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# The *Falconers*

& Raptor Conservation Magazine



**Falcons for Grapes Project  
in New Zealand**

# AVIAN EGG INCUBATION WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 24—26 2010 HELD AT

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## What will be covered on the workshop?

This is an intensive, practical workshop which will cover the following topics:

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## Who is running the workshop?

Susie Kasielke (Los Angeles Zoo) and Pat Witman (San Diego Zoo) will be leading the workshop with additional support from ICBP's team of staff

*Susie has been working with birds at the Los Angeles Zoo for over 30 years and has been Curator of Birds there since 2001. Through her involvement with the California Condor Recovery Program, she worked with the staff at Los Angeles and other facilities to develop and refine propagation, incubation and rearing methods for condors and other species. She has been teaching workshops on avian egg incubation for zoo groups in North America for 18 years.*

*Pat has been working for San Diego Zoo for almost 30 years with 20 of those years being involved with artificial incubation and hand rearing at the Zoo's Avian Propagation Center (APC). The APC has hatched almost 300 avian species, including the first California Condor. Pat joined forces with Susie Kasielke two years ago to combine their knowledge into the actual workshop format.*



## How much will it cost?

Course (including lunches and coffee): £450

Spaces limited to 20 people so book fast to get a place

## For further information please contact:

Jemima Parry-Jones MBE at the above address

Tel. ++44 (0)1531 820286

Email [jpi@icbp.org](mailto:jpi@icbp.org)





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Colin Wynn

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I hope you have had a good summer and that your hawks and falcons have been through the moult without any problems – although I expect that some of your birds will have moulted out very quickly.

Also, I hope that for those of you who have new hawks, the training is going well, particularly those who have their first hawk and are taking advice from someone more experienced. This is where joining a club is so important – it enables the inexperienced falconer to benefit from others' knowledge and to have the opportunity to be mentored by a more seasoned falconer.

The Campaign for Falconry still have a number of items for sale which didn't sell at the Festival of Falconry or Falconers' Fair. Items available include T-shirts, Polo shirts and enamel badges. If you want to purchase any of the items or find out more details please contact Doreen Page at  
doreen.page@btinternet.com

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](mailto:peter.eldrett@tiscali.co.uk)

## New range of falcon vitamins

There is a new range of vitamin supplements available in the UK which are designed by avian vets and are targeted at raptors.

Research has been carried out in Italy and falconers and raptor keepers have reported better reproductive performances, better flying activity and a reduced time for moulting. Overall it has been claimed that the products enhance the well-being and performance of raptors.

There are three products in the range – Leucaspray, Falcon Top and Falcon M – and they have been created using a combination of ingredients including vitamins, minerals and amino-acids to aid condition and help prevent diet deficiencies in captive birds of prey.

Leucaspray is a spray designed for falcons to reduce problems with feet and it helps prevent difficult issues such as bumblefoot. It forms a thin layer on the skin preventing germs penetrating and its components act against pathogen contamination.

Falcon Top is a dietary supplement designed to help balance the daily diet of falcons and hawks to keep them healthy and improve their performance. It has a unique formula made up of herbal extracts which are able to protect the liver, stimulate the immune system and protect against diseases.

Falcon M is very rich in amino-acids which are designed to improve the moulting of feathers in raptors. It can be used as a daily nutritional supplement during the moult and contains all the essential vitamins and minerals birds of prey need to maintain health during the stressful time of moulting.

To find out more about these and other products from Falcon Vitamins, telephone 0788 632 4270 or visit their web-site at [www.falconvitamins.co.uk](http://www.falconvitamins.co.uk)



## Letter

Dear Sir

After visiting this year's Falconry Fair at Chetwynd Park I feel I must make the following comments. Having attended this Fair for almost 20 years, I feel that the standards cannot be compared as to how they used to be. Whilst I was glad to see the back of some of the events in the main arena such as the jousting, I was also disappointed in seeing Jonathan Marshall's display compared to what he performed last year.

As for the man with the bald eagle, I distinctly heard him warning people with small dogs and children to keep them safely out of the way but could not understand why as I don't think I saw the eagle get more than two feet off the ground, and I think that was only once. Most of the time it just ran to him. After that the display put on by the Yorkshire Hawking Club was like a breathe of fresh air. On the Monday, according to the programme, it stated "continuous arena events", but by 11 a.m. nothing had taken place. Can anyone explain to me why a fly fishing demonstration later took place in the main

arena of a Falconry Fair when normally it would take place at the lakeside.

As for the Falconry equipment trade stands, I have never seen such shoddy and poorly made equipment from the one from Holland, particularly the block perches and ring perches, which I thought were dangerous for the birds made to perch on them. I can remember years ago one only had to look at a piece of Falconry equipment, i.e. a glove, bag, perch, etc., to know which supplier it had come from. Now when I walk around these trade stands, much of the equipment looks the same, in fact most of it looks as if it was imported from Pakistan. I could certainly count on one hand the manufacturers who make their own brand.

This event used to be so popular, but if it continues in this vein I, like many others, may not attend in the future.

Kind Regards,  
Brian Jones – by e-mail

# Peregrine Falcon escapes from a sticky situation

**A** female Peregrine Falcon, that was sent from Guernsey to the Hawk Conservancy Trust for hospital treatment has been returned to the Channel Islands, by private jet and set free.

The peregrine was found beside a road on the island unable to fly and covered in a gluey-oily substance. It was initially taken to the Guernsey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who had hoped to release it back into the wild. However, after receiving advice from the British Trust for Ornithology it was decided that the peregrine needed specialist care and the Hawk Conservancy Trust, near Andover, was contacted.

The Hawk Conservancy Trust has a specialist bird of prey hospital that treats over 200 sick and injured raptors each year. The hospital has an expert avian vet on call and a full-time hospital manager.

Hospital Manager, Kim Kirkbride, said 'initially it was suspected that the peregrine was covered in glue because her feathers were so sticky and caked together. She was in otherwise good condition but certainly unable to fly.'

Scientists from the Environmental Scientifics Group used high-tech equipment, including an electron microscope and mass spectrometry to analyse a sample of her feathers and establish that the substance coating the peregrine was a natural ester based oil (vegetable/seed/fish) with a high presence of silicon (sand) and soil.

Chief Executive Officer, Ashley Smith, said, "the results have presented a totally different scenario to the one first imagined when she was found. We now believe that the peregrine may have preyed upon seabirds, possibly a gull, which has used its primary defence mechanism of projectile vomiting to escape her. The partially digested fish matter would have coated her feathers and she would then have tried to clean herself by dust bathing. This would explain the high presence of sand and soil in the sample, which had encrusted her feathers and prevented her from flying."

The peregrine, who was believed to be at least three years old, was released back into the wild by Hawk Conservancy Trust Falconer, Paul Betchley, said, "it was an amazing moment. We opened the door to the carrying-box and she hopped out, got her bearings and then took to the skies. Let's hope she's learned her lesson and will avoid gulls in future!"



## Angie and Rob get married

**O**n Saturday, 26 June Angie Chick and Rob Newark were married at Salisbury Methodist Church. This is the church where Angie was baptised and her parents, Jim and Liz, were married many years ago so there are lots of special memories connected to it.

When the date was arranged two years ago the one thing that couldn't be planned was the weather so it was an added bonus to have such a gloriously sunny day giving guests the opportunity to enjoy the lovely garden at the reception held at Antrobus House in Amesbury.

Angie grew up with Birds of Prey so it is not surprising that she shares Jim's love of falconry and more recently Rob has become involved too and they will again be supporting the Hawk Board displays and demonstrations at the Game Fair at Ragley Hall.



Nick Kester  
Communications Officer



**T**he Falconry Fair at Chetwynd Park, Newport, Shropshire over the Sunday and Monday of the first May Bank Holiday was not its usual success. I fear the organisers have lost focus. Sunday was not well attended as was evidenced by the Hawk Board 100 board (£1 a ticket) taking two days to fill as opposed to the normal one day. Monday, which is usually Joe Public, was equally poor. Very few clubs were there (possibly due to the cost) and the non-falconry trade stands were much reduced. Unfortunately the name obliges our attendance but unless the event recreates the sparkle of its earlier years even that is in doubt. Some of us remember the party that was Althrop Hall in Northamptonshire.

# Game Fairs and licences

## 2010 CLA Game Fair

The CLA Game Fair at Ragley Hall in Warwickshire at the end of July is far more important. I know key DEFRA ministers have been invited and they all have a relevance to falconry: Jim Paice looks after Animal Health; Richard Benyon, whose estate hosted the Festival of Falconry, oversees wildlife; and Lord Henley has charge of companion animals. The opportunity to have a brief 'hello and here we are' is essential. At the same event a small team hopes to meet with Natural England to discuss a variety of topics that affect falconry. A busy three days ahead.

## Welsh Game Fair

On the penultimate weekend of June I helped Terry Large at the Welsh Game Fair for two long and hot days. No credit to me for this, I was canvassing for land on which to fly my goshawk, but all credit to Terry for his unceasing efforts. At every event he works into his commentary the Campaign for Falconry, and there is always a collection available at the static display – this one will have raised over £200 for the fight to protect falconry.

So here is a thought. Why doesn't every display giver make the same effort?

It costs nothing and is a simple pain-free method of making the public contribute to something you love (and which earns you a living).

All you need to do is contact the campaign and ask them for advice.

You can email Terry at [terry.large@btinternet.com](mailto:terry.large@btinternet.com)

## Licence applications

For those of you looking to apply for quarry licences or to use open general licences this year, remember there have been some changes in Scotland and England. Wales was due to change but the Assembly government seems to have run out of steam and has postponed any alterations until 2011.

## Good news, bad news

There are two news items which should be out of embargo by the Autumn issue. But here is a teaser. The first was a bad news story that has become a good news one, and the second is a fantastic news story that should have a huge positive effect on our sport. Cannot say more, so you can speculate all you want, my lips are sealed!

Hope the moult goes quickly and you will be ready for the season on time and in good feather.

## Useful Websites

Hawk Board  
[www.hawkboard-cff.org.uk](http://www.hawkboard-cff.org.uk)

DEFRA  
[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

British Falconers' Club  
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The Welsh Hawking Club  
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Yorkshire Falconry Club  
[www.yorkshirefalconry.org.uk](http://www.yorkshirefalconry.org.uk)

The British Hawking Association  
[www.thebha.co.uk](http://www.thebha.co.uk)

The South East Falconry Group  
[www.sefg.org.uk](http://www.sefg.org.uk)

South Eastern Raptors Association  
[www.seraonline.co.uk](http://www.seraonline.co.uk)

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# Tinkerbelle – the Highs and Lows

**F**alconry is a funny sport; what I mean is, when things go right it looks easy. As an example, you load up your dogs and falcons or hawks or eagle, whatever bird you're flying, and head out for an afternoon of hawking. Everything just clicks. You find a great slip and your dog goes on point, you flush and, just like that, your bird has caught something. Looks so easy. I have had folks in the field with me when things go right and they say, "Wow, you could fill your freezer and feed your family doing that"! Naturally I do my best to explain that things don't always go this smoothly, giving them reasons such as weight control of the bird, experience of the bird, and I go on to explain that the prey is not going

to just give itself up; there are lots of factors that go into hunting with a trained raptor. I'm not sure how much of my explanation actually sinks in, probably most of what I say doesn't compute anyway, but the truth is when things all come together falconry does look easy. Like I said, falconry is a funny sport and things can turn from good to bad in a single moment.

## Five year old Perlin

Tinkerbelle is my five year old female perlin; she is a fantastic game hawk. Tinkerbelle routinely catches game and does so from a very nice pitch. In Tinkerbelle's early days she hunted game that was found out in wide open fields. Keying in on my dog's point she

would come over and the flush was made. But that was back while I lived in California. Now that we have moved to Eastern Oregon things have changed and Tinkerbelle has had to make adjustments in her flying style and game catching. In addition, I have had to figure out all the little things that went along with finding game in flyable situations. Here in the high desert of Eastern Oregon there are good opportunities for game to hunt Tinkerbelle on. We have Hungarian partridge, starlings, doves and valley quail, all of which Tinkerbelle is quite capable of catching. The most numerous are, by far, the valley quail which Tinkerbelle prefers to hunt. Valley quail are just slightly smaller than Hungarian partridge and very difficult to hunt with a waiting-on falcon.



Tinkerbelle with bandaged wing



Valley quail are masters at finding cover and are never very far from it, which can be very challenging. Tinkerbelle has had to make some adjustments in her pitch as well as how she strikes the prey. To be successful your falcon must bind to the quail, rarely is the quail caught when simply struck down. They run off in an instant, never to be seen again. Once she figured out that holding onto the quail was the way to go, Tinkerbelle's game catching numbers began to climb quickly.

### Good and bad slips

So, as I said, falconry is a funny sport; the moment you think things have settled into a good routine – think again. I was going through a slump where I was picking bad slips and misjudging the good ones. I try not to hit the same area too many times in a row for obvious reasons, although the winter weather sometimes dictates where I can and can't go. Snow is not an issue but mud is and this year we have had lots of rain. With all the mud, slips were becoming harder to come by, and at times I settled for ones that were not very good. The temperature had warmed up just enough to melt the snow and ice which, like I said, made getting to some of my better spots impossible. Not having access to many of my regular spots, Tinkerbelle and I found ourselves in a stretch of a few weeks where nothing was clicking. The quail would flush too soon or Tinkerbelle would get distracted by some other raptor, it just seemed like something always came into play. But, like all slumps, they run their course and finally things started to turn the other way. I started to find quail in better situations and, more importantly, Tinkerbelle was getting more focused on her job.

And as I thought back on the times when something had gone wrong they all seemed to have one thing in common -- I was in a hurry to get in the field, racing the sun for that last slip of the day. And because I normally fly in the mornings, my birds, after waiting all day, were just that much sharper. Plus, when hunting late in the afternoon, predators want to eat before night fall so they try just that much harder and that can lead to some bad things happening.

The day was shaping up into one of those days when things just kept piling up. My wife, Cordi, and I have a large



Feeding on the fist

ranch and there is always something that needs to be done. As the day went on I could see my hawking opportunities dwindling and the late afternoon was looking to be my only chance. My cut off time to fly was 4:30 pm. Much after that and the sun, or lack of it, became a real issue. It was now 3:00 pm and time was running out! Flying too late could mean Tinkerbelle spending the night outside, exposed to very cold temperatures, coupled with a wide assortment of hungry raptors willing to eat her. Right at the top of the list would be the northern goshawk which, despite the fact that we really don't live in what would be considered a goshawk area, we have. They come up into the ranch following the arroyo canyons which finger into our ranch. I used to think goshawks were a really cool, neat bird to see flying around; not so much anymore. They are very aggressive and come from seemingly out of nowhere and chase Tinkerbelle or "assist" in our hunts. And not just Tinkerbelle. One day I was standing right next to my male gyr/peregrine who had just caught a pheasant not more than two feet away, when a goshawk came in low and fast trying to grab my falcon! Charming birds these goshawks!

Finally I rushed home, loaded up Tinkerbelle and the dogs, and headed down the road looking for a quail slip. I found a nice group of quail in an area I have flown many times with much success. I released Tinkerbelle and turned the dogs loose. Vegas, my English pointer,

went on point almost instantly and I glanced up to see Tinkerbelle coming over. I flushed the quail and Tinkerbelle came in with a rush of air and made a sharp turn, closing quickly on a quail. She flew past me and behind a small tree and as near as I could tell was going to bind to the quail . . . when I heard the sound. My first thought was that I had just killed my falcon because the sound left no doubt of what had just happened. Tinkerbelle hit a fence! I ran over to the spot where I had last seen her and found her sitting on the other side of the barbed wire fence on top of some tumbleweeds.

### A quick wing check

The quail was knocked out cold, but as I reached across the fence for Tinkerbelle, the quail regained its faculties and flew off. My first thought was to check her wings. As near as I could tell both seemed still attached and unhurt. I then looked her legs over and they also looked undamaged. As I lifted Tinkerbelle back through the fence I could tell she had definitely had her bell rung and was not quite all there. Walking back to the truck I felt nearly sick to my stomach, because what I meant when I said, "I think I just killed my falcon" is this – to me, falconry is a team effort. My team is made up of three parts, the falcon whose job it is to fly and catch the game, my dogs whose jobs are to find and point or retrieve the game, and me. My job is to find the game in good safe places so the rest of the team can do its job. I am supposed

to be the “brains” of the outfit and I take that responsibility very seriously because the safety of the team depends on my judgment. Yes, things do happen that are totally out of the control of the falconer for sure and I understand that. And there have been times when I looked at a possible slip and said “I don’t think so” and drove past because sometimes “it is better to not fly and live to fly another day”. Walking back to my truck I was looking at Tinkerbelle intently and I noticed she was holding her right wing just a little funny. The wing was just slightly hanging down and, with all things considered, I felt lucky. I also noticed that her tail mount was missing so I tracked it back to the fence and found it had been ripped off from the impact of hitting the fence. The mounting bracket was all bent up and twisted, rendering it almost unrecognizable. I fed Tinkerbelle up and returned home.



A posing Tinkerbelle

### Tinkerbelle in the house

Because of the very cold temperatures at night I thought it best to keep her in the house that night as she was, in all likelihood, in shock.

Soon after placing Tinkerbelle on an indoor block I noticed blood dripping ever so slowly off the right wing up near the shoulder area. I immediately called our veterinarian and took Tinkerbelle in for a closer look. By the time I had arrived at the animal hospital Tinkerbelle was holding her wing almost normal which I took as a good sign, but the blood was still dripping and that was not a good sign. With me holding her, our vet gave Tinkerbelle a thorough examination finding a half inch long cut just between the arm pit and the elbow of the wing. I was starting to relax somewhat, thinking that maybe all she did was cut herself on the fence and hoping that Tinkerbelle had dodged a major bullet. But as the vet continued to check over Tinkerbelle’s wing things suddenly went downhill fast! As the vet followed along the bones in her wing I heard the unmistakable sound of the two ends of a broken bone clicking against each other. X-ray’s confirmed that, indeed, the bone was broken. In my mind this was a death sentence to this wonderful falcon. My stomach instantly knotted up and I felt sick. Falcons that break bones in their wings are doomed to breeding or display and since Tinkerbelle

is a hybrid, breeding was not an option. At any rate, her flying and hunting career was all but over....or so I thought. Small things began to turn in Tinkerbelle’s favor. Yes, she had broken a bone in her wing but it was the smaller of the two wing bones which, as it turns out, was a huge stroke of good fortune because the larger bone would act as a natural splint for the smaller bone. This was critical because no surgery was required, just rest and keeping the wing immobilized for three weeks by taping it to her side. Once again, falconry had taken me on a roller coaster ride, from the high of seeing Tinkerbelle stooping on a quail to the low of finding her in the fence; from the low of thinking that her hunting times in the field were done, to the x-ray of the broken bone and then the high of being told she would recover fully.... all in one afternoon. As a lifelong falconer you would think I would be somewhat used to these ups and downs, but I’m not! And I admit that I did have my doubts for a full recovery. Having been around birds my entire life I have found that nothing good comes from a broken wing.

I contacted a friend who is one of the leading raptor veterinarians in the U.S. to further discuss Tinkerbelle’s situation and, much to my relief, she confirmed that yes, in four to six weeks Tinkerbelle

would once again be terrorizing the local valley quail populations. In fact, I was told that many trained falcons that have had the same injury as Tinkerbelle recover without the falconer ever being aware of a broken bone in their wing, something I would have found hard to believe before having first hand experience. If Tinkerbelle would not have started dripping blood I don’t think I would have taken her in for a closer look. She was not showing any other signs and holding her wing normal. I would have simply put her in her mews and rested her. I was told that as long as she was not overly active she would heal up just fine . . . hard to believe. I placed Tinkerbelle on a low block and since she is not a bird that bates I felt confident she would be just fine. After three weeks I removed all the tape and gave her full range of motion. The only real danger would come if the wing was kept immobilized too long and stiffness set in, this could cause trouble. So I carefully unwrapped her wing, placed her on the block perch, and removed the hood. I was just a little anxious to see how she would, first, hold her wing and second, would she use it. Tinkerbelle is not an active falcon on her block, she doesn’t bate a lot, actually not at all. She jumps around some, to her bath and such, but not like some falcons

that are all over the place. I stood and watched her for quite a long time hoping to be reassured that the injured wing was all right. Tinkerbelle didn't do a whole lot at first, she preened and roused and stretched both wings, then suddenly jumped into her bath and soaked herself. For the next two days I did not see her do anything other than jump here and there, but on the third day all doubt was erased. I went in to feed her and was greeted with a bumble bee-like hover three inches over the top of her block perch. I was smiling from ear to ear! The next test would be actual flying and the pursuit of game, but from all indications everything looked good. As would be expected, Tinkerbelle was very fat, so bringing her down to flying weight took more than a few days.

Finally the day of the true test arrived and I drove straight to the spot most likely to produce a quail slip, looking for any sign of quail feeding in the more open cover. I told myself not to be overly hopeful, as I prepared myself for seeing some sign that the wing had been injured

and was not the same. I told myself that it was likely that Tinkerbelle would favor the wing as she flew or not have as much strength in the injured wing. Any of the scenarios I just mentioned could show up and in any combination. All of the questions I had been agonizing over would be answered soon enough, the second I found a quail slip. As I drove on I saw five quail run across the gravel road and dive in the low cover on the side of the road. I unhooded Tinkerbelle and held my breath. She looked around and launched, quickly disappearing behind some trees. I jumped the dogs out of the truck and headed for the spot where I had marked the quail. I looked up to find Tinkerbelle coming over showing no noticeable sign whatsoever of being injured.

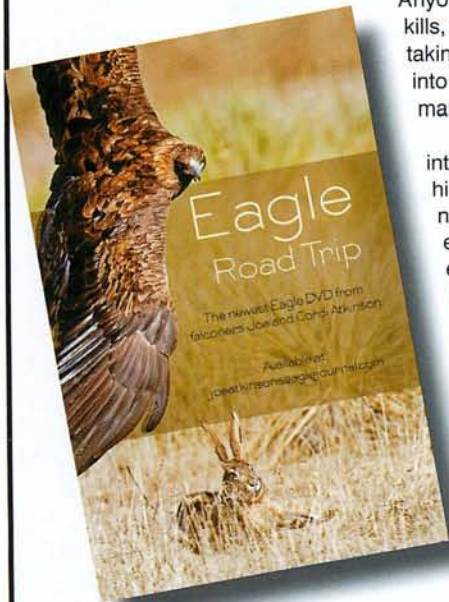
#### Quail quarry

The final test would come in seconds – could she stoop and chase game? The quail exploded in five different directions and without the slightest hesitation Tinkerbelle did a wing-over and stooped

on a quail, leveled off and closed fast, just barely missing. Watching her stoop with her old speed and determination caught me a little by surprise. I could see no difference in her flight other than her condition had dropped off somewhat. She looked exactly the same as she did before the injury!

I have spent my entire life around birds of all types. You name it and there is a good chance I have done something with it, and it does not matter what type of bird it is, nothing good can come from a broken wing. And this takes on a much more significant meaning and impact when the bird is a raptor depending on speed and agility to catch game. I flew Tinkerbelle another six weeks in which she caught several more quail in superb style and consider myself (and her) very fortunate. Tinkerbelle is now happily in her mews and getting fat, starting to drop feathers in preparation for next season. As for me, I am reliving her great flights from this past season, knowing full well that next season will bring a whole new set of highs and lows.

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# askchitty

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

## What viral diseases do we look out for in our hawks and falcons?

While some viral problems are “headline grabbers” because of their implications to other species or because of the risk of human infection they are actually quite unusual except during sporadic outbreaks.

Other viral problems are seen more frequently yet seem to attract less attention. Nonetheless they can be very important in captive raptors in the UK.

Herpesvirus- the most common sign of this infection is sudden death in good condition birds. There are various forms with falcon herpes and owl herpes being particularly virulent. There are issues with immunity as Gyrs (and their hybrids) are particularly vulnerable while Tawny and Barn owls seem resistant. These two viruses are very closely related. However, there is a more distant relative, the eagle herpesvirus, that is less virulent but can cause disease in eagles and hawks. Transmission is from infected carrier birds or from eating pigeons that may be carrying the closely related pigeon herpes virus. There is no vaccine for this condition and control is by avoiding contact with wild raptors and not feeding pigeon.

**Raptorpox-** This is commonly seen. There are a variety of avian poxviruses all of which are species/ group specific in the birds affected, ie raptor pox will affect raptors but passerine pox will not affect raptors. The signs are crusts/scabs/lumps that form over the face and legs/feet. In severe cases, a “diphtheritic” membrane may form in the mouth/ throat and interfere with eating and/or breathing. Otherwise, lesions will heal over time as long as the bird does not become immunosuppressed and succumb to a secondary bacterial/ fungal condition.

Treatment is to support the bird over several months with feeding/ fluids and to provide topical and internal antibiotics/

anti-fungals until the lesions regress. In this period the bird is highly infectious to others (virus can be transmitted via open skin wounds through contact or via objects (eg, equipment..or you!) so barrier nursing is essential with no equipment shared between birds and the infected bird being last to be fed/treated, etc. Ideally the falconer should wear special clothes/ boiler suits when dealing with the pox-infected bird. While direct contact spread is possible, the main means of spread is via biting flies, so the main means of control is to reduce numbers of gnats/mosquitos. There is a vaccine available for pigeons. However, it is not clear how effective this is, or how likely it is to cause signs. In short, the bird is vaccinated by being given the virus – lesions form in a “non-vital” area of skin. The issue is that it is unclear how infectious the vaccinated bird is to others, so it should be kept in isolation until the vaccine lesion has resolved.

**Adenovirus-** this causes a haemorrhagic enteritis mainly in small falcons and Goshawks and especially in Mauritius kestrels. Adenovirus appears to be common in pigeons, so prevention is by reducing contact with feral/ racing pigeons and, in the case of Mauritius kestrels, not to feed bird meat at all.

**Reovirus-** this has been reported as a cause of kidney infection (nephritis) and death. However, as yet, it appears to be very rare.

**West Nile virus** is found in low amounts in UK wild birds – however, it does not appear to be a problem in

Example of Buzzpox virus



captive raptors in the UK. This may be because it is a virus “adapted” to the “Old World” or may be due to the failure of the virus to amplify in transmitting flies over long hot summers. While it is not currently a problem we do need to be vigilant as changes in climate and in species kept/seen in the wild, may see the virus begin to cause disease.

In general viral control is by good biosecurity – reducing biting flies, reducing contact with wild birds and by only feeding meat from known “safe” sources. If there is a problem in a collection, spread between birds is prevented by “barriering” infected from non-infected birds so virus is not transmitted on feet/equipment, etc.

Disinfection plays a role in this biosecurity but cannot be the sole means of control – cleaning is essential before disinfection can have any effect. It is also vital that the disinfectant is used at the concentration recommended for that particular infectious agent AND it is left in contact for the required time period. If not, then the virus will not be killed, but is more likely to become resistant. As ever, when viral disease is suspected, accurate diagnosis is needed to allow for accurate control.

# Developing the High Mount Altimeter

by Jim Chick

**E**ach autumn, like many other falconers in the UK, I journey to the north of Scotland for grouse hawking and from my home in the very south of the country it is indeed a very long journey. Last year on the homeward trip I was recalling some of the memorable flights I had witnessed and the conversations some of which had revolved around the heights achieved by particular falcons.

Over the years I have heard many such conversations and the estimates given always vary wildly. This is understandable given that the average person is rather poor at assessing distance and particularly bad when trying to estimate vertical height against a clear sky. The human brain needs a reference or datum point against which to make a comparison

and on low ground something of known height like a pylon or chimney can be very helpful. However, on the hill such aids are seldom available and my thoughts turned to altimeters.

Designing a unit which could be useful to falconers presented a number of problems and challenges. It needed to be small and lightweight yet robust enough to withstand the shock of an impact at the bottom of a stoop and the result of the peak reading should be immediately available without the need to involve a computer. Many altimeter designs record the height above sea level (ASL) whereas what we require is a peak reading above ground level (AGL) so the microprocessor first needs to establish and store that data and then compare each subsequent reading against the

ground data. When the bird is released the unit takes sample readings and compares each against ground level. If the reading is greater than the previous it overwrites the earlier data, if however it is lesser then it ignores it. On the hill it is very possible to get an altitude reading which is less than the starting ground level when a bird drops into a gully and the unit must take this into consideration.

Having spoken with several eminent falconers and settled on the final design I set about writing the code with which to programme the microprocessor. For those interested in programming, the language used is Basic which although not being the easiest to encode does save on space. After several attempts and much modification I had a working prototype altimeter which was ready to field test. I had decided that in order to read the final peak altitude I would use two high intensity light emitting diodes – these would flash out the result in feet above ground level. Initially I had hoped to incorporate a bleeper but I was unable to find one small enough to fit into the unit.

I was lucky in finding two falconers who both had high mounting birds who were willing to run field tests for me and from the results that they provided several changes were made to the packaging and programming before finally arriving at the present working unit. The outcome of this project is some really useful data and with the onset of the next game-hawking season not so far away I'm sure that more interesting statistics are likely to be revealed.



Altimeter unit in comparison with a 50p coin

# A year in the life of The Yorkshire Falconry Club

**E**veryone's life revolves around calendars. Different times of the year being more important than others depending on your situation and circumstances. For some it's the farming year, some the financial year, for some the school year. As Falconers we are no exception. We have our own calendar, The Hawking year! But things never really seem to start or finish – things just roll from one thing into

another and it has been a very busy 12 months for the Yorkshire Falconry Club! Our official field meets cease at the end of February and we all look to feeding up our hunting birds and preparing them for the moult.

March brings our 'end of season do', and the posts on our members' forum turn from 'field meet diaries' to moult updates! It also gives us the opportunity to catch up with anything sidelined during the hunting season, such as tidying the

garden, any unfinished decorating or lavishing attention on our neglected, long suffering partners.

In April the show season commences. As well as attending shows on an individual level, the club had displays at many of last year's shows. These are always enjoyable affairs with members mucking in and taking turns manning the stand. We have members keeping all types of birds of prey so we can usually manage a good static display ranging from



YFC show set-up



In the field looking for Hares

Barn Owls and Kestrels to Redtails and X's.

### Club promotion

The shows are a great opportunity to promote the club, meet the public, talk about what falconry is about and some of the responsibilities involved with keeping birds of prey. You do get the odd, "Isn't it cruel keeping birds fastened down like that?", but in general the feedback is good with people showing interest and keen to know more. The days can be long and hot but when the public go home those staying over get the opportunity to relax and mix with like minded people within the falconry village. There's usually a barbeque sparked up where everyone chips in and does their bit, we fill our bellies, indulge in some liquid refreshment and swap stories of the hunting season!

The shows have also proved fantastic for meeting land owners and for gaining permission to fly on their land. Some of it is a bit further afield than Yorkshire but this is a good thing as we now have members in Lincoln, Derbyshire and as far south as Hertfordshire.

This year we attracted some new members who have been excellent

additions to the club bringing their knowledge and enthusiasm with them.

There are various events held through the year at club meetings including guest speakers, but May brings the annual Ferret Racing Championship which is always good fun (don't know who enjoys it more the kids or the grown-ups!), along with our photographic competition. June brings the AGM and then into July with more shows to attend!

### Preparation for forthcoming season

As we approach August and late summer, those with second year birds (or older), all start preparing them for the forthcoming season. Any members new to the sport are mentored and guided to get their birds going. The support given to individuals at this point is important to build confidence and ability in both the falconer and their birds.

From the 1st September onward we hold field meets every fortnight on a range of different types of land - hilly, low level, managed estates, with a range of quarry including rabbit, pheasant, partridge and hare.

However the highlight of the year has

to be the Hawking Weekends held twice a year in November and January. Both occasions are well attended with flying available from Friday to Sunday. There is



Barbeque at a show



It's snow time

house has a well equipped kitchen so Friday night it's 'fend for yourself night', but on the Saturday we make a night of it and eat as a group at a local public house – saves on the washing up!

### A snowy start

2009-2010 season saw the whole country blanketed in snow for long periods. The devastation to the rabbit population was evident. Just walking up to land there were rabbit carcasses everywhere. Using ferrets became impossible as they were staying down on dead ones that had starved in the sets. It seemed unfair so it was decided to leave them be to recover for next year's sport. This is where the effort put in by members at the shows paid off. The extra land permission gained meant we were able to continue holding field meets through January flying at pheasant and into February flying at hare.

And so we are back to where we started. March, looking back and reviewing the season just gone, thinking how we can improve for the next one and getting back to tending those neglected jobs and partners!

Guest speaker David Bradley who played the part of Billy Casper in the film, Kes

a great atmosphere and they attract both families and individuals alike. We take over a bunk house in a location central to the flying land as our base and from here we split into groups and travel out in the mornings to our designated land.

Once again the social aspect is as enjoyable as the Hawking. When the day's hunting is done and we head back to base there is usually a warm pan of home made soup on the go. This year one member who keeps his own geese

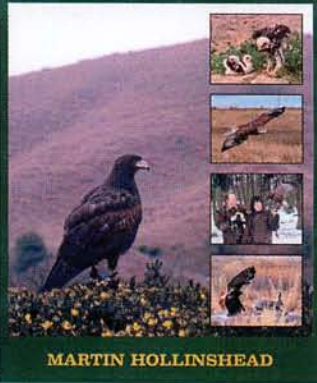
brought two with him which were roasted, providing sandwiches for everyone. Folk then get together and relax in front of a coal fire and discuss the day's successes (or failures!) and this year we indulged in some home made sloe gin made by our Fieldmaster. The bunk





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# NAFA 2009

## Woodward, Oklahoma

**T**he 2009 NAFA meet was held in Woodward, Oklahoma. This was my fourth NAFA meet and my first in Oklahoma. The locals were extremely friendly and helpful and were excited to help us find quarry. The first couple of days of the meet were a bit tough because quarry was somewhat hard to find right in Woodward. Ducks could be found with a bit of driving (isn't that always the case!) and there were pockets of quail (bobwhites). On Tuesday my German Goshawk had a couple of nice flights at bobwhites in a creek bottom. I must say that Oklahoma is

beautiful. Many small ravines and streams dot the landscape as well as stands of deciduous trees that make the landscape look like a painting.

### Invitation

Cottontails were hard to find (again, right in Woodward) so I wondered how my red-tail would do at the meet. On Wednesday we were invited to go hunting with some friendly Minnesotans. We had an aplomado, merlin, goshawk, and many Harris' and red-tails to fly. On the way to the hunting spot we stopped to fly the merlin. She was a blast to watch and the first time I had seen a merlin

fly. She came quite close to a couple of sparrows and quail but nothing in the bag. Lots of fun to watch anyway! We continued on to our spot and my friends were kind enough to let me fly my male red-tail Chase first. The spot was filled with cottontails and he had one in less than five minutes out of the car. It was a very nice flight out in the open. Next we flew a cast of three female red-tails. Being from the west coast I am used to smaller red-tails, even the females.

These females looked like monsters to me and you could tell right off the bat they meant business. Even though I have been involved in falconry for almost



Simone and Redtail Hawk, Chase



Paul, Rachel and Chris

10 years there are always new things to witness and I had never before seen red-tails flown in a cast at jackrabbits off the first. Here in Washington we are not allowed to hunt jackrabbits and flying a red-tail off the fist is uncommon because we have so many large trees and thick brush. It was an absolute blast and we witnessed many long flights by all three red-tails. In the end one of the females scored a jack and the other two, although they didn't end with quarry, put on a great show.

Next we flew the Harris'. Almost immediately after starting to walk for jacks the male Harris' had caught one on his own!

We flew the Harris' some more and also got a cottontail in the bag. After the Harris' our big group split up and we went to chase pheasants and cottontails with my goshawk. He chased a rooster pheasant and then we switched to a hedgerow with lots of cottontails. He chased well and even made one rabbit scream that he didn't even touch! In the fading light we called it a day with nothing in the bag for the gos but an absolute day to remember!

#### Aplomado flight

The next day we flew the aplomado at quail and sparrows. She pulled feathers on a quail and was a delight to watch

fly. We also flew the merlin again. Back to the jackrabbit spot and another full and fun day of hunting. My red-tail got another cottontail and we chased more quail and jacks. One of the female red-tails had an excellent flight out in the wide open on a jackrabbit. Watching her mirror the jack's moves was amazing and with no brush in the way we saw the whole thing. She crashed into the dirt in a cloud and missed the jack but not without leaving the group of us in awe! Later, back at the meet hotel, we listened to a great presentation by Raul Ramirez of Peru about flying Aplomado Falcons for abatement as well as a little bit about flying some of the native birds in Peru. It was great to hear about falconry in another country. Every night the raffles appeared well-stocked and well-attended.

#### Flights at ducks

As Friday rolled around we decided to stick closer to Woodward and try for ducks with Chris and his male gyr/peregrine Oddsod. We were up bright and early Friday morning and after a quick breakfast we headed out. We checked many ponds and had one miss. Finally we found a good pond. Up Oddsod went and we all crested a hill to make ourselves visible to the ducks. Oddsod was in perfect position and a lone Gadwall

flushed. Oddsod hit it in a picture perfect stoop witnessed by all. I will always remember that flight and what a great way to end the week. NAFA meets are always a great place to make new friends and see some great flights. This held true for the 2009 NAFA Meet in Woodward,

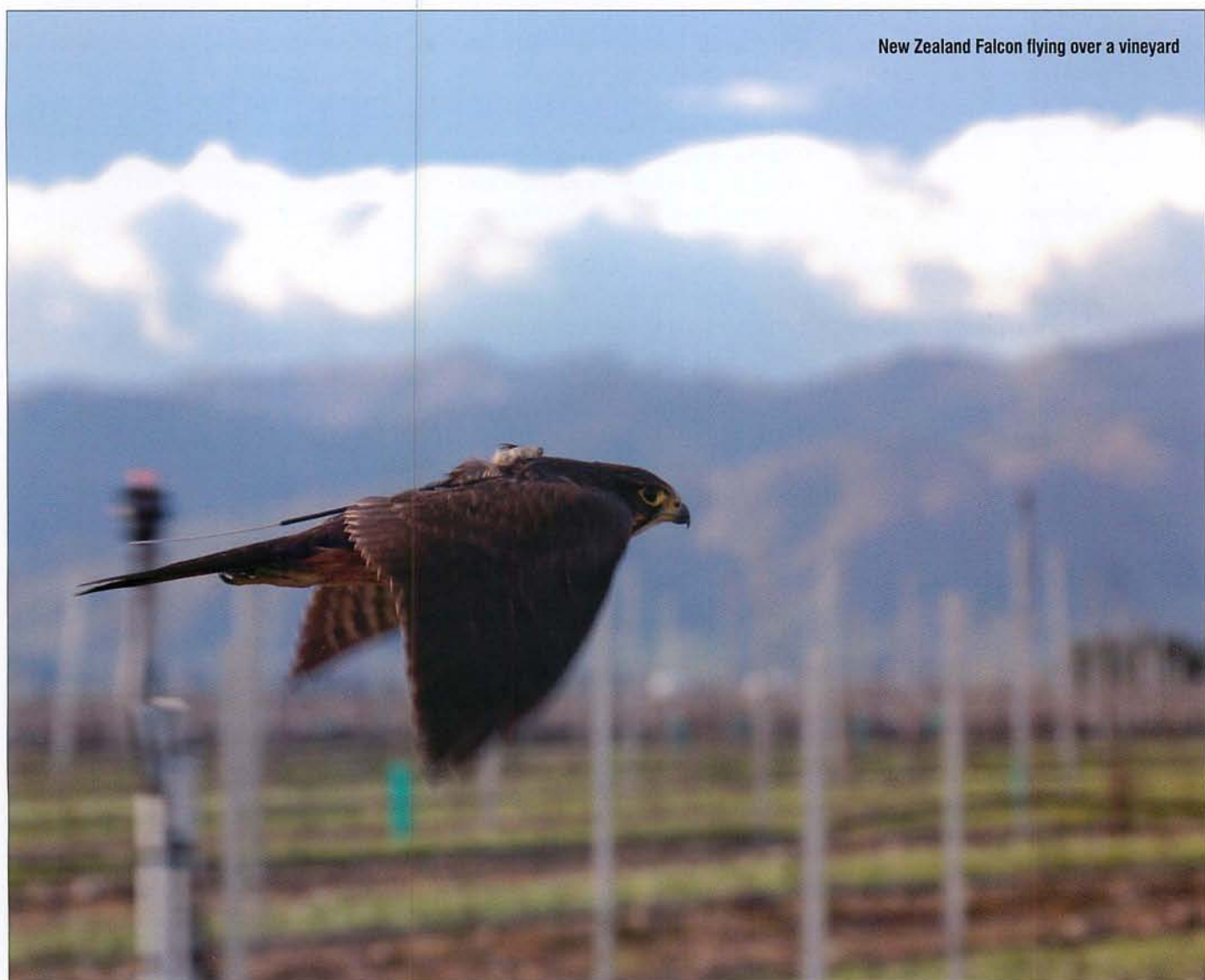


Aplomado Falcon

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# Volunteer for New Zealand Falcon Conservation Project

New Zealand Falcon flying over a vineyard



I have always been under the impression that Falconry was an art passed down in families from parent to child, full of intrigue and mystery. To my amazement, the local agricultural college where I studied horticulture a few years ago, had a 12-week course on Birds of Prey . . . fantastic. Although the course was over subscribed, I got in. It certainly was enlightening, exceedingly informative and I saw an amazing variety of birds. Through this, I was introduced to a true gent, Bob Emerson and his Harris Hawks. He was my mentor, who unfortunately very sadly passed away earlier this year. I also think myself very fortunate to have spent a lot of last year volunteering with Jemima Perry-Jones.

Most years I migrate to New Zealand for the winter. I miss a lot of hunting, but all is not lost. I knew NZ did not favour falconry, neither did I think I would find any connection with Birds of Prey there, except for Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust, in the North Island. It was my lucky day then, when I discovered Falcons for Grapes – known as New Zealand Falcon Conservation Project. You can download from their website (doc) [www.wine-marlborough.co.nz](http://www.wine-marlborough.co.nz), for the full story. *The Falconers Magazine* also published an article on this subject in issue 66. The scheme is headed by Nick Fox and is a five year project in the South Island. Nick was great and passed my telephone number to Colin Wynn, team leader of the project.

At the time he was inundated with help – the project tends to be either swarming or Colin is left high and dry. Colin conveyed to me he would be happy to take me on, the only minor problem being that they had no beds! There are four teenage boys sharing a room, but my saving grace was that I had my own mobile bed in the form of a van with a mattress. A bit lost for words, which doesn't happen often, Colin could only say yes. Next day I bought my ferry ticket and headed off to the South Island, somewhere I hadn't been for 12 years.

### A nice surprise

On arrival I was pleasantly surprised, expecting some old wooden hut in the back of beyond. The house was very civilized, close to town and convenience stores. Inside, the lack of washing up



New Zealand Falcon

by the inmates had meant that a swarm of flies had also taken residence. The cleaning up (or lack thereof) seemed to be the hot topic of debate; aside from the falcons of course. The more mature of the team thought it quite important not to keel over from dysentery and as I was the only wrinkly sharing the house, it was left to me to inspire these youngsters to clean up their act – banging your head against a brick wall, comes to mind! I've always classed myself as an outdoor girl, quite tough, basic and earthy. These young people on the project were amazing, whizzing about on quad bikes over narrow mountain tracks, mile after mile, mountaineering, spending days living in hunters huts in remote areas (basic survival) to find a nest – they were so totally dedicated. I can see their point . . . what's washing and tidying up when you are used to dealing with mother earth in its raw.

A part of the project is helping the Cherry Orchards, who place mist nets to prevent birds taking their crop. They are checked every day and this helps us with quarry for the few captive falcons we keep and falcon chicks we raise to release into the vineyards. As in the UK, we also use day old chicks to feed the falcons, the problem being we have to collect them,

which means a five-hour drive to the factory and collection time is 7.30 am. On a particular run we had a surprise, well several surprises. On the return journey, the guys stopped for some breakfast and hundreds of chicks were running round the back of the pick-up – passers by were horrified. Not quite ready to be fed to the falcons, they replaced the tarpaulin and quickly returned to the factory. That was an extra long day.

After returning from another trip, we were removing the chicks from the back of the pick-up into the freezer when I heard a faint 'cheep, cheep'. A few chicks had survived the gassing, a five-hour trip, jammed in baskets – 'arrh'. We felt we had to give them a chance. Someone knew a farmer with a broody bantam, so four little cockerels went to their new home after a day, so I could do a bit more 'ooh arrhing'!

### Limited with raptors

New Zealand is very limited on birds of prey. The Australasian Harrier is prolific, which I compare to our red kites not in looks, but habit and size and the magnificent gliding ability. I used to save any waste falcon food for the journeys back. Away from the release sites I fed the harriers, also hoping to entice the



The team: Ben, Jeremy, Lena, Chris, Colin (kneeling), Xavier, Simon, Terri (author) and Joss

lone black kite I hear so much about, but have not seen.

Fortunately for me I was invited back last season . . . on Boxing Day we were whisked off in a speed boat to a remote conservation island for the kiwi. Our aim was to try and remove a nesting pair of NZ falcons. Nick has invented a marvellous hat with loops for catching wild falcons but as the island was dense with trees and bushes there was no way we could use this. The nest was found and it was gratifying to see no kiwi remains, only seabird skeletons, (being nocturnal is a bonus for the kiwis). The keepers on the island had brought a female falcon chick to us just before Christmas from this nest; the males had already fledged (which tends to happen).

### Spooky event

The thing I found spooky was after raising the female falcon chick from the island and getting her fit, she was released into the vineyard with a tiercel, but within hours of release she headed off, making her home in sparse bushes, in a very windy, barren area over looking the sea, where she remains. I thought, homing pigeon!

The project is so varied, tracking previous years' released falcons, feeding

existing vineyard falcons especially during nesting, re-catching wild falcons to replace their telemetry, ringing chicks in wild nests. Vigilant watch is kept on release sites in the first week, done in shifts from dawn to dusk. Pride is also taken in good husbandry of the aviaries, food preparation, building nest barrels to encourage new nest sites, making traps, pest control of feral cats (of which there are thousands). The electricity transformers on pylons are the biggest threat to NZ falcons and much work is being done to resolve this. A lot of research is done on eggshells, mutes and remnants of quarry collected around nests. This information is recorded and stored. Keeping records of each falcon as well as the day to day diary is an important aspect of the work. Towards the end of the season (February) a few falcons are manned and used for educational purposes, which the children love and the press are very supportive of the NZ falcon.

The mundane things have to be done too . . . WASHING UP!, maintenance of the vehicles and machinery, painting and gardening. There is a big garden with fruit trees, lemons and grapefruit, so I was a bit domestic and made marmalade – we survived!

When the team are together for the evening we have a group cook, something like a wild hare casserole (there is plenty of game in the freezer and Colin does an excellent job of hunting) and watch a video. This year young Ben joined us, a budding director who was waiting for his break in the film industry in Wellington So instead of watching Dracula and a bucket of blood type films (not my choice) we were re-educated with his choice and saw some brilliant films.

On the whole it is one big happy family. Volunteers come and go, there is always a new colourful character turning up, I sometimes wonder if I am on Big Brother!

I have to pinch myself, being in such a beautiful country and with fantastic wildlife – working with the falcons, its like living in Paradise. One other bonus, we are surrounded by approx 60 vineyards, there's a bit of tasting to do and if a job's worth doing, its worth doing well!

All I need to complete my life is to find a niche in the UK and all would be perfect. If there are any Bird of Prey working opportunities, I would be very pleased to hear. References are available. Please write to me: Terrie Fisher c/o Peter Eldrett, Editor, *The Falconers & Raptor Conservation Magazine* (see details on page three).

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# Reaching for the Nerve Pills

**T**his season will see countless new Harris' hawks flown. It will also see no few losses. The reasons for these losses will be many and varied, but figuring in there somewhere will be the neglect of one bit of kit – telemetry. And so to a confession.

All of my early Harris' flying was done without telemetry. It's something I just slid into. When I first took up the sport – a rather strong way of describing my kestrel and buzzard flying – telemetry just wasn't available. Later, as it slowly became more established, I did what many of those around me did: put it on the 'something to consider list', offering that falconry had managed this far without it. And at just about the time when I would have taken the plunge, I moved abroad and found myself flying in places and in company where telemetry was still less used – goshawk and golden eagle flying all without telemetry.

## Idiot proof

Back in the UK and faced with my very first Harris' hawk, I was quite happy to continue this type of no-telemetry flying. And I seemed to have plenty of company. Lots of falconers flew the Harris' without telemetry. The reasoning was that the bird was so tame and returned so swiftly – often without being called – that the gear could be dispensed with. The Harris' was idiot-proof, everyone knew that.

That the idiot-proof bit might not extend to me took a little while to register. I was getting more and more into hill hawking, the parabuteo's lust and ability to soar luring me away from the local arable and onto the not-too-distant high ground at every opportunity. But it was scary stuff – real scary: the Harris' a dot in a wild sky over a landscape of

view-stealing rises and in a position to spot quarry on the other side of the world. And to go with this, cover – deep early-season bracken spreading out in an ocean as far as the eye could see and hungry to swallow any bird quarry-crashing into it. I had flight finishes on those hills I'll never forget. I still visit them sometimes in nightmares . . .

A long stoop takes the bird at some far-distant quarry, smaller, smaller, smaller, an evil climb in the landscape hiding the finish. Already I'm in full panic mode, fighting through the bracken, sweating, stumbling, cursing, pleading – desperate to keep some rough mark on the finish. I fall and get to my feet disorientated: Left? Right? Where the hell did she go!!! I plough on, gripped by blind and horribly familiar terror. I tell you, every session took my nerves and forced them through a cheese grater.

And problems were developing closer to home too. Rabbit and hare mad, I'd never been much interested in pheasants. In fact, I'd never caught a single pheasant before moving to the parabuteo: I'd either operated in pheasant-free country, or been in pheasant country but not with pheasant-compatible bird. Now, on my local arable ground, I had pheasants. Lots of them.

I'd seen pheasants pursued by other falconers' hawks, but the frantic cross-country follow-up chases I'd also observed hadn't really sunk home until it was my battered and exhausted body doing them. And I soon discovered another aspect of this game I hadn't registered: even if the targeted pheasant escaped, the Harris' might easily spot another victim – perhaps a tempting moorhen – and be off again. I can tell you, those pheasant flights had me grow

ears so sensitive to bells and the sound of agitated hawk-mobbing corvids I could have won prizes.

Eventually it all became too much. The high soaring, long marathon chases – and the nerve pills – simply took me to a point where the risk-taking side of my nature had to let go. I wasn't enjoying the hawking any more; the worry of loss was outweighing the pleasure, was sitting on me like a three tonne rabbit.

## The spotlight of shame

The move to telemetry was an uncomfortable experience. I was stepping into another world, a world of frequency ranges, yagis and multi channels. It was a world every young falconer felt comfortable in – spoke the lingo – but it was one that had left me way behind. The discomfort wasn't so much learning about all of this but having to confess my ignorance and, in doing so, own up to having flown so long without a safety net. I was a confessing alcoholic. The spotlight of shame was on me. But it was the only way to a cure.

In an effort to side step the full intensity of the glare, I purchased my telemetry swiftly. It was a face-to-face transaction rushed through with a dry babbling mouth and a pair of eyes that refused to lie. The swift-purchase plan had one flaw: it robbed me of any instruction at all. I arrived home with a pile of high tech gear I couldn't have found the back door with and a 'Getting Started' leaflet someone had obviously written while waiting for traffic lights to change. The obvious answer was to practise with birdless dry runs, so I dragged my wife out to play lost hawk.

It's an odd thing but the English countryside, for all its machinery and activity, makes very bold anything out of



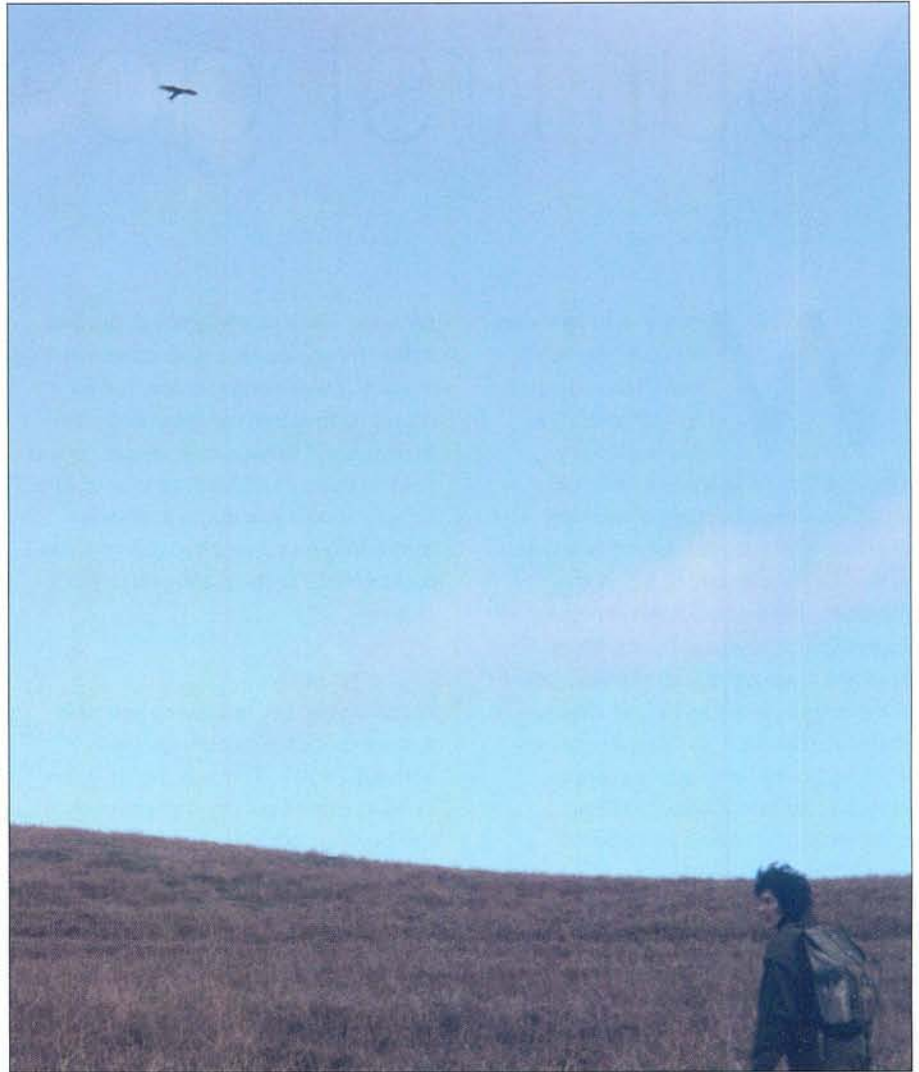
the ordinary. The eye only half registers the usual, but magnifies the strange immediately. I hadn't thought about how I might feel walking the local fields waving a TV aerial about until I got to it. Embarrassed doesn't nearly describe it, and as cars slowed and children pointed, I wished myself on another planet.

Worse was to come. My wife had gone off with the transmitter on a long flight and I set about tracking her down. Eventually I obtained a loose mark on her position and, soon after, got a visual. She was out in a huge field and still briskly moving along. What the hell was she up to? She was supposed to be down on quarry! I shouted that she should stay put. She continued. I shouted again, now quickening my own pace and waving the TV aerial aggressively. I could feel my temper building, wasn't this carry on difficult enough without incorporating a hundred metres dash. 'STOP! STOP!' and she did, and turned. And it wasn't her!

All the while these hide and seek games were taking place, my new electronic toy was testing me in another way. Although I still couldn't have found that back door, a transmitter went on the Harris' from day one. And with this I encountered a problem I fully anticipated – the bird not accepting it. My chosen place of attachment was the leg, fitting the transmitter to the reward tag. This went pretty much against the general UK love of the tail mount. But I've never been a great fan of the tail mount, be it for bell or transmitter. With hawks that hunt in cover, the risk of a snag causing the removal of the feathers the mount is attached to is unacceptably high – and the Harris' seems more susceptible than most to become a victim of the premature moult.

### Works of art

However, my leg mount did make the transmitter very obvious to the Harris'. Everything was fine if the pace was brisk and quarry was being sighted, but should there be too great a lapse in the action, the wicked free-flying bird immediately looked to other amusement. I was terrified to take my eyes off her, jumping to a mad there's definitely something here bush bashing frenzy if she as much as looked at her feet. And she was a magician with her vandalism, a perfect antenna destroyed without



It was scary stuff. *Real scary*

you seeing a thing. She even plucked me from the audience to assist her with one of her tricks. It was 'The Magic Box' where I was stupid enough to leave the transmitter on her while she was placed in her box during a coffee break. Funny, but finding just a stump where there had been a long flowing antenna actually surprised me! And with all of this came unforgettable art, her deft beak creating modern masterpieces: the 'Pig's Tail', the tightly coiled 'Full Spring', the 'Slowly Moving Snake' and the sublime 'Multi Kink'. I still have some, each recording the agonisingly slow move to acceptance.

Art or not, telemetry became vital to my hawking: from flying for years without it, I now became obsessive about employing it. Even when hawking simple and safe locations, a transmitter was used. Flying without telemetry was like driving without a seat belt: I just felt naked. The impact on my falconry was massive. I was just able to enjoy the

experience more. There was less fretting and more savouring. And I became much better company in the field. The worry of loss had tended to make me a short-tempered 'don't do anything unless I tell you' misery. Now I was a 'relax and have a good day' Mr Nice. And the flying got better – much better. I'd always had good hawking with the parabuteo, but now things were taken to another level. It wasn't a case of throwing caution to the wind, more having that bit more confidence to allow this very special raptor show what it could really do. From fourth, we went up to a fifth gear I never knew we had.

So for those fielding their first Harris' this season, let my little tale of confession have you eager to embrace locating equipment. It's not a passport to trouble-free hawking – and those super-sensitive ears would still be well worth growing – but with its help, when the moult comes around, the mews will have a better chance of being occupied.

# Your first goshawk

**W**hen should falconers move from Harris hawk (or redtail) to goshawk? The answer is very simple. If you have a hawk, then now is not the time to change. I was very impressed by Sean Whitehurst's article in the last issue (number 81) of this magazine. He is absolutely correct in everything he says and I hope many read and inwardly digest. Hawks mature and many falconers forget, or choose to ignore, this fact. So flying the same hawk or falcon for as many years as possible provides a better hunting companion and makes you a better

falconer. Think carefully about this and make the comparison with other working animals. Event horses, those that go round Badminton, compete well into their teens. Working dogs steady up and start to think intelligently at four or five. So why should you dump a hawk for 'something more exciting' before it has had a chance to learn and you to learn from it?

## My situation

Lecture over. Let us assume you have some experience but are currently without a hawk. This was the situation I was in when I got my first goshawk. I had flown a redtail for eight seasons and

he was now in a breeding chamber at a friend's home. Perfect time to move on to the long dreamed for goshawk.

As for any hawk (or falcon) you have two very distinct either/or questions that need answering: male or female, imprint or parent reared. Both require careful consideration so take your time.

Question one: male or female? When I had my first goshawk no one wanted males. They were considered too small for the UK quarry list. Most were from southern European stock and flew at below 11b 8oz (680g). I well remember a friend of my old mentor, Ken Wood, had a male goshawk that flew at just over 11b (453g) and he really struggled to enter it at our big bad bunnies. To be frank, at that time no one really understood what a male can achieve. If you want to fly hare, then as a general rule (although the continentals will tell you different) you need a female, but for almost everything else a male will serve you well. Modern breeding methods are very selective and breeders are pairing goshawks of good size to produce males more than capable of flying even the strongest cock pheasant. Modern austringers understand much more about managing goshawks, possibly due to a need to achieve more with less, and many have looked back at the older manuscripts to see how our medieval forebears succeeded where we may have failed.

At British Falconers' Club field meets you are seeing more and more males flown by austringers who are seeking a bit of a challenge, and they are fantastic to watch. That is not to denigrate the females but in Yorkshire last year, I watched Darren Chadwick's male chase a pheasant in stunning style. From the start of the day this hawk (who flies at the same weight as mine) was in furious yarak and when the quarry flushed there was no hesitation. Of course the speed is deceptive, males always look faster but I am never sure of this, but he was closing fast and secured his prize in



Baldrick – first year Goshawk

deep bracken. It was then that the best receivers pay dividends for we were in a fold between to hills and bounce was inevitable.

Question two: imprint or parent reared? I am biased but not totally convinced. Baldrick is an imprint but I have since had long conversations with better austringers than I. For goodness sake keep talking. You are never too old to learn and falconry is still evolving. I spend a great deal of my time slack-jawed at the ability of others to learn, interpret and pass on information that seems to have passed me by. These conversations and their example lead me to believe that you can make a rock steady goshawk by other means. Imprinting was the traditional method of obtaining a bombproof hawk. But I know now and have seen it in action, that the old method of 'waking' serves just as well, and there are benefits that outweigh an imprint.

### Screaming imprints

Imprints almost always scream in their first season and you can only overcome this by entering them early and making lots and lots of kills. Do this and they quickly quieten down and become super obedient. My advice is to use an ungarnished lure as a bridge to the fist. My male adores the lure and comes huge distances to it. Obedient goshawks make hawking fun; chasing over the countryside desperately waving seemingly unattractive bits of food can be very demoralising.

The day I flew my first goshawk free, she decided that I served no purpose (she was actually too high in weight) and my wife was deputed to follow me waiving the telemetry – and she hates hawks. Eventually, she (the gos, not my wife) came to the lure and I pounced on the jesses with sweaty relief. I have used a lure ever since. Be warned all you Harris hawkers, goshawks must be on weight to perform and to come back instantly. My current imprint has a half-ounce (14g) leeway. He needs to be lower for fur than feather and what he has eaten the day before counts a great deal. Keeping him at hunting weight for days on end makes him stale and potentially aggressive. Never before has the weight chart been so critical. I record both the morning and before flying weights; food type; weather conditions, including barometric pressure (which really does influence how they

fly); and, of course, what they killed. You may laugh at the concept of barometric pressure but over six years of keeping records I can tell you that high pressure is more conducive to good flying – don't know why but it seems to be so.

The other problem with imprints happens at the end of the season. You put him (or her) up for the moult and what follows are three months of sexual display. My male has just dropped his first secondaries in the third week of May. I spend every day checking the floor of the aviary hoping for a more rapid progress that will have him ready for September and it is always touch and go. At a recent British Falconers' Club meeting I was talking to the owner of one imprint who tells me he uses lights to pass rapidly through the sex period and this seems to work, but his male is not as mature as my six year old; something to consider for next year.

Edmund Bert published his *Approved Treatise of Hawks and Hawking* in 1610 and, following his example, many of my austringer friends have 'waked' their goshawks with great success. T. H. White (*The Goshawk*) made a complete mess of the process despite reading Bert, which is a surprise because he was exceedingly well educated and could easily read Elizabethan English. Nowadays falconers can buy Derry Argue's excellent 'translation' so there is no excuse. Bert claims to be able to read his hawk at all times, although I do not recommend you make the promise that he did to his lady that if your goshawk mutes when you bring her into the living room you will lick it up.

But you need to do the 'waking' properly. Next time, I will have a weekend of goshawk, friends, and beer – do not plan on sleeping. Think back to the old days when households kept new hawks in places of regular traffic. There were many people to carry her, with noise and distraction at every turn. Those who have visited countries where trapped hawks are the norm will tell you that the process of manning is simple if there are lots of spare hands.

In China the hawks are part of the family group. People arrive; have a cup of tea, and pick up the hawk for a walk. Do this for two or three days and your new goshawk will accept anything with a curious bend of the head rather

than a hysterical, feather bruising bate. In the Middle East, falcons (really not that different) are kept on blocks in the midst of the main room where they are admired, picked up and stroked at will. Of course falcons don't slice so their mutes can be easily confined to a small sand tray under the block.

### First sighting

I saw my first goshawk flown in anger – interesting how no one (with the exception of the Japanese), seems to fly them for display – over 30 years ago. I was amazed as she powered through an early autumn tree canopy to snatch down a cock pheasant. I am a patient man (I think) and it was not until fate dealt me a good news, bad news event that I fulfilled my dream. I was made dramatically redundant from a lucrative city job. A plastic bag and instant clear your desk, leaving the keys to fully-financed 4x4 with the commissionaire. That is the way they do things in the city because they are terrified you will take some sort of computer revenge. So I started my own company and got a goshawk. That was the good news: broke and happy.

In those days the British Falconers' Club ran a members breeding scheme and for the princely sum of £150 you could put your name onto the waiting list. There were no guarantees but when a friend offered me a club goshawk he had because he was over-hawked I jumped at the chance. Freya was exciting stuff. She flew at just under three pounds and was the first of the three goshawks I have owned in the last sixteen years. Her preferred quarry was hare and although she was not of the same calibre as her sister, with over 200 in the bag, she would take massive slips; once, and I paced it out, at over 200 yards with a seven pound hare caught on the North Kent marshes.

Like all new austringers, I was fascinated by her energy and commitment. Although she needed a good break between flights to let the adrenalin subside, she was quickly in yarak with crest raised and eyes like flashing sabres. Despite this aggression for quarry she never footed me so I was unprepared for the day that came... read on. Everyone pushes their first gos to its extreme, hopefully only once. I wanted to know how many kills I could achieve

Baldrick – mature Goshawk

Photo courtesy of Val Smith



before she went on strike. Ten rabbits and a moorhen was enough thank you, and, truth to tell, that was nine too many. I have never again been tempted.

Freya killed herself one afternoon hitting a wire fence after a pheasant. The wily old cock flipped over the wire and landed whilst the gos powered in and failed to notice the mesh. The result was a double fracture to neck and pelvis from which she never recovered.

Phaedra, her replacement, was another club hawk; a mal-imprint who came good after a lot of work. Un-entered in her first year, she refused all feather, was slow to hare and occasionally was aggressive. Once in Scotland staying on the Isle of Lewis, bleary eyed and thick headed after a hefty night on the malt, I snatched up a towelling robe and went to put her on the weathering lawn before a shower, shave, etc. She was already in yarak and the red towelling was more than she could stand. Ignoring the fist, she bounced onto my forearm and sank her talons in before ripping the red robe to bits with glee.

The pain was exquisite, if you are into

that sort of thing, and it took two of my friends with chicks and helpless laughter too long to remove her. Staggering around with foul mouthed abuse, I was further humiliated to find my arm liberally dosed with ketchup and photos taken and then hopefully lost, because I never saw them. The deep puncture wounds took a week to heal and the bruising several weeks longer.

### Mantleing and imping

The other failure of this hawk was that she mantled heavily over quarry. So much so that tail feathers had to be regularly impeded. Frankly it served her right when I used redtail and then crow tails. She was given to a breeder, who used her with some success and the promise of a youngster when I had settled into my new farm in West Wales.

Two years into Wales came Baldrick. He is a demon at 11lb 10oz (740g) and has taken everything but hare (which we have not got). He seems faster, but, as I said, that is a size to weight thing and is just as aggressive on quarry. Oh, and less of a lump on the fist. Because he is

an imprint, I can fly him like a Harris or off the fist depending on where I am and if I have a dog with me – we have some dense, deep, bramble covered valleys down here so out of trees makes sense. He occasionally takes woodcock, which is awesome. For my 60th birthday my family had Martin Brook paint his portrait and the result is splendid. I have never been so committed to a hawk since my first redtail. The painting hangs on the wall opposite my evening armchair and I will never tire of the sight of it. I have a friend who flew the same gos for 18 seasons . . . but you must never tempt fate.

But I would end with this point be it Harris hawk or goshawk, which I think is worth remembering. Once at a game fair a chap who boasted how many hawks, falcons and eagles he had flown in his short life as a falconer confronted me. His false pride slid off my memory like grease on Teflon, but my friend with his one goshawk. Now he is a falconer, would that I am similarly remembered for such commitment, understanding and experience.

# All Too Easy



Cameron Turner with Katy

Several separate incidents have recently conspired to make me believe more than ever that we need some sort of proper apprenticeship system for the sport of falconry and not just a series of well intentioned but totally voluntary schemes. As more and more hawks and falcons are being produced domestically the prices relating to them are simply tumbling and I am certain in my own mind that this leads to a great deal of "spur of the moment" and "on a whim" purchasing. When prices were generally considerably higher than they are now then in all probability the would be purchaser of a hawk gave the matter a great deal of careful consideration before taking the final plunge. Now with male Harris Hawks, for example, being cheaper than a decent night out on the town no wonder so many are being brought then very quickly either sold or passed on. In several instances some are even being let go as a means of getting rid of them quickly.

I can illustrate these last couple of points very easily indeed. My display team now contains a male European Kestrel that is some two years old. I was given him when he was seven months old and it transpired that despite his tender age I was his eleventh owner. The kestrel had originally been purchased as a birthday present for a young boy who had seen the film *Kes* and wanted a hawk of his own. Needless to say the film inspired vision of what life would be like with your own Kestrel and the real thing varied quite considerably and the final straw came when the boy was apparently bitten by the Kestrel. When I received the Kestrel he was in a real mess with every tail feather and every primary broken and he also suffered with a real fear of the bare hand and any sudden movement of it. It doesn't take a genius to work out why any hawk or animal would be scared of the bare human hand.

Very gradually and with considerable care the Kestrel concerned, now known as Reject so as to ensure his past



Falconer with Harris Hawk

trials and tribulations are not forgotten, got used to the bare hand and learned to trust people again. His feathers moulted through well and he currently flies very well at displays and on experience days.

### Unprepared newcomers

Another episode that happened quite recently also convinces me that something ought to be done to lessen the ease with which hawks can be obtained by completely untrained and blatantly unprepared novices. I received a phone call from a couple of lads who had brought a female Harris Hawk between them and needed to purchase some equipment from me and also wanted to get some advice on a couple of different matters relating to their hawk. They duly turned up at my house and brought several items of basic furniture and they wanted to buy a hood for the hawk. As they had the hawk with them in their car I suggested they bring it in and we could ensure they got a hood that fitted as it should.

The hawk had been brought from a supposed falconer that did not have the time to hunt this particular Harris Hawk anymore although he did have another female Harris Hawk he was hunting. He

told the two lads the approximate flying weight of the hawk and how much food she should have to keep her at an ideal weight. For anyone else the asking price for this hawk would have rung alarm bells being as it was less than the price of two decent hoods. The new owners had taken the hawk out the same afternoon and tried to catch rabbits with her. Unfortunately, she did not chase rabbits hard at all although she did react to them being flushed immediately. Apparently, if a rabbit was bolted from the warren or flushed from cover the hawk would take off instantly but after a very short distance would give up and sit on the ground. This scenario was repeated several times, or so I was told, and the lads became more and more dispirited with the hawk itself.

Unfortunately, the sum total of falconry knowledge gained by these two newcomers to the sport was the half hour or so spent in the company of the man that sold them the hawk. However, as with so many beginners, the two novices decided that the hawk would not chase properly as she was obviously not hungry enough and therefore withheld rations from the hawk despite the fact it reacted instantly to quarry being flushed. But with the half hour of falconry

knowledge behind them they thought the best course of action to rectify the problem was to increase the appetite of the hawk. This had been the case for four days and accordingly by the time I saw the hawk when it was brought in to have a hood fitted it was to say at the very least lethargic. I immediately felt the breast bone of the hawk and on declaring it to be exceedingly thin the whole story came tumbling out.

### Injured hawk

However, worse much worse than this was another condition that was blatantly obvious to anyone with half an eye for a healthy hawk. As the hawk sat on the fist of one of the joint owners it looked unbalanced and on closer inspection this proved to be the case for a very good reason. One wing had been heavily sprayed with an antiseptic spray and when I got the owner to roll his fist so that the hawk would open her wings all become clear in an instant. The hawk had obviously recently suffered from wing tip oedema and as a result had lost all the primaries from the main joint. In fact a large part of the wing was missing altogether. I quickly took the hawk from its owner and cast her so that I could check and also show him exactly what was wrong. It goes without saying that the two novices were far from happy and they were going to go directly from my premises back to the falconer they had brought the hawk from and resolve the matter with immediate effect. I had a feeling that the resolution was not going to be a particularly peaceful and friendly one.

Imagine my surprise a couple of hours later when I received a call from the two lads that owned the Harris Hawk saying that everything had been resolved amicably and that I had got everything wrong. Apparently the seller had assured them that the hawk had merely hit a fence whilst chasing a rabbit a few days before she was sold and that the antiseptic spray was merely a precaution. The fact that the hawk had lost a few feathers, a few feathers being all the primaries on one wing, was neither here nor there as they would re-grow given time. I personally found it beyond belief that the seller would pull such a stroke and that the buyers were obtuse enough to accept the story when they had been

shown that the end of the wing was actually missing.

In a situation like this it is the poor hawk that you have to feel sorry for. What sort of a life is she going to have as she will never catch quarry and sooner or later the patience of those who own her now will run out and she will be passed from pillar to post or worse still let loose. I myself have a male Harris Hawk that I have flown for the past 14 years for both hunting and display work. He was given to me because he was apparently useless and not only would he not chase anything he also wasn't very good at coming back to the fist. For me he has performed superbly and is generally very well behaved and very obedient. But then that may be because I fly him at 23 ounces as opposed to the 19 ounces I was told he was most responsive at when he was given to me.

### Apprenticeship system

Whilst on a hawking trip to Texas recently I saw the other side of the coin and witnessed firsthand the results of the mandatory falconry apprenticeship system they have in America. On a previous trip to the same area some months earlier I had been introduced to the apprentice of a falconer that has long been a friend of mine. The apprentice concerned, Cameron Turner, was progressing through the system nicely and had had his mews and equipment passed by the fish and wildlife inspectors and had been issued a licence to obtain his first hawk. This was to be a female passage Red Tailed Hawk which the apprentice would trap himself under the supervision of his sponsor. This trapping venture had been a success and a fine hawk had been taken. She was named Katy as this was the name of the area near to Houston where she had been trapped. On my return trip I was privileged enough to see the hawk take its first free flight.

The following day the hawk was taken to the field in an attempt to enter it and the effort expended ended in complete success with the hawk taking a swamp rabbit at its fourth attempt. The following day the hawk caught a cane rabbit and since those early tenuous days in the field both hawk and tyro falconer have gone from strength to strength. What a different story and outcome to the one that preceded it. To me the American

system makes a great deal of sense and it means that any would be falconer gets a very thorough grounding in what is required in terms of daily husbandry long before he or she ever gets a hawk. The tyro falconer has an experienced mentor on hand to help when required and to provide a safety net should one ever be required. What is most important in all this is that the hawk gets the respect and quality of life it deserves both as a living creature and a hunting partner.

Whilst we do indeed have the series of Lantra courses over here they are not compulsory and as we all know only too well anybody can buy a hawk no matter how deficient they are when it comes to having the knowledge to look after and house the hawk properly. I fully realise that the vast majority of those that set out to be falconers do so in a proper manner and avail themselves of as much knowledge and practical experience as possible before ever buying a hawk. But there are also a very great number that

think they may well have a dabble and in these cases the hawk all too often comes to a miserable end. With a decent system in place this misery for a not inconsiderable number of hawks could well be avoided.

With so many hawks now being produced domestically prices are naturally getting lower and lower and this brings many species within the range of just about everybody. I am sure most of the big established breeders have a code of ethics that they adhere to and would not sell hawks to those that would appear blatantly incapable of looking after them properly. Unfortunately, human nature tends to mean that where money is concerned ethics and scruples can often end up taking a back seat. There are undoubtedly those, as illustrated by the seller of the Harris Hawk with half a wing, that care only about money and have a total disregard for the welfare of the hawk.



Trained Kestrel

# THE BRITISH FALCONRY & RAPTOR FAIR 2010

**F**or the last 21 years we have all enjoyed the benefits of the British Falconry and Raptor Fair. I myself have personally been present at all but one of these. I vividly remember the very first event at Stoneleigh as though it was yesterday. My, how those years fly by. However, over the past few years I have heard rather a fair amount of disgruntlement from falconers and would-be falconers about this event. Indeed, the 2010 Fair was somewhat smaller than those we have become accustomed to, but even so, it was still a wonderful event and to be perfectly honest, we have

nothing else like it in the UK.

It would be a great shame if this Fair were to cease for it is one event in the calendar that I look forward to each year, for I know I am going to meet up with friends I may not have seen for some time, even years perhaps. I can look at all the equipment on show, try out new gloves, which you cannot do via the internet, which seems to be the latest tool for all our shopping needs, see the latest telemetry technology, watch some very good, and it has to be said, some not very good flying displays and have a good old wander round all the various stalls. For me however, it is the

camaraderie of the Fair which is unique, and this is something one cannot buy off the internet.

## Support needed

If we all would like the Fair to continue and I am sure most of us do, we have to support it. Traders will not pay for stands if they barely cover their costs and thus, will not attend, and who can blame them? I have no personal involvement with the Fair, I am a normal visitor just like virtually everyone else who makes the pilgrimage annually, but I fear that it is under threat because many of us have ceased to patronise it.

This year, visitors were noticeable by their absence. At lunchtime on the Sunday, when it is normally crowded, there were just a comparative handful of people wandering around. From the British Falconer's Club stand, where I had a display of eagle falconry photographs advertising a forthcoming eagle field meet, I could see right across to the United Kingdom Eagle Falconry Association weathering ground near the entrance with an unobstructed view. This was not the norm and quite worrying. Things improved on the Monday when more members of the public swelled the numbers. Why is it that Sunday seems to be the day when falconers attend and Monday more for the public? I have noticed this strange phenomenon for years.

Stallholders have told me in the past that if they do not sell much on the Sunday, then they may as well pack up and go home, for the Monday will be a dead loss. I expect some of this is quite true, for after all, it is the falconry fair for falconers and it is falconers who would be the most likely to dip their



African Fish Eagle



hands into their pockets. What would Joe Public want with a brand new Marshall telemetry unit or the latest Goshawk book? So from this, it is clear that if we want to keep the Falconers Fair, we have to support it. Besides, what else are you doing over the bank holiday?

### Downsize of fair

Despite its smaller size, (most omissions being clothing type stands, falconry clubs and suchlike) I had a great time at this year's fair and met many old friends and enjoyed some fascinating conversations. As many readers of *The Falconers'* and *Raptor Conservation* magazine may be aware, I have somewhat more than a passing interest in Golden Eagles and this year, as aforementioned, I had toeholds in two exhibition areas.

As a proud member of the British Falconers' Club, I had asked for and received permission to erect a large display board depicting a series of photographs of my male Berkut Golden Eagle "Star" in action. These photographs were taken by two former students of Nottingham University's School of Biology, MSc in Biological Imaging Unit and for whom I am Natural History Museum curator and also species identification officer. These two students, Alex Hyde and Peter Moonlight, have accompanied me in the field on several occasions and secured these fine images. There were also some photographs present taken by Midland BFC Group Chairman Martyn Standley and also Brian Glace, a spectator on the recent two-day eagle field meet covered in a previous magazine article. The photographs were supported by a notice which detailed a two day eagle field meet for the BFC's Annual General Meeting this coming November.

### Eagle weathering display

Additionally, a new display this year for the Fair was the inclusion of an eagle weathering ground organised by the recently formed United Kingdom Eagle Falconry Association (UKEFA). Many eagles belonging to this association were moulting, as indeed were the six on show, but we had to have some birds present so my two Golden Eagles, Star and Skye were there, as was Geoff Surtee's female Golden Eagle named Abbie. A fourth Golden Eagle, a lovely female called



Syke, female Golden Eagle

Oops, belonging to Wesley Murch was also present. I asked Wesley why he chose to name his bird "Oops," and he replied that when he went to fetch her, she was supposed to be a male, hence, Oops. Brilliant!

The remaining two eagles were not hunting birds in the strictest sense of the word, but nevertheless, added much interest. These were, an immature Bateleur Eagle and an African Fish Eagle brought by Nigel King. The public loved this display and we were kept busy over the two days explaining eagle falconry to the masses. Each afternoon, we took some of the eagles into a small secondary arena and gave a brief talk about the eagles and UKEFA, which went down very well to an appreciative audience.

I tried my best to divide my time between the UKEFA weathering ground and the BFC exhibition AND attempt to wander round the fair and get rid of some money. I also made time to watch Jemima Parry-Jones's flying demonstrations, which were excellent as usual. Her Tawny Eagle is a superb aerial performer and the Kites are so buoyant that it left one breathless.

As always, a visit to Paul Morgan's excellent stand of Coch-y-Bonndhu Books helped to lighten my wallet. More telemetry mounts for the coming season were purchased from Marshall and many photographs taken during my rambles.

However, every time I set out to have a wander round, I constantly bumped into friends I hadn't seen for some time and so it took ages to actually get anywhere. But isn't this one of the greatest aspects of the Fair? Where else, except the International Falconry Festival, which incidentally, we are unlikely to see here again for quite some time, can one experience such a great atmosphere and more or less guarantee seeing old friends? Game Fairs, as good as they may be, are not the same and tend to be regional, so are not attended universally by most falconers, whereas just about everyone does, or did, attend the British Falconry & Raptor Fair.

I fully understand and take on board the gripes about the fair, but come on lads and lasses, just think how much poorer we would be without this event to look forward to. If one still believes something is lacking, I would like to know what that could possibly be, for just about everything one could need falconry wise is there. And if one still has to gripe just for the sake of it, then imagine what it must be like to have to organise such an event. If you have any ideas that could improve the fair in any way, or there is something that you are not happy with, just let the organisers know, that is all it takes, just a bit of constructive criticism can go a long way. I just hope we haven't already seen the last one. Here's to the next 21.

# Club Directory



## The Welsh Hawking Club



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

The Welsh Hawking Club has four regional groups throughout the United Kingdom meeting in:

**South Wales, North Wales,  
the South West and Essex**

*For more details please visit our website and click on Regions.*

For all general enquiries please contact:

**Jan France on 01993 822906**

*or*

email: [secretary@thewelshhawkingclub.com](mailto:secretary@thewelshhawkingclub.com)

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*Further details from:*

**Jim Coyle**

**E-mail: [info@scottishhawkingclub.co.uk](mailto:info@scottishhawkingclub.co.uk)**

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

## **The South East Falconry Group**

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

Drawing its membership from around the South and East of England, the SEFG provides a forum for falconers and would-be falconers to meet, discuss and practice the art. Members benefit from having access to a wealth of experience and knowledge, good facilities and field meeting opportunities throughout the winter months.

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

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

*For further information or an application form please contact -*

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

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

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

Established for some 30 years, and now affiliated to the Hawk Board and holding group membership to the Countryside Alliance, the aims of S.E.R.A. are to further and maintain the standards of falconry in the South-East of England.

With a broad band of knowledge and experience within our club, we extend a warm welcome to new members, whether practising falconers or complete novices. Where practicable, novices will be allocated a mentor. Helpful, honest and friendly advice is always available.

**Our meetings are held at 10.30am on the second Sunday of each month throughout the year at  
The Junction Inn - Groombridge, Kent. (Opposite Groombridge Station)**

Outings, guest speakers, field meets, (at home and away) videos, quizzes and other special events are ever-present features of our club calendar and may be viewed on our website.



Please visit our website at: [www.seraonline.co.uk](http://www.seraonline.co.uk)  
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# Independent Bird Register

Telephone 0844 700 8500

## IBR Lost, Found, Reunited & Stolen birds of prey from 25th March to 29th June 2010

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

If you think one of these birds is yours or you think you may know the owner, - please contact us.

If you have reported losing a bird it is **LOGGED** on the database and **REMAINS** on the **LOST LIST** until **WE** are told differently.

Our web site now has a rolling 2 month lost IBR registered list and a found list.

Part of the ring number has been replaced with a ? for security reasons

**REMEMBER!** We offer a service don't abuse it.

### STOLEN x 1 (this is a list of stolen IBR registered birds)

BREF	RING NUMBERS	SPECIES
18316	IBR17881W	HARRIS HAWK

### REUNITED x 106

BALD EAGLE	1
BARN OWL 16	
BLACK KITE	2
EURASIAN EAGLE OWL	4
GOSHAWK 3	
GYR HYBRID FALCON	11
HARRIS HAWK	29
KESTREL 8	
LANNER FALCON	2
LUGGER FALCON	1
LUGGER X SAKER	1
MERLIN 1	
PEREGRINE FALCON	4
PEREGRINE HYBRID	9
RED-TAILED HAWK	2
SAKER FALCON	4
SIBERIAN X TURKMANIAN EAGLE OWL	1
SNOWY OWL	1
SPARROWHAWK	5
TAWNY OWL	1

### LOST x 29 (this is a list of lost IBR registered birds)

BREF	RING NUMBERS	SPECIES
55378	?5242?	BARN OWL
66968	?6360?	BARN OWL
75237	?2468?	GYR/SAKER FALCON
75715	?3338? / ?7858?	GYR/SAKER FALCON
5298	?5AJH?	HARRIS HAWK
17410	?1752?	HARRIS HAWK
30385	?2859?	HARRIS HAWK
32896	?9CNX?	HARRIS HAWK
42239	?2074?	HARRIS HAWK
45732	?4566?	HARRIS HAWK
52891	?5269?	HARRIS HAWK
57641	?5783?	HARRIS HAWK

62343	?6115?	HARRIS HAWK
63419	?CDB0?	HARRIS HAWK
65360	?6306?	HARRIS HAWK
74030	?6RPRF?	HARRIS HAWK
74301	?7285?	HARRIS HAWK
57647	?5664?	INDIAN EAGLE OWL
57052	?5229?	KESTREL
63238	?5416?	KESTREL
77239	?7155?	KESTREL
80156	BD24	PALM NUT VULTURE
32494	?2446?	PEREGRINE FALCON
71000	?2897?	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID
75233	?7338?	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID
77530	?DRS0?	PEREGRINE/SAKER HYBRID
14195	?1098?	SAKER FALCON
37934	?3676?	SAKER FALCON
40766	?NM0?	SAKER FALCON

### FOUND x 18

BREF	RING NUMBERS	SPECIES
37294	?3461?	BARN OWL
46074	?4514?	BARN OWL
57061	?5467?	BARN OWL
58134	?5489?	BARN OWL
59452	?5844?	BARN OWL
60725	?5940?	BARN OWL
70343	?6739?	BARN OWL
76728	?34BC?	BARN OWL
78533	?253BC?	BARN OWL
79537	NE10 OXP	BARN OWL
79944	M20 3DU	BARN OWL
80349	?483BC?	BARN OWL
76818	?708W?	COMMON BUZZARD
55513	?5691?	EURASIAN EAGLE OWL
47095	?4725?	HARRIS HAWK
58786	?5789?	HARRIS HAWK
76211	?6413?	HARRIS HAWK
69700	PE34 4RT	INDIAN EAGLE OWL
76558	?059BE?	LONG-EARED OWL

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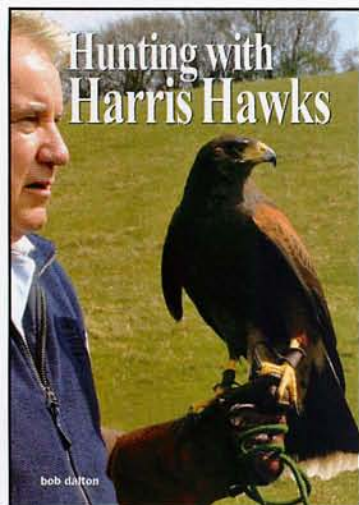
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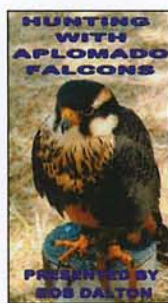
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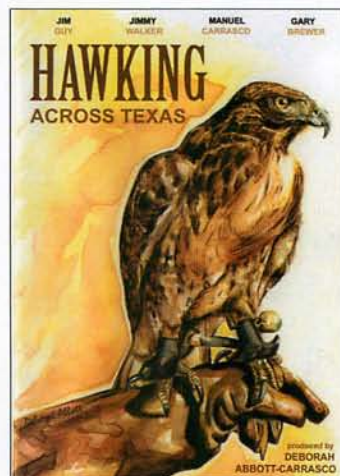
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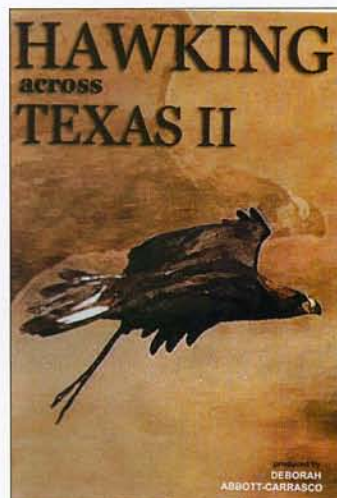
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