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The **Falconers**

& Raptor
Conservation
Magazine

**Focus on
Bill Prickett,
wildlife
sculptor**



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& Raptor Conservation Magazine

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In this edition we have a mixed bag of articles for your enjoyment. I am grateful to all those who have contributed to the issue, both from home and abroad. If anyone is thinking of emigrating to France and taking their birds, Dave Green will tell you that keeping birds of prey is not as easy there as in this country. You have to take an exam before you can fly your birds – and the exam is, of course, in French. Also, a big thank you to Elizabeth Schoultz from America for her article on the Austrian symposium that she attended, with Bob Dalton's account of his visit to Holland, this is truly an international edition.

You will see in this issue that Hawk Board News is on two pages so there is plenty for all falconers and bird of prey keepers to read that will affect the way we keep and fly our birds. Applying for quarry licences through English Nature is just one of the new regulations that we have to observe to enjoy our sport. I hope that all falconers support the HB because they all put in a lot of hard work so that we can keep enjoying the sport that we do.

If you want to help the HB, why not make a donation to The Campaign for Falconry by logging on to www.hawkboard-cff.org.uk and click on to the donation button.

In the meantime, have a good read.



editorial

news & products

a review of what's new in our sport Send all your news and product information to peter.eldrett@tiscali.co.uk

Falconiformes Winter Fair

Bob Dalton

Mid December saw falconers from all over Europe gather for a two day open weekend at the Falconiformes breeding centre which is situated just outside Rotterdam in Northern Holland. For those that made the journey there was an incredible mouth watering variety of raptors for sale as well as a full range of equipment, books, DVD's, telemetry and falconry related art work.

Despite the bitterly cold weather everyone who attended the Fair was given a very warm welcome from host Jan Wooning and his enthusiastic and ever helpful staff. Hot refreshments, to keep the inner man and woman satisfied, as well as a couple of flying displays each day had been laid on to provide some excellent entertainment.

I have always found that visiting with Falconiformes is a real pleasure. Every member of staff is truly helpful and always seem to be extremely cheerful with nothing being too much trouble. You are always made to feel welcome, whether you are there to spend thousands or merely to look at what is on offer. Such an accommodating

attitude is a very pleasant change in this day and age.

It was agreeable to be able to sit down with falconers from Denmark, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Greece and various other countries

enjoying a glass of wine together and discussing falconry and how laws relating to its practice vary from country to country. But the main reason for attending such an event is to enjoy the sight of such a magnificent collection of raptors gathered together under one roof.

There were Eagles, Hawks, Falcons, Vultures, Buzzards, Caracaras, Owls and even a Secretary Bird for sale. All of the raptors offered for sale were displayed nicely and in such a way as to be as



stress free as possible for them. Amongst the more unusual hawks for sale was a female Peregrine/Aplomado hybrid falcon. Although Hybrids are not my thing I have to say this was a stunningly beautiful and superbly proportioned falcon. It was brought by a falconer who had the other such hybrid produced by Falconiformes this season. He was so pleased with the way the first one flew he was more than happy to part with a relatively large sum of money to obtain another.

Combination Bow Perch

The perennial problem of should I buy an indoor or an outdoor bow perch, or perhaps both, may finally have a sensible solution. A new product from "Featherweights" seems to be the ideal solution, especially if neatness and quality are two of your bywords.

They have come up with a stunning new product, which comes in a specially moulded storage/travel case. Inside the briefcase are a series of components that in a matter of seconds transform into either an indoor or an outdoor bow perch. The perching area of the bow itself is rubber coated and non slip. The whole product is finished to a very high standard and comes with a twelve month guarantee.

For those that hawk away from home on a regular basis the fact that what are effectively two different bow perches that can be packed flat in a relatively small area is a considerable blessing. The highly polished finished of the component surfaces means they are easy to keep clean with just a wipe over with a damp cloth. Unlike so many other combination products what helps to make this one unique is that every single component can be ordered separately should a loss or mishap occur.

I have been trying one of these perches out for some time and have not encountered any snags or drawbacks with it. My hawk seems comfortable and contented on it so no complaints from that quarter either. At £95 inclusive of post and packing the combination perch is not cheap but I do believe it offers value for money.

This excellent product is currently available from **Falcon Leisure**. Telephone either **02380-696921** or **07774-267790**.



The Hawk Conservancy Trust swoops in to win top zoological awards in the BIAZA Awards

The Hawk Conservancy Trust received three top awards from the zoo world at a prestigious awards ceremony held at Marwell Zoological Park and attended by over 100 people. The Trust was awarded the meritorious awards in recognition for its pioneering work in research and rehabilitation projects with Birds of Prey. The awards were presented to the Trust by Charles Walker M.P on behalf of British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA). The Trust won meritorious awards for the best field conservation project (small collection) for its African White-backed Vulture conservation and research programme and for the story of the Trust rescuing vultures from the illegal trade, that was featured in BBC's Inside Out programme. It was also awarded a commendation for its work in returning a

rescued Peregrine falcon back to the wild. These projects demonstrate how modern zoos can be a powerful force for conservation, tackling issues such as species extinction in the wild.

The Zoo was one of 14 winners chosen from 62 entries. Held annually for over a decade, the BIAZA awards recognise outstanding contributions and achievements in the fields of wildlife conservation, advances in animal welfare and husbandry, sustained breeding programmes, marketing, PR, education, research, enclosure design and individual outstanding achievement.

Dr Miranda Stevenson, Director of BIAZA comments: "The award-winning programmes under the spotlight today demonstrate the huge investment of energy and resources made by our leading zoos to support habitat and species

conservation. Conservation within zoos and aquariums is a vital part of the work to protect threatened species and to help change public behaviour and ensure the future of Planet Earth. These awards recognise and celebrate the vital contributions that our members are making to conservation and education each year. Equally, they are standard bearers for excellence in animal husbandry and welfare."

Ashley Smith, Chief Executive of the trust, said, "It was a great honour for the Trust to be recognized in these awards. Although we are a small collection in size, some of our conservation projects can be held on an equal par to collections that are 10 times our size. This was shown by winning these awards against strong competition, and is a reward for all the hard work, effort and dedication that is shown by all the Trust staff."

Barn Owl Trust Conservationist receives MBE award from the Queen at Buckingham Palace

On Tuesday 11 December Barn Owl Trust conservationist David Ramsden was presented with an MBE for services to wildlife by Her Majesty the Queen in the Ballroom at Buckingham Palace.

David is Head of Conservation at the Barn Owl Trust, a national conservation charity, based just outside Ashburton in Devon that he co-founded in 1987. Since its inception, nearly 20 years ago, the Trust has carried out ground-breaking research into Barn Owl conservation, led by David. The Trust is renowned for its practical work and information service and has become recognised both nationally and internationally.

David was nominated for the MBE award by Mike and Heather Ross from North Devon; they first met in 1995 when he visited their Barn Owl site. David received news of the award in the Queen's Birthday Honours list published last June and his was the only MBE to be awarded for services to wildlife.

Talking about the MBE award David said, "I haven't really had time to stop and think about it as I have been speaking at the World Owl Conference in Holland and returned a few days ago to run the Trust's 'Barn Owl Ecology, Survey and Signs' training course (BOESS). I feel extremely honoured to have been considered for an MBE and I am keen to accept the award on behalf of everyone who helped to create the Barn Owl Trust, all those who helped in its achievements, and especially my partner, Frances Jaime, who was also fundamental in helping to set up the Trust."

For more information about the Barn Owl Trust go to www.barnowltrust.org.uk



Photo: Courtesy of British Ceremonial Arts Limited.

Letters

Got something to say? Write to Peter Eldrett, Knowle View, Kings Lane, Woodlands, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 8LZ or e-mail: peter.eldrett@tiscali.co.uk

Dear Peter,

I have become increasingly perplexed at "Internationally renowned Expert Falconer" Bob Dalton's rantings in this and other publications. Believe me I would have not raised my opinions had it not been for Mr Dalton's unfair tirade against Ben Crane's article in issue 69 of this magazine. I do not know Ben Crane from Adam, but I have enjoyed his writings and to pick him up on such insignificant points and to try and make him look a fool strikes me as arrogance in the extreme.

Whilst I respect Mr Dalton's undoubted

knowledge regarding such things as Coyote predation on Harris Hawks, it should be remembered that whilst he is obviously in the enjoyable position of travelling the world expanding his knowledge, us mere mortals are busy working, keeping the wolf from the door and flying our hawks at quarry at home. Repeating received wisdom regarding the Harris's dislike of dogs is hardly a hanging offence. And personally I would also find it difficult to take any advice regarding working dogs from someone whose pointers are seen chasing rabbits like a lurcher in one of his early videos!

Mr Dalton recently states he does not approve of flying hybrids as it stacks the odds against the quarry, yet claiming it is acceptable to fly an Aplomado or Prairie at British quarry is okay? This strikes me as an argument very thin on logic.

On your journey to the top of the falconry tree it should be remembered what happened to the last person who got to the top regardless of how many toes she stepped on. A little less criticism and a little more support to aspiring writers in future please.

Yours
David Rampling

Falcons return to Wairau Plain, New Zealand

For the first time in over 150 years the endemic New Zealand Falcon has returned to breed on the Wairau Plain.

The unique New Zealand Falcon, which is classified as threatened to endangered, is rarer than the kiwi and, like so many endemic birds, has retreated from lowland areas of New Zealand when its native habitat was destroyed. Persecution and introduced mammalian predators were the final nails in the coffin for this trusting ground-nesting native. It is the only surviving endemic bird of prey we have left.

But now the Falcons for Grapes Project in Marlborough is turning its fortunes around. The project trans-located four falcons from nests in the hills two years ago. Last year a further 15 young falcons were released from artificial nest barrels in the vineyards. This year three pairs of these falcons have nested in the vineyards for the first time since the Plain was cleared for farming.

All three pairs laid their eggs on the ground and one pair lost two eggs and another lost three eggs to marauding hedgehogs at night. So the Falcons for Grapes team placed some of the eggs in an incubator while keeping the parents incubating dummy eggs. Then they have moved the dummy eggs into nest barrels, first on the ground and then raised up off the ground in trees. Now one pair has three strong chicks two weeks old, and another pair has two chicks a week old. The third pair having lost three of their eggs, deserted their final egg. But the team rescued the egg and it has now hatched successfully. The orphaned chick is being hand-reared until it is strong enough to be mothered on to foster parents.

Wild falcons are present on the Wairau Plain but so far have not been able to nest. This year a wild female paired up with a released male but sadly, just as she was about to lay, she disappeared. The male, who has a transmitter, is still present.

Unsafe transformers

Nor has it been plain sailing for the released falcons. Five were electrocuted last year in their first few months of flying. Project Leader

Dr Nick Fox said "There are 3,500 transformers on the Wairau Plains and most of the poles are unsafe for wildlife. As more poles go up and more trees are cut down, the chances of a falcon landing on a pole increase. We have transmitters on each falcon, so for the first

time we have been able to document the hazards posed by uninsulated equipment. Other countries design their installations to make them safe, but New Zealand has some catching up to do."

Apart from this, one falcon has been killed by a cat, one by a harrier hawk, and one was injured by the road. Overall their survival has been better than that of the wild falcons in the surrounding hills. Colin Wynn, General Manager, said "We have been delighted that the falcons have done so well in the vineyards. Two of our pairs are only 12 months old and yet have produced young. First year breeding has never been recorded in the wild and we did not expect youngsters this year".

Peter Gaze and Phil Bradfield from the Department of Conservation are responsible for the permits for the project. Phil reported "This is fabulous news, I'm looking forward to seeing the new arrivals."

Dr Val Saxton from the University of Lincoln, who has been monitoring bird damage in the vineyards, said "It is too early to quantify the benefit of falcons statistically, but anecdotally we have recorded reduced damage in the falcon vineyards. Overall, bird damage is costing the New Zealand Wine Industry about \$5,600 million per year. It is a huge problem."



Dr Nick Pyke, CEO of the Foundation for Arable Research, Lincoln, said "Bird damage to cereals is about 5-10% and to brassicas, up to 50%. Bird damage to oilseed crops makes them uneconomical to grow in some areas, and the pest birds are increasing." Dr Fox visited FAR last week to discuss pest bird control on arable crops. He has had enquiries from vineyard owners and orchardists all over New Zealand to provide falcons.

He said "If we can continue steadily with the falcon programme in Marlborough, then in a while we could be producing a net surplus of falcons that could be used in other areas either for re-introductions or pest control. The project is funded by the Sustainable Farming Fund (43%), my own company, International Wildlife Consultants (UK) Ltd (37%) and by the New Zealand Wine Growers (14%). Now we need to develop funding from other sources for the longer term."

The project is of benefit to the wine industry, not just for pest control, but for marketing and wine tourism. Dr Fox is in discussions with Destination Marlborough to see how the falcons can benefit tourism in Marlborough, and he would like to develop one or more 'focus vineyards' to provide information about the project and enable the public to learn more about this iconic species.



askchitty

Do you have any veterinary questions relating to your bird? If so, send them to the editor (see address on page four) and they will be passed on to John Chitty - BVetMed CertZooMed CBiol MIBiol MRCVS

Can falcons and hawks contract conjunctivitis? If so, how do birds get the infection? What should falconers look out for and what, if any, preventative measures can they take and what would be the treatment?

It is firstly important to realize that conjunctivitis is not a disease in its own right – **it is a sign!** i.e it is a description of an appearance and many diseases can produce this sign. The name, too, simply describes – anything ending in “-itis” means inflammation and the conjunctivae are the linings of the eye/ socket. So conjunctivitis is inflammation of the lining of the eyes and there are many causes of this:

1. “Just” conjunctivitis – this can occur in its own right and can be due to many different reasons
 - a. Bacterial infection. These are common, but are not “caught” from others. They are normally secondary – often to irritation or damage that allows bacteria to invade. This can occur in what looks like outbreaks when lots of birds are all kept in the same husbandry set up – ie they all have the same underlying causes present
 - b. Fungal infection – much less common but can occur for the reasons above
 - c. Viral infection – rare showing just as conjunctivitis, but this can be a part of the signs of a respiratory virus (see below)
2. Eye disease – the conjunctivae will become inflamed if there is also deeper infection or damage to the eye. Naturally this is much more serious because loss of vision will have long-term consequences on the bird’s ability to hunt. In particular, damage to the cornea (ulcers, etc on the front of the eye) or uveitis (inflammation within the eye) may initially look like a conjunctivitis
3. Respiratory disease. The sinuses have a connection with the conjunctivae. Therefore any upper respiratory infection/irritation will often have conjunctivitis as part of its signs. In particular
 - a. Irritation/allergy to dust or other airborne particles
 - b. Respiratory viruses – including avian influenza (but please remember that conjunctivitis is unlikely to be the principal worry here – the bird will be far too sick!!)
 - c. Bacterial infections – again, often secondary. However, some – especially *Mycoplasma* or *Chlamydophila*- can appear to be primary diseases
 - d. Protozoal infections – *Trichomonas* has recently been shown to be a significant cause of sinusitis in falcons
4. Skin disease. Any disease affecting the lids of the eyes can distort their shape resulting in a conjunctivitis due to exposure of these delicate membranes. A good example would be poxvirus infection



Picture courtesy Great Western Referrals

So, what does all this mean?

Basically, it is not sufficient to just presume something is just conjunctivitis and ask for some eye cream – yes, this might be what is required but it is vital that other underlying causes are looked at and even more important that the bird is checked for other more important diseases. The conjunctivitis could just be the tip of the iceberg!

If you suspect your bird has conjunctivitis then make an early appointment to see an experienced avian vet – the therapy may be simple, but it is a better alternative than waiting for the old tube of eye cream not to work before you find the falcon has sinusitis or uveitis.

If a friend’s bird has conjunctivitis then it is unlikely that it will be catching to your bird, as long as it is just a conjunctivitis. If they haven’t had the bird checked for respiratory disease then it is safer not to mix your birds. Remember also that respiratory diseases don’t just spread through the air but by “fomite” too – i.e. gloves and equipment and furniture are likely to spread disease too.



Following the last Hawk Board meeting in October, HB wrote to Joan Ruddock, the minister responsible, suggesting a meeting. Subsequently, Jim, Nick Kester and scientist Andrew Dixon (in the absence of Nick Fox) were invited to meet Mrs Ruddock and her Defra policy team on Friday 6th December. Also invited were RSPB, WWF, Sustainable User Group (SUN) and five MPs including Elliot Morley (the previous Defra minister, whom Hawk Board met last time round).

The Hawk Board has not proposed the abolition of registration, merely asked that when an adequate Article 10 certificate exists, there is no requirement to also

Schedule 4 and registration

register. Readers should be aware that the increased costs of both registration and A10s could add up to nearly £100. The government has advised us that full cost recovery is mandatory, but that they are also committed to a certain amount of de-regulation.

The meeting was restricted to one hour and was somewhat inconclusive. There was a fair amount of sparring between the two camps but no real solution was offered. We want deregulation and believe the A10 serves future conservation needs well (especially if it was transactional and contained parental data), RSPB argue for continued registration at all costs. They claim registration (coupled with DNA) is the sole reason for the drop in chick thefts by falconers. Certain MPs were slightly off-message, preferring to talk about persecution and welfare rather than Schedule 4! It was suspected that the Minister will be as uncertain of a fair decision as she was before the meeting. However, there was a glimmer of common ground from the RSPB which the HB latched onto and have written asking if we might mutually explore how to make it work. The following is an edited version of a letter from HB to RSPB. At the time of writing, 18th December, no reply has been received from RSPB – this report was delayed in the hope we would have had a response by now. But readers should note where it was copied? So the ball is now in their court.

As you know, Hawk Board is primarily concerned with legitimately bred captive raptors. Yours (RSPB) is of course the opposite (wild raptors and those illegally taken). Our argument is not against protection for wild

raptors (and other species) but resistance to an extra layer of legislation, and increased costs, when one should suffice. I would hope no one would argue against this, especially in the light of full cost recovery for both items. The Hawk Board does not want to see any increase in illegal taking of wild birds of prey as this would be damaging to the reputation of falconry in the UK.

We at Hawk Board have looked long and hard at Cites in contrast to registration and come up with the comparison in the table below.

On the basis of this info, I think between us we could find a solution that would enable the minister to come to a conclusion that would satisfy both needs. If Defra would undertake to continue to include parental data in Box 4 Description of Specimens of the A10, then a solution would be achieved.

As you will know our submission to the consultation (on Schedule 4) was very simple:

- All Schedule 4 species bred in captivity and traded require an Article 10 certificate (which could be transactional).
- Any raptor not having an Article 10 certificate (ie a 'gift' bird not commercially traded or retained by the breeder) falls outside the amendment and will require registering. And at the new higher cost, this will be an added incentive to obtain a transactional Article 10 from the breeder.

There are definite benefits to this:

- Investigators will continue to have all the necessary data needed to pursue illegal take and the Article 10 data (see above) will support any DNA test required for prosecution.
- A benefit of the system proposed by

	WCA registration	Article 10 certificate
Keeper data	Yes	No (unless transactional)
Breeder data	No	Yes (if specimen specific)
Rings	Yes	Yes
Species/hybrid	Yes	Yes
Hatch date	Yes	Yes
Sex	Optional	Optional
Date acquired	Yes	No (unless transactional)
Import date	Yes	Yes (plus source and permit data)
Parent rings & species*	Yes (if UK bred)	Yes (if UK bred)
Origin (captive/imported/wild)	Yes	Yes
Commercial uses permitted	No	Yes
Special conditions regarding use	Limited	Comprehensive
Where data recorded	Defra	Defra
Proposed cost recovery	£60	£30

* Registration states 'if known' whilst Article 10s appear to be optional, although Defra currently include parent data as a matter of course.

the Hawk Board is that non-schedule 4 species that are traded would require a record of their putative parents (e.g., Barn Owl). This would assist enforcement agencies in the investigation of suspected cases of stealing from the wild for commercial trade.

- Breeders selling in the UK will apply for transactional AIOs which will have to be transferred by the purchaser for the raptor to remain legal in the UK.
- Captive breeding for the falconry market has undoubtedly contributed to the reduction in the level of illegal taking from the wild. Minimising the cost of captive breeding and reducing the regulatory burden has an acknowledged conservation benefit.

Quarry licences and Natural England

English Nature is to take over the administration of quarry licences. They consider the administrative burden on the few falconers who apply for such licences to be worth simplification, principally, by making the process available on-line (including the annual return). However falconers were given very short notice and there were some serious anomalies including the requirement to do a return for the so-called 'pest' species. Readers can obtain the full document from the English Nature website but our key point was as follows:

The HB applauds a simplification of the licences referred to in Ref 14 Phase 1. However, two things spring to mind. Firstly, the quarry list is not as exhaustive as it may be (see pp17-18 of the HB audit) and we would welcome a broader approach. Falconers' desire to remain inside the law is paramount, but we recognise a need to prevent misunderstanding amongst the general public for an activity which, as the consultation points out, has minimal impact on the species concerned. Specially, when you consider the impact wild raptors have on the

same quarry types! Secondly, there is a paradox when so-called 'pest' species are added to the list. As we agreed, it is confusing if a falconer can take a gull or a corvid under the normal general licence covering health, aviation, crops, game birds etc but should he step outside the locale where this is permitted and catch the same species, he would be obliged to fill in a return.

To which English Nature replied:
Returns
We are intending to require returns for the Falconry purpose for the following main reason:
The Falconry purpose is one of those constrained within the legislation by the requirement that we ensure the activity is carried out on a selective basis and in respect to a small number of birds. The only way we can know that this remains the case (without individual licences) is to ask for returns. An additional comment is that returns are actually already a condition of some other licences that affect the so-called pest birds (including the Air Safety licence - Condition 11)

List of species
For the time being, we'd like to restrict the list of species proposed for the licence to those which already appear on individual licences. However, we're happy to consider suggestions for other species in Phase 2. My ornithological colleagues have suggested that the list you propose should be restricted to common widespread species that are commonly taken by falconers. Perhaps your colleagues would like to suggest options by the end of the year.

Following which HB submitted a formal response including the following point on quarry licences (in the table below).

- Plus the following comments:
- A separate category for falconry purposes listing agreed quarry species (see Hawk Board Audit) and full discussion regarding the paradox

**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.**

highlighted in 14 below. It strikes the Hawk Board as faintly ridiculous that, for example, the rabbit, an acknowledged yet edible pest, can be killed both for food and for control purposes, but the pigeon cannot unless certain EU specified conditions are previously met.

- Falconers may fulfil a licence for pest control on one location, but if the hawk or falcon strays onto a second location and makes a kill the falconer could be liable. We would ask that the debate does not exclude falconers and their quarry species by requiring a "quick fix" decision. Such discussions require careful consideration by both parties to ensure the law is flexible and accommodates this minority use. The old pest species open general licence covered this well. Falconers see the change as a retrograde step and would like it reversed or amended. It is simply too prescriptive.
- The concept of returns on "pest" species makes no sense. A farmer can shoot as many as needed to protect crops without requirement to submit returns but a falconer on his must do so.

Following our submissions, English Nature has concluded the whole issue of quarry licences needs looking at positively, but without time pressure. As a result, we shall be furthering this debate during 2008.

Proposal Ref	Support for Change Yes/No	Comments on Timing/Phase	Comments on Licence Purpose
14	No	Insufficient time to enable fuller consultation with interested parties within the falconry community. Should be removed to Phase 2 or later as a matter of priority.	Serious anomalies in the species list need addressing. The paradox of adding so called 'pest' species to the falconry licence will cause transgression either by ignorance or deliberate intent. It is absurd that a landowner can request a falconer to kill species on his farm under one licence and yet the legislation prevents normal falconry activity. Hawk Board believes this will cause confusion, leading to malicious and confused prosecutions by anti falconry groups.

Bill Prickett

sculptor



Finished
Goshawk on
stand



Bill at work on a
Peregrine

Crocodiles. Love them or loath them, when their paths cross with humans they can, on occasion, turn into something of a nuisance. It was just such a crocodile causing problems at a small community in Northern Queensland that indirectly shaped the future of the young explorer and marine mammal trainer, Bill Prickett. Bill was helping the Queensland National Parks Authority to capture the 16-foot rogue reptile when he met the crocodile expert Brent Vincent. Brent not only knew one end of a croc trap from the other but had amongst other things recently completed carving a collection of cetaceans. When Brent discovered that Bill worked with dolphins and whales (when not wrangling crocodiles), he invited Bill to view the collection and offer his professional opinion. The collection included all 76 species of whale, dolphin and porpoise and was hand carved by Brent, to scale and ranging from a 5 foot blue whale to a 5cm tucuxi dolphin. This, according to Bill, is one of the first instances he can recall that sparked an interest in woodcarving as a potential career.

An Early Interest

Bill had always known he had wanted to work with animals. At the age of five he was caught snorkelling in the garden pond in an attempt to collect frogs. His long suffering parents had to share the family home with a variety of ducks, chickens, fish, goats, snakes, insects and by the age of 15, a kestrel. It was during his foray into the world of falconry that Bill developed a keen interest in animal training and, as one of his favourite animals since the age of eight was the dolphin, he made it his goal to become a dolphin trainer.

At the age of 17, after several years of pestering the head animal curator at Windsor Safari Park, he was employed as a dolphin trainer. This was the start of 15 years of working with animals, all over the world. He has worked with many different species from dolphins, killer whales and sealions, to reptiles and, of course, birds. At Woburn Safari Park, he was charged with producing an outdoor educational show which included free-flying macaws, conyers, various parakeets and barn owls. During this time he also travelled extensively, including two expeditions to Australia (hence the



Peregrine on glove

crocodile catching episode mentioned earlier), and research trips to Congo (volunteering at a gorilla orphanage and tracking gorillas in the wild), Borneo (photographing mud skippers, fiddler crabs and studying rainforest flora) and Hawaii.

Whilst in Hawaii, studying Humpbacks with the Pacific Whale foundation, Bill saw another woodcarver, Bruce Turnbull, demonstrating on his sculpture of a

sperm whale who would spend hours talking about carving, wildlife and the world in general - this added more sawdust to the woodcarving mill.

The following year, Bill entered a carving into an art competition held by IMATA (International Marine Animal Trainers Association) at one of their annual conferences. He won first prize and sold the sculpture (of a dolphin and sealion) to the organisation as their

Behaviour of the Year competition trophy, thus giving him the idea that other people might be prepared to pay for his work!

Career Change

Encouraged by this reaction, Bill tried to fit in some carving practice in his spare time, but due to the 24 hour nature of working with animals he could never cram in as much as he would have liked (or needed) to. So, in 1996 after returning from a stint of training recalcitrant Patagonian sealions in Germany, Bill took the plunge, made a complete career change and threw himself into woodcarving on a full-time basis.

Later that same year at the International Woodworking Show at Earls Court Bill's sculpture won £800 worth of much needed carving tools. Up until then he had been using 2 carpentry chisels and a couple of wood turning gouges.

Then, with his newly acquired arsenal, he entered and won the professional category of the BWA (British Woodcarving Association) annual woodcarving competition. Other prizes in the next few years included Peoples Choice, for two years running, at the International Wildlife Woodcarving and Sculpture Exhibition at Pensthorpe. One of these sculptures was his first Peregrine on a Glove. He has also been chosen, on a regular basis, from hundreds of entries, to exhibit at the SWLA (Society of Wildlife Artists) annual exhibition held at the Mall Galleries in London. He now teaches woodcarving, writes for various woodcarving magazines and has rapidly become one of the most respected wood sculptors in the UK.

Recent years has seen Bill developing his collection of Birds of Prey sculptures. Bill loves trying to capture their attitude in wood and is one of the few carvers in the UK who feels confident enough to tackle this subject in detail. He prefers to leave the finished article unpainted. This shows the beauty of the wood, but leaves no margin for error, as mistakes cannot be repaired and painted over. Bill exhibited for the first time at the British Falconry Fair at Chetwynd Park in 2007, to much acclaim, and he will be exhibiting his latest carvings at the show in 2008.

His work has been commissioned by private individuals, businesses and jewellers (two full size saker falcon were commissioned by Grant Macdonald, Goldsmiths, and reproduced in silver.

As well as appearing in a royal household in Abu Dhabi, his work is held in collections all over the world. His sculptures are also available as limited edition bronzes and bronze resins. Various galleries in the UK have examples of his work, but much of his time is spent producing sculptures to commission.

You can see more of his work on his website www.billprickett.co.uk and E-mail him at info@billprickett.co.uk, or telephone **0845 2570887**.



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Chichester's Peregrine

If you look at the map showing the distribution of peregrines in the 1976 BTO Breeding Bird Atlas (resulting from surveys between 1968 and 1972), you will be faced with a frightening illustration of how human activity can affect the distribution of natural species. It shows this largest of all our native falcons restricted to the extremities of the north and west of the British Isles. Once widespread, peregrines had been brought to the brink of extinction in this country by persecution and the introduction of DDT pesticides.

When the next atlas is published in 2011, following survey work just starting, it will almost certainly show peregrines distributed throughout the country. This increase can be put down to the banning of DDT in 1972 and the greater protection now in place for our wildlife. The Wildlife and Countryside Act now gives strong legal protection to peregrines and their nests and the RSPB has been instrumental in actively fighting illegal activities such as egg collecting

and the stealing of chicks from the wild. Regrettably, there are still some parts of upland Britain where peregrines are persecuted but encouragingly, these pressures are less of an issue elsewhere these days due to better law enforcement. Nevertheless, this remains a scarce bird with just 1402 breeding pairs recorded in the whole country in the last full survey in 2002.

As peregrine numbers increased in the late seventies and eighties, suitable natural territories began to be at a premium and by the mid nineties peregrines were being observed on tall buildings in urban situations, taking advantage of the security and the availability of food. On the south coast, having capitalised on suitable cliff territories, they began to be noticed on several tall man-made structures between Southampton and Brighton.

In the late nineties, several nest boxes were installed by the Sussex Ornithological Society. This provided a unique opportunity to study these birds more intimately. Of all these urban nest

sites in the south of England (there are many more throughout the country), probably none is more spectacular than the one at Chichester Cathedral in West Sussex.

A male peregrine was spotted roosting on the cathedral spire during the winter of 1994/95 and a nest box was installed but in spite of the presence of a female the pair did not take to it. Following the success of another box on a building in Brighton, the box at Chichester was changed for one of a similar design and re-sited in a more open position early in 2001. That spring the female was joined by what appeared to be a new male and laid four eggs. However, the initial excitement was dampened as the eggs proved to be infertile. This was later put down to the immaturity and probable lack of experience of the new male.

The following spring, 2002, a female returned and again laid four eggs. This time, all four hatched (one male, three females) and all successfully fledged. Since then, what is probably the same female has produced four eggs each year and, apart from 2004 and 2007 when one egg failed each time, all have hatched and successfully fledged. This means that over six years they have successfully reared 22 young falcons, which must be one of the highest success rates for peregrines in the wild.

It is interesting to note that each annual clutch has produced a sex ratio of one to three, but this has alternated between more females and more males. By 2006, this had resulted in an equal number of males and females reaching fledging. Will the 2008 brood return the balance that was lost in 2007?

The success of this nest lies in the security provided by the cathedral and the



In flight

Superstars



Learning at playtime

proximity of an abundant food supply over which they have a commanding view. Whilst attending the nest the bulk of their diet consists mainly of pigeons, doves and starlings, the last two being the lighter male's prey of preference.

After the breeding season, however, they hunt further afield on the tidal inlets along the coast and from the collection of skeletal remains at the base of the spire the skulls of a large variety of prey have been identified. These include snipe, black-tailed godwits and other wading birds, lapwings, teal, black-headed gulls, terns and moorhens.

People often ask whether we are sure that it is the same pair of birds nesting each year. Because the birds aren't ringed, we do not know for sure but following

the installation of a camera in 2004 it has been possible to monitor the nest and watch, in intimate detail, their family life. Over the years one senses them gaining experience in bringing up the youngsters and everything points to them being the same birds each year.

Because the female doesn't start incubating until all the eggs have been laid, there is a very close hatching period. In spite of the gruesome spectacle,



On the lookout

feeding is always fascinating to watch. Having brought in a kill (minus its head), the male always tries to start feeding the waiting row of chicks but the female rarely allows this. She takes the kill from the male and then feeds the chicks one at a time until they have had their fill. As each one is full, it steps back and the next one is fed. There is never any squabbling. Even when they are developed enough to feed themselves, there is order. It is touching to see the care that the female lavishes on the chicks, mantling them with her outstretched wings and tail whenever the sun beats onto the nest or heavy rain blows in.

The camera was installed by the RSPB and, with the help of the cathedral management, this has provided an ideal opportunity to include Chichester Cathedral in their 'Aren't Birds Brilliant!' projects. At Chichester, the public are invited to view the birds from hatching through to their first flights. Each year's saga is played out in the local press and on television allowing yet more people to engage with the peregrine family.

This year the Chichester 'Aren't birds brilliant!' event will run from 26th April until 21st June, 10am until 5pm (4pm Sundays). From the start of the season until 6th June, there will be a monitor in the Cathedral Cloisters Restaurant showing live footage from the nest. Then



Peregrine at rest

from 7th June there will be a viewpoint with telescopes in the cloisters' Paradise Garden to see the young birds flying. The event is free of charge and last year attracted over 1 0,000 visitors. The nest camera can also be accessed via the RSPB website (www.rspb.org.uk).

The family can usually be spotted roosting on the spire in the evenings until late autumn when the juveniles leave, initially accompanied by the female.

However, the male can still often be seen perched high on the spire throughout the winter. He is guarding that special territory that has seen so much success and brought so many people so much pleasure.

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Photos courtesy of David Shaw and Graham Roberts



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Neo after a successful flight



Neo and the Novice Game Hawker part 2

As Neo's season progressed we both continued to grow along a very steep learning curve; Neo gradually learning to centre attention on myself in expectation of a flush, learning about the need for height and how to handle different conditions of wind, whilst I learned about the delicate and difficult art of setting up slips at wild partridge.

Just when we were beginning to get somewhere, with Neo starting to take reasonable and reliable pitches, the season was interrupted by the birth of my daughter resulting in an enforced rest for Neo. When we returned to flying, Neo had taken a big step backwards in terms of fitness and desire to gain height. With quarry now getting much harder to find as the winter progressed we started to struggle. The weather wasn't helping

much either as at times it felt like every flying opportunity was met with high winds whistling round the car as I pulled into the farm, something that did nothing to help the quest for pitch and style.

Determination shown

Success was correspondingly sparse, although the determination with which Neo was chasing game presented to him was never diminished. One of the

positives however was that Neo had all but cured himself of flying check. Early attempts at wood pigeons had proved fruitless due to his inexperience and he had also taken to having a nervous disposition towards crows. With enough success and near success at partridge he was showing signs already of being wed to game and he could now be flown with wood pigeon in the vicinity without too much worry. Occasional flocks of overwintering field fares were proving to be the only distraction from the business in hand.

Neo did have his moments but the laws of sod and murphy combined, as they often do, to mean that the best pitches corresponded with the times when the game that had been marked down failed to materialise. Mostly we were flying wild partridge (both greys and red legged) which by late in the season had become very adept at flushing when the falcon was out of position and making the most of the available cover and escape routes. The frequency that partridge managed to reach cover just before the falcon made contact was a lesson in the art of survival. There were also times when it looked like contact could have been made and perhaps inexperience in footing skills was also a factor. Certainly there were times when game were struck but not brought to bag. A few partridge were caught, enough to keep Neo's focus but we were still a long way short of achieving our goals of a high flying game hawk.

The low water mark of the season came when I took my brother in law, who was over from Canada for Christmas, out to see Neo fly. As I was getting used to, the wind was blowing hard, maybe too hard to have tried a flight, but with a guest to impress I persevered. The flight when it came was a farce with the falcon raking off after a covey of partridge running across another field and then disappearing only to return from the opposite direction to land on a telegraph pole from where he then spotted the partridge we had marked down and on missing on his first pass at them still on the ground he drifted off down wind to be found over two miles away after an exhausting telemetry chase.

For the next two weeks he refused to take anything at all resembling a pitch and so we were back to the basics of careful slip management to try and build his pitch back up from scratch. A previously

ignored field of rape however proved to be the antidote required. Early season forays in this field had shown no game to be present at all but now I discovered that several coveys of partridge were in residence. The field slopes gently with the prevailing wind blowing roughly uphill and so providing some natural lift for the falcon, just what was needed. The first few days flying on this field (not consecutive days, being careful not to over hawk the ground) resulted in a few close calls, but with the partridge flushing when the falcon was slightly out of place they were making the cover of the strip of trees running down one side of the field. The lesson was not missed on Neo and success came on a day when Neo had taken a much higher pitch. A lone partridge was flushed and with Neo at a much higher pitch the immediate pressure on the partridge was reduced and so it rose over the bordering trees and out across the next field never to make it to the next sanctuary. Although Neo missed on his first pass, his momentum and speed was such that he easily overhauled the fleeing partridge on his second attempt.

Advantage gained

With this success under his belt the next time at this field Neo used the wind that was blowing strongly that morning to his advantage, going away downwind and coming back above the field at a very impressive pitch. As we had literally been tripping over partridge on this field I had decided to put him up before just walking the field up. So up went Neo and off I walked. Very soon I was running through the rape as the expected coveys failed to materialise. Neo was waiting on faithfully above, his pitch improving all the time whilst down below my lungs were close to exploding as I ran in a zig zag down the field, my feet like diving boots with the collected mud. If only I could flush a partridge now, everything was set up for a vertical stoop from an enormous height! Alas it was not to be and I eventually called Neo down to the lure and headed home. A field that one day had been full of partridge was now barren of all game and I never did find partridge or any other game back there for the rest of the season.

We were now however making real progress and Neo was getting back to being much more reliable and looking to make a reasonable pitch. A string of

close calls followed over the next few weeks but the end of the season was rapidly drawing up on us. With a few days booked off work at the end of January and the weather forecast for light winds things were looking good for a few days sport at the end of the season.

Saturday morning arrived with a clear blue sky and a gentle breeze (perfect flying weather) and found us spotting the fields at Barry's farm from the nearby roads. There hasn't been much game in evidence on this small farm for a while but today the small rape field has a covey of partridge in residence as well as a couple of cock pheasant feeding on it. The approach to this field is difficult as it has to be made across a couple of open fields and so it is difficult to hide your approach from the quarry. After parking up and getting Neo ready to go I walked round the first field and stopped at the entrance to the next field that was still in plough and laid between me and the rape field that was my goal. I planned to release Neo here to gain height and hold the partridge where they were as I approached the rape field. As I prepared to strike Neo's braces however I noticed a partridge looking back at me from in the middle of the ploughed field and a long way from cover, our luck was definitely in today! Neo roused and took off, straight for a nearby telegraph pole and sat, the little git! I couldn't leave him to move on his own accord as he would soon spot the partridge, or those pheasant, from where he was. I briefly got out the lure and called him to me and he started to work gaining height and looking all business circling up and keeping a good position right over me. Once at a reasonable pitch I started running into the ploughed field. The going was very heavy and I felt completely exhausted by the time I got to near where the partridge had been spotted. All the time Neo had been gaining height and was now a good 300ft or more right above us. Just when I was beginning to think that I had merely imagined the partridge and was thinking I couldn't run another yard up got a small covey. Neo was coming down at a very steep, nearly vertical, angle and at an incredible speed. Although the partridge were in full flight he pulled out of his stoop and caught up with them as if they were standing still. There was a burst of feathers as Neo struck his chosen bird which tumbled into the earth below. A quick wing over and Neo



Neo on block perch

claimed his prize as a few small feathers still drifted down. What an amazing sight this had been. Sure, there are many game falconers out there that expect this, or better, most times that they go out in the field, but for me it was my first kill by my falcon from a reasonable pitch and boy did it feel good. I phoned my wife telling her all about it like a jibbering child on Christmas morning, I told her I loved her, I told her how lucky I was to be alive and all the good things that I have in this world. Falconry can do this to you sometimes.

Back to the farm

The next Monday found us back at Barry's farm, but this time nothing could be spotted from the road. I parked up and as I sorted out Neo I could hear a

couple of cock pheasants proclaiming their presence to each other in the distance. Setting off across the big field in their direction I stopped frequently to scan ahead to see if I could spot the still calling pheasants. Then, as I was approaching the edge of the field one of the pheasants showed itself by calling as it flew across an adjacent field right towards me and landed at the shallow ditch not 30 yards in front of me, this was too good to be true! Neo has not had much opportunity to fly pheasant and a couple of early season encounters with cock birds showed him to be less than enthusiastic for taking them on. However, he was a different bird now, he was turning into a killer game hawk, surely this was his moment to bring it all together?!

I struck his braces and after a rouse he headed off and was soon working his way up above me. The experience of the other day was obviously fresh in his mind as he climbed and climbed. Not wanting to push him too far I ran to the ditch and started running along it trying to flush the pheasant, but nothing happened. By now Neo was getting even higher, he was in fact higher than he'd ever been, by some way. The ditch led into a big bramble bush, this was the only place the pheasant could have got to. I kicked and thrashed at the brambles and eventually I heard the sound of the pheasant taking off from the other side of the bush. I shouted "ho!" but there was no need. By the time I looked up and located Neo he was on his way down having been just behind me at the time of the flush. As he started to level out however I realised that he wasn't now chasing the pheasant. From somewhere a lone partridge had also flushed (probably from the same bramble) and it was this he focussed on, overhauling it easily. Although he barely seemed to even touch the partridge it crumpled like it had been shot and crashed into the ground below. I'm pretty sure it was dead before Neo got to it on the ground.

Laying in the field

I lay next to Neo in the middle of the field of winter wheat as he plucked and ate his prize. I allowed him to take a full gorge as I let the moment sink in along with all the trials and triumphs of the season past. I decided that this was to be the end to our season despite there being a few flying days left. Anything after this would have been an anti-climax. I could also feel spring approaching, the partridge coveys were definitely starting to split up and spread out and the cock pheasants were already getting in practise at displaying. With two grey partridge taken from a small area in two flights I was also aware that I was now catching the winter survivors which are the coming spring's breeding stock of this precious bird. So, time to take stock, be thankful for what I'd had and let nature's cycle renew. I had had all that I could have asked for this season and Neo has a great foundation now to go on to greater things. We have both learned a lot and the bond between us has grown strong. I can't wait to find out what adventures the next season's game hawking with this special bird brings.



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Adriaan with Goshawk



Dutch Day Out

Falconiformes is a name quite well known within the UK for breeding and supplying a wide range of raptors for falconers, aviculturists, parks and private collections. I am fortunate enough to count both the owner of Falconiformes, Jan Wooning, as well as the manager, Adriaan Koster, amongst my friends. In fact it is through the generosity and kindness of Jan that I have been able to concentrate a great deal of my falconry effort on the Aplomado Falcon here in Britain in recent years.

A chance conversation with a mutual friend led to me realising I had missed Jan's birthday by a day. Too late to get a card over in time I arranged a flight at short notice and a couple of days later delivered belated birthday card and

present personally. Having spent the morning socially with Jan and Adriaan the afternoon was going to be devoted to hunting rabbits with a stunning eyass female Goshawk. The Goshawk is Adriaan's current pride and joy and by mid November of her first season she had taken over one hundred of quarry. This consists mainly of rabbits but with several Hares thrown in for good measure. The Hares were taken when Adriaan visited the UK with his Goshawk. Unfortunately for Dutch falconers the Hare, although fairly abundant, is not a legal quarry for hawks but may be shot by registered gun hunters.

The only practical raptor

My friendship with Adriaan goes back many years and I have had the pleasure

of his company several times hawking Grouse with me in Scotland. With the laws governing falconry in Holland differing so much from ours here in the UK a Goshawk is the only practical raptor for Adriaan to hunt with at the moment. As Dutch law currently stands effectively only Peregrines and Goshawks can be used for hunting. All other raptors can be owned and exercised but not hunted. Moves are currently afoot to try and get the legislation changed on this point but as things stand falconers are very restricted in what hawks they can and can't fly and also what quarry species may be taken. Those wishing to become falconers and practise the sport themselves are also severely restricted.

There are only 200 falconry licences issued in Holland at any one time and

those wishing to take up the sport find themselves in a “dead mans shoes” situation. Before embarking on a falconry career the would-be falconer has to study for and then take a general hunting exam and then undergo a two year apprenticeship and eventually take a falconry exam. Then and only then can a falconry licence be applied for and this will not be granted until one of the 200 becomes available. Adriaan himself had to wait 15 years between finally passing his falconry exam and being able to actually hunt with a raptor in his native country.

One of the problems with this limited number system is that those who no longer wish to, or are unable to practise falconry any longer are apparently reluctant to give up their licences. This means that quite literally those new to the waiting list have to wait for other falconers to expire before being able to legally hunt in their own country. Again moves are afoot to try and increase the number of licences granted but those I have spoken to seem to think that things are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

Our rabbit hawking afternoon was to

take place within a heavily industrialised area extremely close to the port of Rotterdam. The ground we would hawk had been reclaimed from the sea many years ago and is basically very sandy soil bound together with grasses. Due to the general lack of alternative food rabbits are very numerous in the area and tend to dig only very shallow warrens. This means they are quite easy to bolt with ferrets and should the ferret kill under ground then digging them out is a quick and easy exercise. When I first saw the land we were to hawk I found it hard to believe that we would be enjoying any sport that day. But a quick scan round with binoculars soon showed that there was an abundance of potential quarry.

Invitation to Hawk

The area we were to hawk is actually the hunting ground of another Dutch falconer, Paul Backhuys and it was by his kind invitation that we would be enjoying our sport that day. He met us on site along with Margo an apprentice falconer who would be working the ferrets for the afternoon. Once introductions were completed it was time to get on with the

hawking. Just as we took our first steps to move away from the cars a large falcon passed right over our heads and made after a Buzzard which it then started to harass relentlessly. The falcon passed so close to us it was possible to see that it had anklets on and looked to me very much like a Gyr/Saker hybrid. It ignored any attempts by us to attract its attention with a lure and when it had driven the Buzzard off it too then slowly drifted away.

The first couple of holes produced nothing, despite showing plenty of signs of rabbit activity. But from then on the afternoon took a decided turn for the better and we saw plenty of rabbits. The third hole we ferreted produced a rabbit in less than a minute and as the rabbit broke from the ground the Goshawk was off the fist in a flash and had nailed it before it had gone 10 yards. So quick in fact I didn't even get my camera up to my eye before the flight was over. A good start for the Goshawk and one that would help focus its mind on the afternoon's proceedings. I had wanted to get a photo of the hawk in pursuit of the rabbit and had therefore concentrated all my efforts



Goshawk after a successful flight

in watching the Goshawk. Goshawks, just like Harris Hawks, seem to have very acute hearing and will practically always cock their heads to one side and slightly alter their stance on the glove before a rabbit breaks. This early warning means that anyone hoping to get some action shots normally has a couple of seconds or so to prepare. Unfortunately the action had been far too quick and was over almost as soon as it had begun.

The rabbit was despatched by Adriaan and the Goshawk was allowed to pull some fur for a while before being taken back up onto the glove. We moved on and one of the ferrets was put down another hole. This time the rabbit broke some distance behind us and again the reactions of the Goshawk were blindingly quick. A decent flight ensued with the rabbit being taken just a yard or so short of the safety of another hole. It had jinked twice in an effort to throw off its pursuer but to no avail. Rabbit number two was in the bag. The goshawk was given several minutes for a breather and then we moved on.

The next two rabbits we bolted were both taken well by the Goshawk and each time the hawk was allowed to pull at some fur before being taken back up onto the

fist. As we moved forward to a fresh set of holes the Goshawk suddenly stood very erect on the fist and tightened up her feathers.

Adriaan raised his fist and loosened his grip on the field jesses. The hawk had spotted a rabbit in the distance that was obviously intent on feeding. It was a very long slip but the Gos took it on and so nearly succeeded. Right at the very last minute the rabbit became aware of the hawk and scrambled to safety. The hawk flew on a little further and settled quite high up on an electricity pylon. The problem then was that from its vantage point it could see a great many more rabbits and set off in pursuit. Fortunately it failed in its attempts to self hunt and eventually took stand on another pylon. A lure was produced and the Goshawk, after a minute or two of hesitation, came down to it and was taken back up onto the fist. I found it curious that at no time was the garnished fist proffered in an attempt to recall the hawk. After a couple

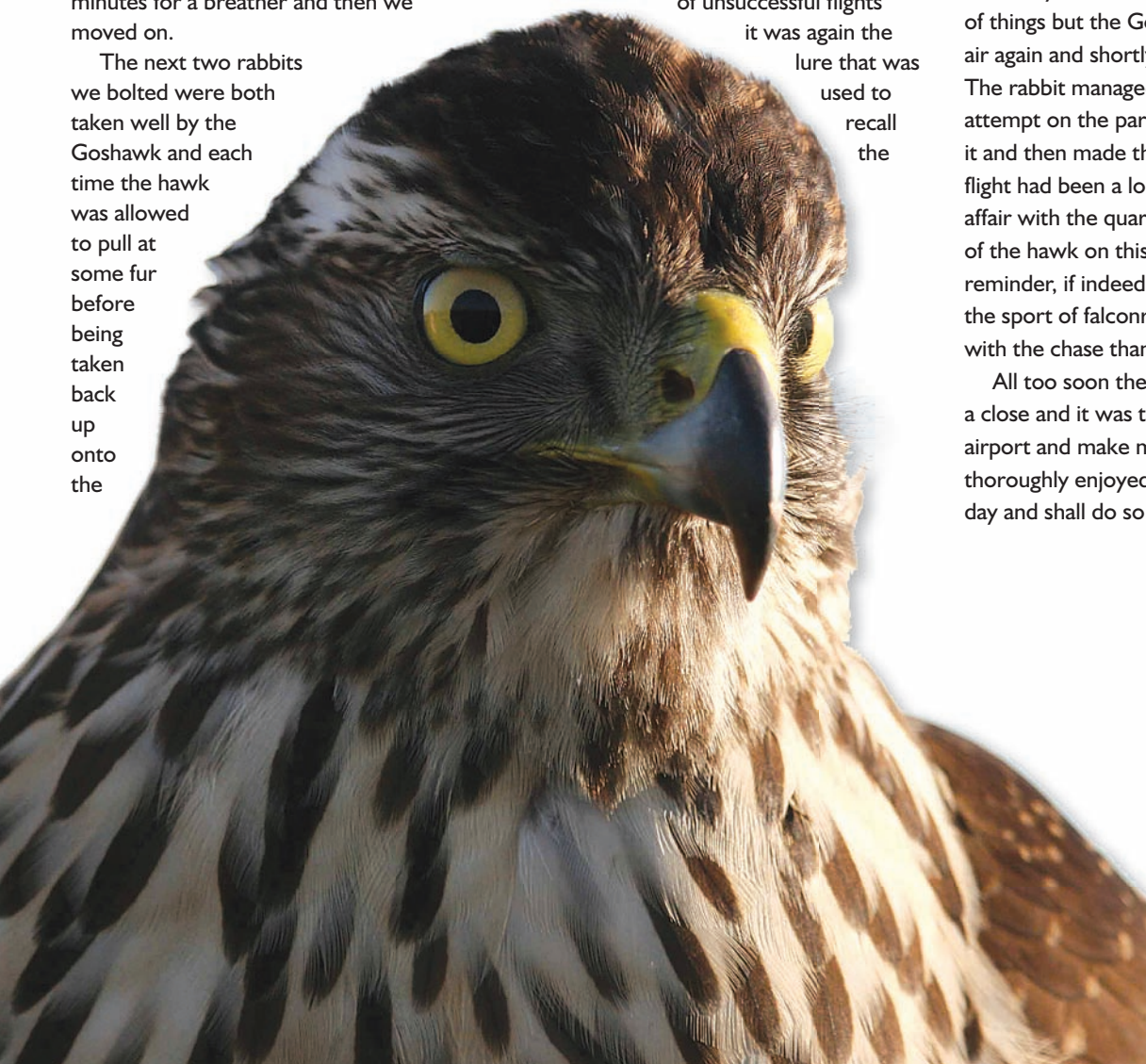
of unsuccessful flights it was again the lure that was used to recall the

hawk. I can well remember several years ago going out with some Belgian and French falconers and they also only ever used the lure as a recall method when flying their Goshawks.

Best flight

We continued ferreting and a total of 10 rabbits were flushed during the course of the afternoon with seven being taken. As is so often the case the best flight of all did not end in success for the hawk but was an absolute cracker to watch. A rabbit broke from a bolt hole quite some way behind us and made off at a good pace. The Goshawk threw herself from the fist in hot pursuit and rapidly closed the gap on the rabbit at a very impressive rate. Each time it looked as if the rabbit was about to be taken it would jink and avoid the clutches of the hawk. Once the hawk totally mistimed its attempt to nail the rabbit and ended up on the ground. For many hawks this would be the end of things but the Goshawk took to the air again and shortly closed the gap again. The rabbit managed to avoid one more attempt on the part of the hawk to grab it and then made the safety of a hole. The flight had been a long and action packed affair with the quarry getting the better of the hawk on this occasion. A stark reminder, if indeed one was needed, that the sport of falconry is more concerned with the chase than the kill.

All too soon the afternoon drew to a close and it was time to head to the airport and make my way home. I had thoroughly enjoyed going Dutch for the day and shall do so again very soon.



Stunning looking Goshawk

A Tribute to simply the best Kestrel

Xraysay was picked up from the side of the road 17 years ago, assumed dead by a kind-hearted lady, whom on seeing the bird move and realizing she was alive, took her to a parrot shop for help. The parrot shop in Bedford revived the little hawk and offered her to me for a new lease of life.

I took the little underweight waif in and trained her alongside my Ferruginous hawk and later Golden Eagle.

I named her Xraysay, which in the Nharo, Bushman language means "Take everything slowly". She was so frail and barely able to stand initially. But she learnt quickly to fly extremely well to the lure, which she treated as a toy, not a carrot to be caught and eaten. With an un-garnished lure, she flew equally well as to whether it was garnished with a mouse or a chick.

At the end of a few dozen swings I threw the lure into the air, which she rarely failed to catch. She would return to the ground and wait for me to come. Whatever I offered in my fist was always preferable, regardless of what was attached to the lure and she would fly straight to me for her reward, even if my glove was empty she would leave her 'caught mouse or chick' and fly to my fist, whereupon she would not be disappointed.

Increased fitness

Her fitness increased daily until she made the magic figure of 100 stoops consecutively, without landing, before I called her in. Not long after her first '100 stoops' she could be called upon to fly 100 stoops almost any time I took her out, with the correct conditions.

Deciding to let her set her own record and be acknowledged in the *Guinness Book of Records* I set out one morning with a friend, who was training to be a game-keeper, called Wayne. He was to operate the video camera for the proof



Xraysay 1990 – 2007

and another gentleman accompanied us to 'count' the stoops. He also loaned me a courtesy car from the local garage while my car expired temporarily.

There were 40 knots of wind blowing, so I felt a little anxious about going for the record that day, although Xraysay certainly preferred some wind to nil wind conditions. I should not have worried as she flew magnificently with 135 consecutive stoops, including three hover periods, without landing. After the 135th, she started panting, so I threw up the lure, which she caught effortlessly. Convinced she was about to be acknowledged in the record book I was delighted with and very proud of my

little hawk whose motto has always been "The best things come in the smallest packages".

Disappointed, I discovered later, to be entered in the special book, one must approach the various authorities first, prior to the intended record breaking date, where upon an 'approved observer' is sent out for the event to be confirmed with a back up date should the first occasion not go ahead. However, the video is good enough for my memories.

On one occasion many years ago, I asked my friend Ray Turner if he would like to come and watch my kestrel flying 100 stoops. He agreed he'd love to see a kestrel flying 100 stoops.

I met Ray and another friend, Wilf and released Xraysay, then waited for her to settle into her routine in a strange field. She would explore the local territory, especially for resident kestrels, then settle, rouse, then start to stoop.

On this occasion she flew around, settled, roused, then stooped to the ground and refused to return to my call. I ran over to find she had caught a live shrew and was in the process of dispatching and eating it. In preference to flying a 100 stoops to my sorrow! Ray still reminds me of the day of the '100 stoops', whenever I tell him of her later achievements.

Another little worrying quirk of hers was to check the territory for the local resident kestrel, which when found, would end in a tremendous dog-fight between her and the wild one. The result was always the same. In mid-air, she would bind to the wild kestrel on the breast, whereupon they would both return to earth with Xraysay on top, landing with her wings outstretched as if using a parachute for a gentle landing.

Wherever I was, I would hear the loud keeking from the victim and would run like mad to rescue the wild one. On arrival, I would offer Xraysay a fresh dead mouse, which she would jump to my fist for. She seemed to say, "Anything from my keeper is better than what is in my talons". I would then put the wild caught kestrel, gently, into the back pocket of my waistcoat and take it home overnight where I would transfer it into a large, aired box with a chick and a mouse. By the following morning every wild kestrel had eaten either the mouse or the chick, (usually the mouse). After which I would then release it in the same place it had been captured and fly Xraysay somewhere different.

Her tally; 32 kestrels. To her, I think it was a game. To the wild kestrels, a hard fight followed by their first decent meal for a while? It was not until three years ago I was finally able to call her off a chase of a wild kestrel; perhaps in her twilight years she preferred a more leisurely flight. Or maybe it was because she has never been beaten and she no longer felt she needed to prove she was the best pilot around.

Many years ago, I wondered if she

should have more food than she could eat, whether she would eat the freshest first, or use sense and survival to eat the oldest first, leaving the freshest to still be edible later. I gave her three mice one day. (Of which she ate two.) The following day I gave her three white mice. She ate the remaining black mouse. The next day I gave her three brown mice. She ate 1 white mouse. The following day I gave her another three black mice. She ate both white mice remaining. The next day she ate 1 brown mouse.

Whilst I am fairly sure she didn't like



her food hung or high and never took any interest in carrion, she did appear to have a strong, natural survival instinct. Xraysay adored her flying and stooping, yet I felt she should have company as I spent so much time away. There was no question of getting her a companion or even a mate, as she would have instantly driven off or attacked any newcomer or potential mate.

Egg laying

However, she laid six infertile eggs every year for the first 13 years of her life. Then four years ago I begged two fertile eggs from a hawk in Manchester. Xraysay sat on both the eggs so carefully; having discarded the previous eggs, seeming to know the new ones had a chance. But both failed to hatch. In desperation I tried

another hawk, called Kevin who gave me a fertile egg. This one hatched. The offspring I named Audax. Xraysay adored him and spoiled him rotten. Whenever Audax was hungry he would cry. She would rush to him with whatever she was eating and feed him like a small chick – even at four years of age.

When Audax was a year old, Xraysay laid four eggs and I had hopes that they may hatch. Although Audax was Xraysay's foster-son, as they were not related I thought it could work. Nothing hatched. At 13, she may have been too old, or he may have been too young. The following year she laid three eggs, but again nothing hatched and in her 16th year she ceased laying.

Xraysay and Audax flew so beautifully as a cast. In their early years together, Xraysay would wait for Audax to fly. He would then land by her side and it always looked as if she whispered something in his ears. He would then fly with renewed energy more determined to catch the lure. He would then stop to get his breath back and she would go into her routine to show him how it should be done.

Later they flew together developing a trick where Xraysay would usually start stooping, then Audax would arrive and they would both double back a split second apart, which usually caught me out. Sometimes it could be 30 minutes or sometimes five. But whenever one of them caught the lure, the other would rush in to receive a

reward. Since it was a combined effort, I always rewarded both whoever caught the lure first.

Travelling in the car, Xraysay always sat on my headrest behind my seat and Audax always sat on a bow-perch behind me. If I exited the car, Xraysay would join Audax on his perch, but as soon as I returned to the car, she would be back on my headrest, where she leaned against me and seemed to have no objection to my leaning gently against her.

There were periods of long anxiety on my part, on three separate occasions when Xraysay decided to explore the country further. The first was 17 years ago, when I had started flying her. She flew off, not to return from near the Newmarket racecourse. With notices everywhere, she was eventually found

three days later. A local gamekeeper who, on seeing a kestrel flying with a bell and jesses, but no person in sight, swung a champagne cork around attached to a piece of string and called out to attract her attention. She came along to play with the champagne cork and was offered a piece of steak, which she thought was better than the cork. The police were notified and called me immediately and Xraysay and I were reunited.

I then bought a set of Telemetry

Two years later, whilst flying Xraysay at my cousin's home in Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, she flew off with the wind and failed to return. Searching all day and stopping only when it was dark, a local policeman, named Jim, called to say my Kestrel had been found. When I asked for directions, mentioning I lived in Duxford, he told me to come to the police station and he would accompany me to where she was. Jim directed me to Cirencester and allowed me to exceed all the speed limits as he agreed this was an emergency; should she fly off again, it may not be possible to find her again. After a few twisting roads, he pointed ahead to where he could see a lady, called Joy, standing outside a house.

I braked hard and we jumped out. Joy pointed to a tree and I put out my fist calling "Ho". Xraysay shot out of the tree like a bullet from a gun, taking the mouse I fished from my pocket and paused. She looked at me with her beak full of mouse and I put my hand out, where she returned the mouse. She felt heavy and after weighing her, she topped the scales at 8 ½ oz's, over an ounce above her flying weight. Joy explained they had a resident kestrel in their small wooded area, which had disappeared a week ago (driven off by Xraysay), but when she had heard the notice on the radio of a missing kestrel, she had looked at the new arrival to find there were jesses and a bell attached and called the police station.

I have been in touch with Joy and Rex, her husband and with Jim and his wife Linda since then. People brought together by Xraysay. This time, although wearing a transmitter, Xraysay had managed to pull off the aerial, which when tested, took the range to the receiver of 10 yards.

She last flew off again five years ago, when she was located in Tewkesbury after a very worrying seven days of searching. This time someone noticed her flying around their garden and she was offered a piece of pork fat, which she came down to eat whilst the local raptor centre was called in, who called her to their fist and she came immediately. Her microchip was then read and I was reunited with her through the Independent Bird Register. This time she had not fared so well and had lost weight whilst away. Although still wearing her transmitter, the



batteries were flat when she was found.

In the last five years she never flew out of my sight, having tried the wild living she thankfully opted for home comforts. During the early five years I flew Buzz, the Ferruginous Hawk, Xarra, the Golden Eagle and Xraysay (though not together!). There were occasions when other people came hunting with me, either falconers or otherwise. Occasionally I may have had a disappointing day with nothing caught, or perhaps a quick kill or even two rapid kills, which made for a short day. On every 'dull day' as such, Xraysay would come out of the land rover and look at me as if to say, "I won't let you down".

Ballet in the sky

She would then proceed to stoop and dive, perform stall turns, wingovers and

hover, pirouetting through the skies as if her life depended on her flying skills. When she finally started panting I threw the lure up as high as I could which she never failed to catch.

Two years ago, at 15 years of age, she failed to catch the lure when I threw it up, then collided with Audax once and then flew into me, all within a period of a few days. I took her to a family party soon after and my Aunt Mary said she thought she had a cataract in her right eye.

An immediate appointment with Neil Forbes, who diagnosed a cataract in her right eye, which was surgically removed, together with the lens – a smaller edition of the human operation. Back flying fairly soon and no more collisions or missing the thrown lure. Although Xraysay slowed down as she got older, she managed 60 stoops at the age of 15 and even managed 12 stoops at the age of 17, on a particularly windy day.

Aski, my German Wire Haired Pointer, joined the team of hawks 12 years ago. He developed an immediate bond with Xraysay and Buzz, being sensibly wary of Xarra. He also loves Audax.

During the last eight years he became so protective of Xraysay, and later of Audax too. Whenever they were together, especially in the car where Aski would have the front seat, Xraysay my headrest and Audax the perch in the back. If someone came to the car and talked to me, or got into the car (a squeeze!) Aski would be quiet and polite.

However, should I get out of the car, Aski would ensure no-one came near the car, making such a noise if anyone approached, it would awaken the dead, yet the hawks were happy enough in the confident knowledge that Aski was looking after them. Xraysay would happily sleep through the loudest barks Aski could muster, even standing next to him, yet she was very wary of any other dog.

Loved by all

I can confidently say that nearly everyone who met Xraysay or saw her fly, loved, admired or respected her, possibly all. She seemed to love everyone she met and would without question have given her life for her son, Audax.



Preparation Book

Permis de Chasser

hunted, shooting, types of guns, ammunition, legislation, security of arms and much more.

There is also a list of 400 multiple choice questions, each with its own picture (for a reason I will explain shortly). The 21 questions for the exam will be taken from these 400. The exams are held throughout France and are computer linked with results fed through to Paris. It's here that all the information on results is collated. The examinations are very well organised with each department having its own office building and team of employees, trained solely for the control of hunting within its area.

After you have applied to take the Permis de Chasser you will be given dates of when the exams will take place. However, there are also other times when introduction days, theory practise and practical practise are offered to ensure you are under no illusions of what you will have to do. The whole organisation of this process is quite amazing and very professional indeed.

The theory exam works through a computerised system with a running video sequence. Each question picture that I mentioned before in the book is taken from a clip from the film, which gives you a link to each question. The exam is run under strict control, more on the lines of a college exam; proof of ID, etc. taken on entry to the exam, so no cheating.

The film sequence is played with each of the 21 small films/questions having a one minute pause to enable you have a chance to answer the question. The films could be anything from showing different species of birds, asking which you can hunt or not hunt, hunters in the field performing good or bad practices, or recognition of shot

patterns from a particular cartridge.

Each candidate has a small hollow box with a card placed over it with the series of questions numbered systematically. You also have a small pointed pen which you use to push through the card into the box indicating your choice of your answer. On completion of the exam all the cards are collected and put into a machine to calculate your score. You are expected to have a score of at least 16 out of a possible 21 to pass.

The scores are fed through to Paris via internet link and in turn the results returned.

Within a few minutes of this happening the computer link prints the certificates for those who have passed.

Practical

The practical examination is based 100% around shooting, both shotgun and rifle. You are expected to be able to shoot both gun types in a safe and proper manner, under the supervision of an examiner. You will need to know how to load and unload both, move from different areas safely, and shoot the correct targets.

The designated examination area is permanently set up with automated clay pigeon trap stations and an automated, simulated wild boar shoot. The clay pigeons are flown in a series of directions and you must only shoot in areas which are safe and shoot the correct coloured clays. If a clay pigeon is released which is the incorrect colour and you move to shoot you will lose points. After the completion of the clay pigeon stations, you have to be able to dismount the shotgun and place it in the correct carry case in the back of your hunting vehicle.

The next stage is using a .22 rifle

Thinking of moving abroad and want to continue your sport of hunting with birds of prey? Depending on which country, you may be very surprised on how easy it is to own and hunt a bird of prey in England in comparison.

To be able to take part in any form of hunt in France you have to have the qualification of the "Permis de Chasser" (Hunting Permit). I have recently had the experience of the system that is in place in France, to gain the hunting permit. To be honest I think it's a good system, although it could do with a few improvements.

To gain the qualification you have to take two examinations, one practical and one theory, both of which are free of charge.

Theory

The theory examination is a series of 21 multiple choice questions (all in French of course, and no, you cannot have a translator). Each year a book is published called, Le Nouvel Examen du Permis de Chasser. The book has a massive amount of quality information about animals, birds, (including some on falconry), dogs for the hunt, trapping, a wide range of species which can and cannot be

on a simulated wild boar hunt; this type of hunt is called a battue. A Battue is a line of hunters which take designated positions, and must only shoot within a designated area. You will be expected to show control over the gun, load, unload, inform other shooters you are ready to take part, mark out your area which you are allowed to shoot in and shoot the moving targets.

The scoring is carried out through an electronic hand set with the

The whole experience was quite incredible, it was performed in a meticulous and professional way which is a credit to the French hunting

Exemple

QUESTION E1
L'emploi de ce chien à la chasse est :

autorisé **A**
interdit **B**

Question d'entraînement E1
Dans la case E1, perforez, à l'aide de votre styler, la lettre de la colonne claire correspondant à la réponse qui vous paraît correcte :

la lettre A, si vous pensez que l'emploi de cet animal est autorisé
la lettre B, si vous pensez que l'emploi de cet animal est interdit.

Pour perforez correctement votre carte, tenez le styler à la verticale et appuyez à fond au centre de la lettre qui correspond à votre réponse.

Nous vous rappelons qu'il ne peut y avoir qu'une seule réponse juste par question. Prenez votre temps, regardez bien l'image sur l'écran. Relisez attentivement votre réponse.

Si vous pensez vous être trompé, vous pouvez répondre à nouveau en perforant la lettre correspondant à votre choix définitif dans la colonne marron, qui est une colonne de secours.

Colonnes de secours

Attention ! Toute réponse dans la colonne marron annule purement et simplement votre précédente réponse dans la colonne claire.

Si vous n'avez pas bien compris, il est encore temps de poser une question à l'examineur. Une fois l'examen commencé, vous ne pourrez plus le faire.

DÉROULEMENT DE L'EXAMEN

Examination example

Examination book example

information being fed back to the computer. There are a possible 21 points and, as the theory, you are expected to gain at least 16 to pass. On completion of the exam you are given your results; if you pass you are given a second certificate.

Sending your application

You now have to send these two certificates, a proof of posting envelope, two passport type photos and a further form to the federation office.

Within four weeks you receive your Hunting Certificate, a bit like a driving licence. Because France is split into different areas similar to Kent, Surrey and Sussex for example, you can only hunt in the area you live in, unless you seek prior written permission. To hunt in your own department you will join the local hunt and pay 150 euros each year to the federation for a hunting ticket, a bit like the English fishing ticket.

and protect certain species. Areas of land are set aside for the sole purpose of letting the animals and birds breed naturally and of course these are out of bounds at all times. Hunts have to be well organised and controlled for the well being of all involved.

I personally think England

would do well to take a look at what France have and start to move towards a similar system. You may or may not agree with what I say but the French are looking after a tradition they have had for hundreds of years very soon the tradition we have in England may be no more.

Oh, by the way after you have your Permis de Chasser, if you want to keep birds of prey in France you have to apply for a Demande D'Autorisation De Detention D' Animaux, D' Espèces Non Domestiques, but that's another story.



Before going to the shooting stands

Austria's International October 2007



At the falconers call

In mountainous Northeastern Austria, looming high on a rock cliff more than 100 meters above the small Kamp River valley, Rosenburg castle peeks out between misty veils as I drive through the village taking the route toward this “castle of roses”. What must have been a lengthy ascent on horseback still takes a good quarter hour, winding up through dense forest growing on the side of a strategic mountain. Built in the 12th Century and transformed to a Renaissance palace in the 16th Century, Rosenburg Castle is where Josef and Monika Hiebeler, along with the Austrian Falconry Club, are hosting an International Falconry Symposium, followed by three days of hunting.

Placed in wall niches, tethered to colorful blocks along boundaries of a grand courtyard, raptors greet my passage beyond thick fortress walls. In this former tilting (jousting) yard, weathering falconry birds bring medieval days alive. I can almost hear thundering hooves, then clashes of tilting contestants as I walk toward registration. Banners depicting stooping eagles and airborne falcons embellish several walls. Illustrated plaques offer intricate descriptions of falconry and some of the exhibited raptors, as well as bird breeding details.

Panoramic view

A second enormous, inner tiltyard and terrace adjoin by a massive

iron gate. Panoramic views across treetops would have provided backdrop for the many martial pursuits gracing these lawns during medieval times (including falconry), and add drama to present-day falconry demonstrations that regale visitors with many unusual breeds of eagles, falcons, owls and vultures flying in orchestrated patterns as well as among costumed riders cantering around the yard. I look forward to a stirring exhibition following the symposium.

Held on the castle's first floor in the oblong Marble Room, where arched and ornamented ceilings reign high above the colossal windows rising from floor level, speakers bring light to international falconry affairs. British Hawk Board Chairman Jim Chick explains how desire to move his organization from being reactive to proactive led to aiding Dr. Nick Fox, whose dream to gather falconers from around the globe became the successful Festival of Falconry weekend, enjoyed July 2007 in England. Bringing people together to share their falconry culture and traditions seemed to spark imagination, build individuality, hone unique skills and provide a hotbed of information exchange and understanding as globalization intensifies.

One theme that stands out to me while speakers present is that of being understanding. A basic component in taking responsibility for our human impact on Nature's eco-system, we often have fears of truly understanding “the other side's positions” (e.g. such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals “P.E.T.A.”) since full understanding of an opposing viewpoint is often interpreted as disloyalty. We can honor our natural, human tendency

Falconry Symposium



Falconry demonstration

to recoil and retreat from opinions we see as unacceptable; however we can then choose to reach out, using our free will to seek truer understanding, to listen, to comprehend and to forgive rather than make negative judgments or blame. Our ethics as falconers can be inspiration for groups like P.E.T.A., such that we can advocate with them. Being understanding is a fundamental component in creating futures for global falconry communities.

The afternoon sun warms us on the inner tiltyard terrace while watching the Hiebeler's unique collection of eagles among other falconry birds dance with lures manned from horseback and afoot. This demonstration echoes through the next days as we assemble each morning, called to the hunt by trumpeting falconers stationed on the



Back to the fist



Golden Eagle in flight

ledge of one castle tower. Thanks are given; the falconer's oath is spoken, then Josef and Monica Hiebeler arrange hunting groups.

The first morning I am standing next to falconers that I know from Czech Republic when Josef stops organizing for a moment and with eyes sparkling leans toward me to say, "Deer eagles!" in very clear English.

Containing hefty eagles bred for hunting deer, our group is small. A short drive from the castle, nine hunters are dropped off in positions at a distance that surround a huge island of trees in agricultural fields. Each sits on a folding stool brought for this purpose, eagle on fist. Several assistant falconers walk through the forested area beginning to move deer out toward hunters. Eagles are unhooded, given opportunity to choose their attack. Multiple deer course in random directions, every hunter has ample prospects in several morning hours. One bird pumps its wings in a vigorous straight path toward three charging roe deer,

grabbing hindquarters of the largest. Full wingspan helps her balance during attempts to bind to the head, looking promising as the deer bucks and spins, but she drops off after a few more violent plunges and the deer dashes away. Wind howls with fierce determination, some eagles are blown off course and many other flights go unfulfilled. Even so, three deer are brought to bag before we break for lunch.

At a new location, falconers are positioned in a similar manner for afternoon hunting, which produces three more deer catches and one fox secured by Josef's eagle!

Strong, bitter winds with periodic sleet storms compound challenges for eagle flights the next day, in particular for many first year birds, as a long line of eagle falconers begin hunting the fields near Austria's border with Czech Republic. However, abundant hare offer plentiful opportunity, enthusiasm remains sharp and soon these majestic raptors are mastering their environment. About 10 feet in front

of me one eagle connects with a galloping hare minutes after leaving the fist. Like slow motion cinema, all expressions of predator and prey are visible as the hare surrenders to immense, taloned feet. Several times eagles appear to have made the catch when an amazing skyward hurdle occurs and the vaulting hare bolts for safety leaving the eagle clutching grasses or clumpy dirt.

Cleaning a young eagle

Upon returning to the castle one young female eagle, quite bloodied from her catch, is tethered upon a portable eagle block set near the inner tilyard's terrace. The falconer holds an active hose, filling a bucket as Josef repeatedly plunges a scrub brush, then swishes water over the birds' feet and chest, scouring away dirt and blood. The hose is then turned on the eagle's plumage, cleansing any remaining grime while the bird seems to enjoy the treatment, not once attempting to bate. Other falconers carry out similar routines of post hunting care.



Monica Hiebeler

Gyrfalcons, peregrines, goshawks, Harris' hawks, and various crossbreeds encounter similar challenges with forceful winds as I walk alongside falcon hunters on the third day. Persistence pays off for many, though not for a beautiful white goshawk, showing great heart

in a chase over hundreds of meters without catching her hare. One peregrine accelerates all through a long tail chase to bag her bird; a supercharged flight! Two different gyrfalcons manage to wait on for flushes, each taking their pheasant after suspense filled, turbulent flights.

Hosted with wonderful warmth and sincerity, this inspiring falconry

symposium creates a powerful field of resonance in an elaborate, final closing ceremony. Revealing studious attention to ancient hunting traditions, the celebration is yet another special consideration given to everyone during these days. After a delicious dinner, we are seated again in the Marble Room where several assemblies of falconers playing trumpets, bugles, French horns and other similar musical instruments entertain us. Josef explains each progression of these horn ensembles that guides us through honoring every animal laid out in the falconer's bag. Choral horn notes describe thanks to Nature's bounty, give tribute to animal spirits, and observe hunter's good fortune. Melodies offer gratitude to those animals that have given life so that life may continue interweaving the very web of Nature. Music becomes a brush painting the living forest and field, sketching the twitch of fox's tail, flare of deer's nostrils, leap of the hare and flight of the pheasant.

I began to hear messages through the music: falconry is for finding new ways to care, to give, to create and enjoy the rich bounty and goodness of Nature. Falconry is for finding responsible fun and happiness in practicing the art.



Jim Chick speaking at the symposium

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Northern England Falconry Club

Club meets the first Wednesday of each month at :-

Lane Head Hotel,
2 Brighouse Wood Lane, Brighouse,
West Yorkshire

Contact: Karl on
01924 891179



The Welsh Hawking Club



South Wales Region

2nd Monday of the month at The Rat Trap Hotel.
Further details from Martin Cox - Tel: 01633 790372

North Wales Region

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

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.
Regional Secretary: Kevin Mosedale - 01392 833681

Yorkshire Region

Meetings take place at The Milton Arms, Barnsley
Regional Secretary: Frank Pitts - 01709 555538

For further details about the club, contact the secretary, Mike Clowes, on

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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 or
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Further details from:

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

South Eastern Raptors Association (S.E.R.A.)

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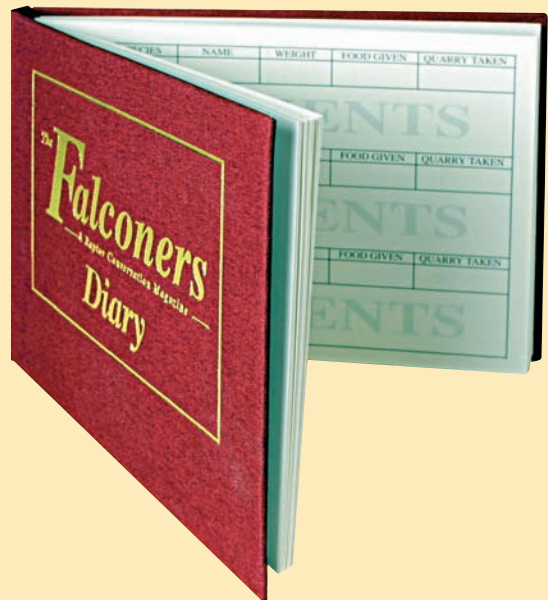
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