tragedy struck the Simonds family. His only son, Lieutenant George Simonds of the 2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers died in the first few weeks of The First World War. After the war ended Simonds sadly turned his hand once again to sculpture, designing one of his last large scale works, The Bradfield War Memorial. This records the name of his own son and others who had fallen during the war. How he must have grieved when carving out the name of his boy.

Simonds resided on the outskirts of Reading, mainly in Bradfield. He was known to fly and hunt his birds in Bradfield especially at Rushall Farm over land that he owned. He flew Merlins and Peregrines. He was a known rook hawk and is recorded flying with members of the Old Hawking Club in 1923 with Althaea, a passage Peregrine Falcon. He flew his birds with other well known falconers of the day: Michell, Blaine, Allen, Garnett and Palmer to name but a few. He was known as a good and proficient falconer. His wife also joined him in falconry and she flew a Sparrowhawk.

During his later years Simonds continued to be very active in the sport. At the age of 84 he even went to India and was practising falconry with Indian Princes. As 1929 drew to a close Simonds was not in the best of health. In a letter to Hugh Knight, the Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer of The British Falconers' Club, he says:-

*My Dear Knight,*

*I have just been 'vetted' this morning and I am told that if I give up most of the things, that make life worth living, I may go on for a year or two yet, or even more but no cakes and ale! Now as to Hawks. My wife desires me to say that if you will accept her Sparhawk you will be doing her a favour. They don't seem to be catching any more at Basildon. My health is not good enough to look after Hawks myself and Leslie and my wife are too busy looking after me. I have no news of the Hawking world, not a word from Blaine. I have no idea where he*



*is. My old Falcon is almost clean moulted out and is as handsome as paint but probably about as useless.  
My kind regards to you and your family  
Yrs truly G.B.S.*

Sadly, he did not go on for a year or two but passed away some five weeks later. He continued his brewery duties right up until his death and only ten days prior he signed the Simonds annual report at the Board Meeting. Before he died he was delighted and honoured to know that the Simonds Company had been granted the Royal Warrant.

In 1929 there was no British Falconers Club Magazine but his eulogy, written by Hugh Knight, was recorded in *The Field*:-

#### *A Famous Falconer*

*Sir, There are probably many of your readers who are unaware of the death of George Blackall-Simonds, of Bradfield House, Berkshire which occurred on the 15 December last.*

*He will be greatly missed by all those who are keen on falconry, as well as others; president of our club to the very last he took a tremendous interest in the ancient sport. As late as last August he took the field with us on the Marlborough Downs rook hawking etc., and although he was very frail then, his keenness was extraordinary and his delight at having a falcon on his fist was a joy to us all. We shall miss him very much indeed.*

*He was an artist of some considerable note, being a sculptor; he studied at the Royal Academy of Arts at Dresden and later on in Rome, where he always had a few trained sparrow hawks in his studio, and he has often told me that any hawks that were brought to him by bird catchers and others always found sanctuary with him, and if he had no room to keep them, he let them go; curiously the only hawk he did not care for was a gos. Rook and game hawking was what he liked best and he loved a day out on the Salisbury Plain with the Old Hawking Club, now alas extinct! A kind and generous man and an excellent host, we shall miss him tremendously.*

*There is an excellent oil painting of him carrying a falcon, by Oswald Birley, hanging in the directors room at Messrs Simonds' Brewery, Reading and there is also a statue of a falconer in Central Park, New York, which is his work.*

*He was born in Reading in 1843, and was almost the last of the old school of falconers, such as E.B. Michell, Col Sanford and others.*

*George Blackall-Simonds has not been forgotten. Not by The British Falconer's Club and certainly not by the town of Reading. In*



■ Blackall-Simonds with falcon.

*2005 he was voted the town's greatest ever person. He finished first in a poll on the Reading Library's website and a debate at the Central Library beating the biscuit baron George Palmer, playwright Oscar Wilde, King Henry I and a host of others.*

*And we, the members of the British Falconry Club, will ever raise a toast of thanks to him that was born, along with our club, at the Falconers' Feast of 1927: 'Hood, leash, and lure'. In 1927 the old man gave us a future and here we remember his past.*

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#### With thanks to:

- Roger Upton
- Raymond Simonds
- David Simonds
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# club directory



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## The Central Falconry & Raptor Club

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Is the local falconry club serving the following counties: -  
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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

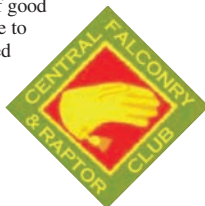
The mission statement of the C.F.R.C. is to offer people the opportunity to embrace all aspects of Falconry in a spirit of good companionship. There will be a warm welcome to people of all ages, whether they are experienced falconers, novices, or families.

For more information e-mail:

[cen.falc@ic24.net](mailto:cen.falc@ic24.net) or phone

John Hill 07973 224609

[www.central-falconry.co.uk](http://www.central-falconry.co.uk)



## The Welsh Hawking Club



**South Wales Region** 2nd Monday of the month at The Rat Trap Hotel, Usk.  
Further details from Dave Dimond Tel: 01179 324845

**North Wales Region** 1st Tuesday of every month at The Robin Hood Pub, Helsby.  
Regional Secretary: Neil McCann - 0151 929 3402.

**Bath Region** First Wednesday of the month at The Bull Inn, Hinton, Nr. Bath.  
Regional Chairman: Bob Martini, Tel: 01934 862446

**Central Region** 1st Monday of the month at 7.30 at The Plough, The Green, Shustoke, Coleshill. Regional Chairman: Lee Featherstone - 0121 384 6102  
Regional Secretary: Mick Wynn - 0121 7481794

**Cotswold Region** 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Beckford Hotel on the A46 between Evesham and Tewkesbury, approx 3 miles off Junc. 9 on the M5  
Regional Chairman and Secretary: Mike Hope - 07944 447517

**Essex Region** 2nd Tuesday in each month at The Whalebone Inn, Fingeringhoe, near Colchester. Regional Secretary: Ray Hooper - 01206 251765

**South West Region** 3rd Monday of the month at The Ley Arms, Kenn, nr. Exeter.  
Regional Secretary: Kevin Mosedale - 01392 833681

**Yorkshire Region** Meetings take place at The George & Dragon, 81 Main St, Wentworth, Barnsley Regional Chairman: Glyn Treloar - 01709 326865

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## Northern England Falconry Club

*Club meets the first Wednesday of each month at :-*

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A638 to Low Moor 1 mile from junction 26.  
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*Contact: Phil: on*

**01274 815797 or 07795030640**

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**Lee Copeland on 07802 251502**

**or Ray Grange on 01642 291817**

E-mail: [clevelandhawkingclub@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:clevelandhawkingclub@yahoo.co.uk)

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For further information or an application form please contact -

**Dean White (secretary) on 01489 896504**

E-mail us at [enquiry@sefg.org](mailto:enquiry@sefg.org) or

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**Our meetings are held at 10.30am on the second Sunday of each month throughout the year at  
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Outings, guest speakers, field meets, (at home and away) videos, quizzes and other special events are ever-present features  
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