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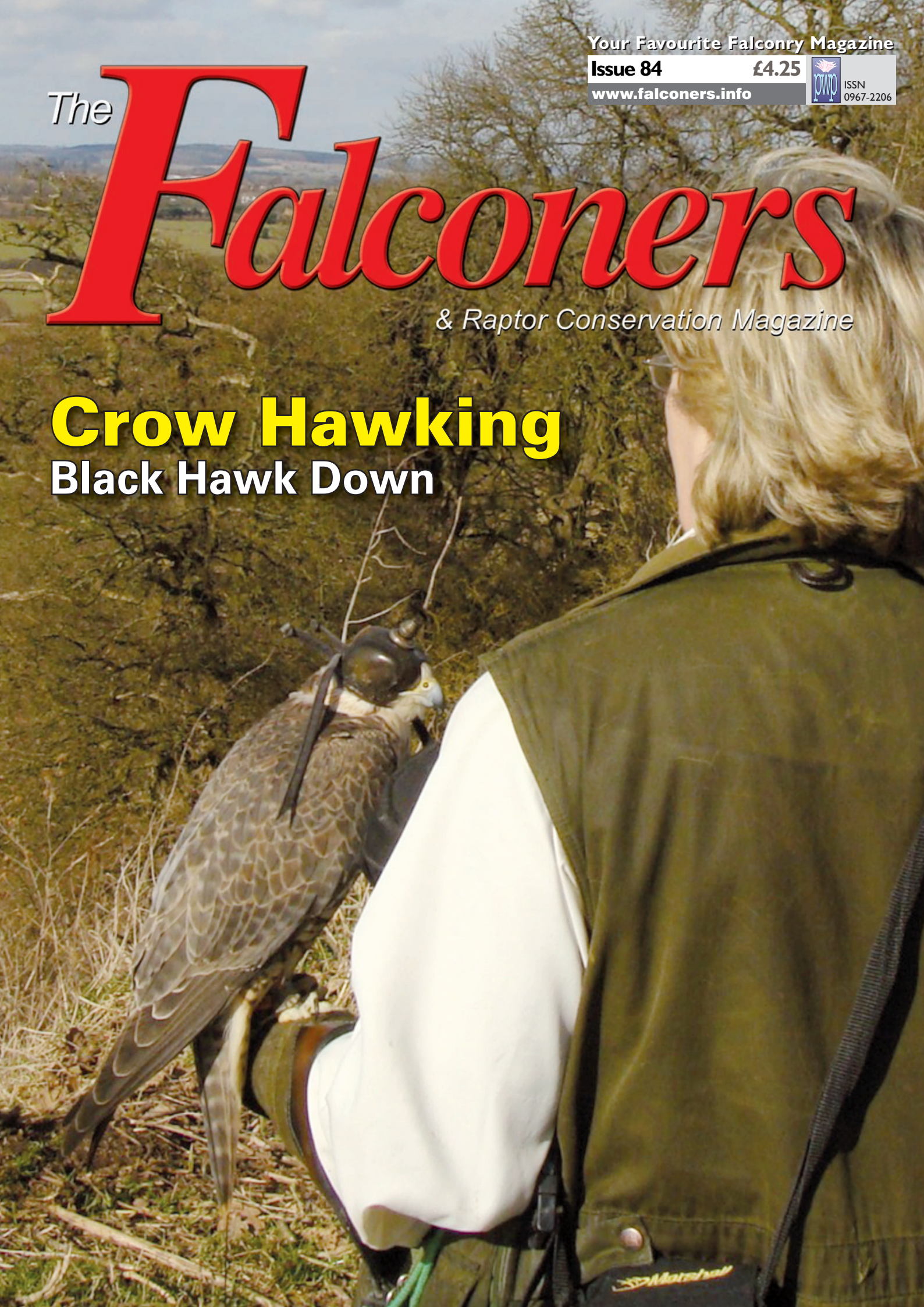
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**W**ell, I hope everyone has survived the bad weather conditions that we had in December and January and, more importantly, that your hawks and falcons have come through it unscathed. I also hope that your aviaries and weatherings were not damaged in any way due to the amount of snow that fell. Never mind, Spring is just around the corner and we are now in the middle of the flying season and I hope everyone is having a successful time – at least, more successful than me. My own hawk ended up chasing a rabbit and, once caught, she continued to hold on right into the warren where the rabbit attempted to seek refuge. It took some time to dig her out and after an initial examination it was decided that a visit to the vet was called for. Many thanks to John and Kate Chitty for their invaluable help. At the time of writing, the hawk has been brought indoors and I am administering daily medication. Here's hoping she is soon on the mend.

## editorial



In this issue you can find a variety of articles but I particularly draw your attention to the Hawk Board News page where you can read some very exciting news for the world of falconry. Everyone in the falconry world (and I mean world) should rejoice at this piece of great news.

In the meantime, have a good read.

# 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)

## Change of roles at the Hawk Conservancy Trust

**A**shley Smith, the Chief Executive of bird of prey conservation charity, the Hawk Conservancy Trust, is to take on the role as a Director of the Board in the New Year.

Marion Paviour, Chairman of the Board of Directors, said 'Ashley with his wealth of knowledge, skills and experience, will add much to the Board. As a Director he will be responsible for the Trust's future development and will oversee key aspects of the Trust's activities.'

This means that the search is now on for a new CEO to take on the running of the charitable and commercial activities of the Trust. The successful candidate must have a proven track record of successful business management and development in a rapidly - growing and changing commercial environment; and skills in marketing planning, financial management, and team management and development. The personal qualities required for this role will include a high standard of personal and professional integrity and a high level of personal resilience.



Ashley and Tracey Smith

Candidates, with a sound and broad business background, for the position of Chief Executive Officer of the Hawk Conservancy Trust should apply to: Michael Bolger, Director Responsible for Human Resources, Hawk Conservancy Trust, Visitor Centre, Sarson Lane, Weyhill, Andover, Hampshire SP11 8DY or email [michael@hawkconservancy.org](mailto:michael@hawkconservancy.org).

## New falconry glove on the market

*Reviewed by Peter Eldrett*

Chris Payne is a name to remember in the world of falconry glove-making. He has been making falconry gloves for over 11 years and I was lucky enough to try one.

The glove I tried was a single thickness glove with a lambswool lining (much appreciated during our recent cold weather). When I put it on for the first time it felt like one of the most comfortable gloves I have ever worn. It is made of soft deerskin hide and the stitching is first class – which makes a change from some of the cheap foreign products that are on the market. The glove also sports a “D” ring, although it does not have a tassel. I have used this glove throughout the season and have been impressed with its durability. The single thickness (combined with the lining) has proved more than adequate for my Harris' Hawk and comfort now is as good as the first time I wore it.

I believe that comfort is paramount, both for the falconer and the hawk – your hawk deserves the best, not some cheap rubbish which is so easily available these days. Although there may be a temptation to keep costs down for some equipment, your hawk (and indeed your hand in the case of a glove!) can sometimes suffer because of cheapness and poor quality.

Chris has used his years of experience to produce an exceptionally well-made product. The gloves come in both single and double thickness and the lambswool lining is optional. His gloves do fall within the upper price bracket but they are of a very good quality. I highly recommend them and I would urge falconers to take a look at his work.

You can find out more by visiting Chris' website – [www.paynes-bfg.co.uk](http://www.paynes-bfg.co.uk)

## Laggard

By Ronald Stevens

Reviewed by Paul Manning – Amews Falconry ISBN 978-0-88839-699-0

I should make it clear at the start that, whilst this has been written by an eminent falconer, this is NOT a falconry book. Indeed there are no significant references to falconry or birds of prey until “part two” 138 pages in. This is by no means a criticism as there is a huge amount in the book to enjoy, but for anyone hoping to quench their thirst for falconry knowledge, this will not deliver.

Written in the years immediately after the Second World War, when people had returned to a very changed England, the author describes a quiet country life, settled into a small cottage within an old family estate.

Before the war the estate, was renowned for its wildlife, especially the rare duck, geese and swans that lived and bred on its huge double lake. During the war, the estate, main house and grounds, were requisitioned by the army and most of the bird collection were destroyed. The author is now living in these changed conditions. The cottage sits beside the lake, and much of the early part of the book is his observations of the lake’s current health, the birds that have returned, and those that have not, triumphant sightings and wistful comparisons with the past.

There are no great events and no overall direction or conclusions. The book is more of a gentle ramble through the relatively privileged life of a country gentleman. Every detail of that life is closely observed and raised up for comment. When gentle routine is the order of the day, one’s thoughts can dwell on the squeaking of a gate or the ordering of flower seeds for the coming season. Also, much of the book is that – a gentle imparting of the author’s thoughts and observations, his staff, life, people, the natural world, and the “modern” world.

In the second part of the book the scene changes as the author embarks on an (in-part) unsuccessful two months holiday to Iceland, in the hope of trapping a newly fledged Jerkin. Again acute observation and elegant prose help to bring this austere landscape to life.

The final chapters of the book take the reader, if he or she is a falconer, to more familiar ground. To the moor, for the grouse hawking season. And here the falconer will be very satisfied, because it is in describing the passion and emotion of falconry that Ronald Stevens excels. Through his detailed blow by blow accounts of each flight and the emotions, good and bad, that they invoke the reader becomes totally absorbed in the text which, again if a falconer, places you on that moor feeling those emotions.

As with all of Ronald Stevens books the writing is elegant and quietly understated, and in consequence

a very easy read. For the falconer; His passion for Falconry and Birds of Prey is very evident when this subject is covered, and his ability to convey emotion along with the information, makes reading one of his books a real joy.

Before embarking on his first trip to Iceland he spent a summer’s day down at the coast walking the cliff tops, where he encountered a Tiercel amongst the seabirds. His description of this “moment in time” is a great illustration of the author’s, skill in conveying the passion that is invoked by these magnificent creatures.

“For a long time I sat there enjoying the scene. I watched the comings and goings of individual birds. As each one came in from the sea it swung up on to its own ledge and the others paid no attention to it, for it was but one of many fitting itself into its own place. One little unit in the seething mass.

Suddenly everything was transformed. A peregrine tiercel came gliding down in a long, slanting stoop that took the breath away from me. It was screaming with joy as it swept the cliff in glorious finality. It brushed arrogantly through the crowds of seabirds and came to rest, crowning a crag. I came mentally to attention. “On arrival!”

Until that moment the cliffs had rung to the tumultuous uproar of the seabirds, but with the coming of the peregrine there was a momentary hush of respect at the arrival of royalty”.

Whilst not strictly a falconry book, it is a book that most falconers would thoroughly enjoy. With the bonus that when the author does turn his sights on falconry he really does excel. A very enjoyable read.

This book is very enjoyable to read and should be on every falconer’s book shelf. You can obtain a copy by contacting Coch-Y-Bonddu Books

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[www.falconrybooks.co.uk](http://www.falconrybooks.co.uk)

## Laggard



RONALD STEVENS

# 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)

## Book Review

# KAI

by Tim Borrill

Reviewed by Marian Eldrett

ISBN 978-0-9565332-0-3

**W**hen I'm first given a book for review, I normally have a quick flick through to see what it's like. I was still reading this book after half an hour, which is testament to how quickly I became interested in it.

The author makes it clear early on that this is not another "how to" book – for which I was grateful because I, for one, believe that the falconry world has more than enough of these! He states, "This is not a book about management or husbandry or mews sizes or food. Nor is it a book which explains in detail how to jump with your hawk through the successive training hoops in hopeful pursuit of the final goal: the trained hawk." He says the reader should not expect to learn how to train a hawk from his book, rather that it is a book about what it is like to fly a hawk through several seasons.

His observations and thoughts are drawn from the lessons he has learned from four redtails, but his redtail Kai is the principal subject. He readily admits that there are many other books available which provide the practical material to be devoured and learned from. What he has attempted is to write a book about the rest of a hawk's life – and, in my opinion, he has done this very well. He takes the reader from his early days of training through to his hunting forays and, although he claims this is not a "how to" book, there is much to be learned from his writings.

He has a certain style of writing which some may find a bit "wordy" or "flowery". However, I found his writing style easy to read and amusing, his detailed descriptions allowing one to fully share in his experiences. This is also helped by the inclusion throughout the book of numerous photos, mainly his own, which show that he also possesses a photographic talent.

Tim Borrill is a man who is passionate about his sport and cares for its future – "... all who practise the art of falconry ... are beholden to do their best to maintain the standards and integrity of this the most exacting and ancient of all field sports." He accepts that there is so much to learn and that

there is, he quotes, "more than one way to train a hawk and more knowledge out there than we can ever know."

He clearly enjoys his pursuit of falconry and I believe anyone reading this book will be able to share in his enjoyment, particularly if they too favour redtails.

You can obtain a copy from Pemberton Publishing, Green House, Glasbury, Herefordshire HR3 5LL. RRP £17.00.

See web-site: [www.pembertonpublishing.co.uk](http://www.pembertonpublishing.co.uk)





# 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

**With the extra-cold weather we have been experiencing this winter (and, if you believe the experts, will continue to experience in future winters), are there any specific precautions we should be taking to ensure our birds do not suffer in the extreme conditions?**

It is hard to know whether these cold conditions are here to stay or whether we have simply had some cold snaps in "proper" winters just like we used to have.

Nonetheless, when temperatures hit  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  at night, it is clear that some precautions do need to be taken regarding the birds in our care.

Many of the species flown do, in fact, live at these temperatures in the wild. However, in the wild they are able to change their behaviours and make choices to increase their ability to survive. Of course, many raptors do die in the wild



during cold weather (certainly there has been a large increase in numbers of raptors presented to wildlife rehabilitation units this winter).

The important thing for the raptor keeper to remember is that the ability of captive birds to amend their behaviour to cope with weather changes is limited – it is in fact up to the keeper to anticipate these changes and ensure the bird is able to cope.

So, what are the main dangers?

1. **Frostbite** Some of the species from warmer climates (especially vultures) are very prone to developing frostbite and losing toes. Therefore these birds should, ideally, be housed indoors or have sheltered perching with heating in very cold weather. Otherwise, sheltered perching in very sheltered aviaries may be sufficient.
2. **Wing-tip oedema** Whatever the views on the exact cause of this condition (see previous articles), cold does play a part as a trigger factor in many cases. Therefore tethered birds (especially those from warmer climates) should not be kept at ground level and should not have access to water after noon each day. Again, in-bay heating may be helpful in extremely cold weather.
3. **Hypothermia** Keeping warm requires a lot of energy. Expecting a bird in flying condition to keep warm and to hunt may be simply asking too much – the bird becomes too light and hypothermia/hypoglycaemia rapidly results. Birds may simply need more to eat – in the case of aviary birds, this is easily provided (though be careful of food caching – rats and mice will be hungry too!). Flying birds should be weighed twice daily and their keel condition assessed at the same time. For very small birds (eg kestrels/

sparrowhawks) it may be easier to bring them inside and/ or increase feeding and temporarily stop hunting. This way, any minor changes can be picked up much earlier. Remember too, that wind chill and wetness are also very important – if kept in open exposed conditions, any bird can die. Therefore attention must be taken to ensure that birds can get out of the wind and that rain/ snow cannot blow into the bird's shelter. This may well mean changing part of the aviary structure – in my area, most adverse weather comes from the south-west, and aviaries are generally built to reflect this. However, the recent extreme conditions were associated with a northerly wind: not all aviaries would have been protected against this change in weather direction. Baths should be removed after noon each day and if birds are still wet by nightfall, they should be brought in (in the very cold recent weather it would have been advisable not to provide any bathing – however, in this case food should be soaked in water immediately before feeding to ensure birds do not become thirsty).

4. **Enteritis** Beware feeding frozen food! This is easier said than done as it is harder to defrost in cold conditions and, if left, food may freeze in aviary. If frozen food is consumed, it will defrost in the stomach. This may cause the gut to slow allowing bacterial infections to develop. Therefore, food should be checked before feeding and food not eaten immediately checked to see if it is freezing again

As ever, these recommendations are basic common sense. However, when it is cold and unpleasant outside it is sometimes easy to forget that birds actually require extra care, even if they are supposedly adapted to a harsher climate than ours!

Nick Kester  
Communications Officer

# UNESCO says yes





**T**he promised event has happened! Falconry is now on the UNESCO list as an activity described as one of 'intangible cultural heritage'.

We must congratulate Abu Dhabi for leading the submission and our own Nick Fox for being the engine that drove it to a successful conclusion. When announced in November – too late for the last issue – the following press release was issued:

*At a Meeting of the Parties to the 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Nairobi this week, UNESCO has officially designated Falconry on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.*

*The submission was made by Abu Dhabi on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain and the Syrian Arab Republic. It is expected that Austria, Hungary, Croatia and Slovakia will be added shortly.*

*In its evaluation, the UNESCO Committee declared that Falconry, recognised by its community members as part of their cultural heritage, is a social tradition respecting nature and the environment, passed on from generation to generation, and providing them with a sense of belonging, continuity and identity.*

*UNESCO singled out the submission, the largest multi-national submission ever made under this Convention, for special praise as: 'an **outstanding example of co-operation** between States and underlined the exemplary nature of the information provided'.*

*His Excellency Mohammed Al Bowardi, speaking on behalf of the Abu Dhabi government said: "We are delighted at the news. This will help preserve our traditional links with the desert and encourage our children to enjoy and protect our natural heritage. We are looking forward to hosting 65 nations at the Third International Festival of Falconry next year."*

*Dr Nick Fox, who helped prepare the submission, said: "This is a milestone in the history of world falconry. I hope that one day soon the British government will also sign the Convention instead of waiting in the wings while our own rich British falconry cultural identity fades away. Despite Britain's tardiness in cultural affairs, falconry is flourishing here. Up to 25,000*

*people keep birds of prey and find falconry a way to provide hands on contact with the natural world."*

The full submission can be found on the UNESCO website at:

**<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00335%3E%20&pg=00335>**

If Britain signs then we can add our name to the list of nations but in the meantime we can take pride in the fact that one of the most natural field sports has been recognised for its cultural significance.

### Respect our quarry

Respect for quarry species is central to our view of wildlife. As I write this, the forecast is once again dire and this respect forms one of the basic tenets of our sport. It is important that we remember that our sport survives because it is neither greedy nor commercial and that falconers know when to give as well as take. Not hawking during that critical hour before dusk when game is going to roost is critical at all times, and particularly so when the weather is bad.

### Disease in Peregrines

The Hawk Board has been made aware of a potentially fatal disease in the peregrine and peregrine hybrid population. If you want more information we suggest you contact raptor vet Neil Forbes at Great Western Referrals <http://www.gwreferrals.co.uk/> who will have more information. We also note a report in 24 November issue of *Cage and Aviary Birds* linking in-car air fresheners with potential respiratory failure in birds of prey – the case concerned a goshawk. As HB member, Graham Irving reminded us, Neil Forbes had already found a link between Teflon (as used in non-stick pans) and breathing problems in raptors. So you would be well advised that the natural smell of wet dogs and hawk mutes is worth it despite your better half's protest.

### Another prosecution

Regrettably there has been a successful prosecution, with another case continuing, of a goshawk breeder selling or moving hawks without papers.

This is plain stupid and all potential purchasers should absolutely refuse to accept any bird of prey without the required paperwork, be it Article 10 or, where appropriate, the blue registration document. The Hawk Board has no sympathy with those who flout the law thereby bringing our sport into disrepute. Also, for the record, it seems that in law you cannot have a hybrid of two raptor sub-species. CITES and Animal Health only recognise **species** so regardless of your belief that you have bred or own an *albidus x buteoides* or more often a German x Finnish, the UK issued paperwork will still only say *Accipiter gentilis* (Northern Goshawk).

### Licences

Quarry licences have always been a keen debating point in the falconry community. They fall into two categories. The open general licence permits the hawking of certain species that you and I would more typically call pests, while those requiring a quarry specific licence enable you to hawk lark or blackbird. The open licences have now been reviewed and implemented by all the devolved governments and the terms posted on the appropriate websites.

This year we have had meetings with each of the governments responsible for quarry licences and our proposals have been received very sympathetically. As these are continuing it would be foolish to pre-empt the outcome but future information will be available on the HB website. Sufficient to say that Natural England do not see our activities as prejudicial to the species we hawk and the Welsh Assembly are looking at the simplest way of permitting lark hawking to continue in the Principality.

By the time this is published in February the game season will have finished and our long-suffering partners will have created a list of jobs to be done now that hawking is over! So from us all at the Hawk Board, best wishes for 2011.

Don't forget to keep checking the Hawk Board website for information and contact details:-  
**[www.hawkboard-cff.org.uk](http://www.hawkboard-cff.org.uk)**

# Isn't Falconry Boring...

**W**ell, it most certainly is to some people I talk to. They start by politely feigning a passing interest and then tell me that they have seen Jemima Parry-Jones so they know about falconry. Roused by their ignorance of my sport, I start to explain what really happens with goshawk, dog and me on a freezing January day. Within seconds you can see them glaze over. I on the other hand am getting into my stride. The impassioned love I feel for an activity that I discovered quite by chance in my thirties is so great that it takes over all reasoned conversation. I am in my pulpit. The trouble is I am preaching conversion to the unconvertible. I might as well be trying to sell fridges to Eskimos. They are not that interested.

Eventually, the lecture on falconry's finest moments runs out of steam usually because they either walk away or become totally comatose. Out of politeness they often ask if I can take them hawking. My response is pre-ordained. Anytime, all you have to do is ask. They never, well almost never, ask.

Well, actually, that is not quite true. When we lived in Kent I took the son of a noble lord out and he was bored to bits as we waited over an hour for the redtail to deign to descend from the top of an enormous oak tree. From that moment on, all I had to do was call him for permission to be instantly granted with the caveat that he was not able to accompany me. Conversely, one of my largest landowners adored falconry. He rarely refused our invitation to walk his land after hare, and any houseguests would always be included. His commentary was accurate and enthusiastic, and a slip would illicit cheers for both hawk and quarry: a true sporting man and a good friend of falconry.

But he was an exception that unfailingly proves the rule. Shooting men



Goshawk pic courtesy Andrew Knowlles-Brown

are the worst, fishermen the best. The former cannot understand why, when the hawk or falcon does well, you pack up and go home. This mystifies them, especially if it occurs in the first half hour. But as Fergus Beeley, the British Falconers' Club eloquent press officer, confirmed in a recent interview in [www.fieldsportschannel.tv](http://www.fieldsportschannel.tv) (great channel, perfect antidote to Countryfile), you will never have a 500 bird day in falconry. I am not against driven shooting but my goodness the two are as chalk and cheese.

Down here in Wales where the gun pack is the principal method of controlling foxes, they are equally mystified, for their season is judged entirely, and quite rightly, on the number of foxes controlled and the satisfaction they give to the sheep farmers.

Anglers are the opposite. They are patience personified waiting for that one bite. And they do this whilst subjecting themselves to becoming the target for every midge and mosquito in the county. Given that much of what they catch has to be put back rather than eaten, I find it

equally hard to understand them. All that equipment for nothing but a fight in the invisible dark of the river which you will never see. C'est la vie!

Of course it is our duty to explain what we are about to as many as possible and to thus prevent our noble sport becoming misunderstood. But I am reminded of one of the best-known Chinese whispers that dates from the Great War. "Send reinforcements we are going to advance", comes the message from the front line trench. But its eventual retelling after several messengers, possibly deafened by bombardment, becomes "Send three and four pence we are going to a dance". (For the younger reader, three shillings and four pence is about 17p – entertainment was cheaper then.) History doesn't relate what happened next, but it was doubtless calamitous.

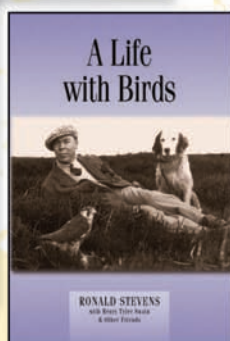
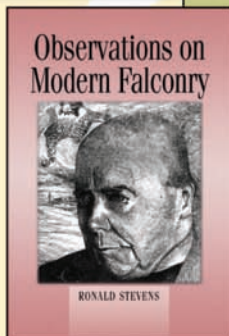
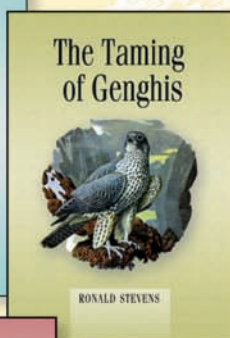
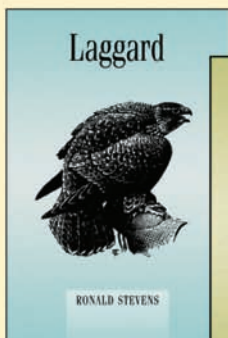
In falconry, the chat room or forum can come close to this. A simple question is asked. A flurry of responses result, some informed, some ignorant, some with half the answer. People disagree

with others; debate descends into disagreement, disagreement into abuse. The moderators step in and everyone is none the wiser.

Alternatively, we find that half heard or partially understood information is reported and everyone leaps to the wrong conclusion, heaping blame on those deemed responsible. What then follows is a metaphorical finger prodded into the chest of those who front-up falconry with the accompanying mantra "What you need to do is..." But if the original author had bothered to ask the question in the first place, or clarify the received misinformation before bursting into print, life would be much less stressful.

I still remain to be convinced of the efficacy of chat rooms or forums, but I do know that the world is full of virtual people, and that includes falconers. On a visit to Japan, I was told that there were over 10,000 such inhabitants of the virtual falconry world... and each will have an opinion based on someone else's views. Well, I would rather go hawking.

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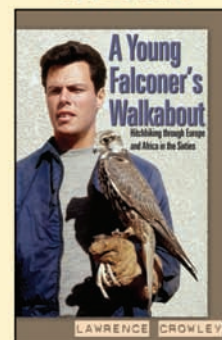
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# British Eagle Hawking Club (BEHC)

Is there a need for another club? The steering committee, Iain Crowder, David Fox, Andrew Knowles-Brown and Neil Hunter, who started this ball rolling believe there is, but only time and the membership will decide if this club will continue and grow as expected.

In recent years, since the availability of captive-bred eagles, the interest in flying eagles in the UK has grown. Although there is not a huge tradition on this small island of flying eagles, there has been a small number of falconers who have kept and flown eagles since the turn of the 20th century. Seeing an eagle flown correctly and in condition is as awe-inspiring as a falcon stooping from a 1000ft or a goshawk flying down a December cock pheasant. Training any hawk species has similarities but also demands specific knowledge of methodology, whether it is a Goshawk, Sparrowhawk, gamehawk or falcon for pursuit and in this respect eagles are no different. However, the overriding difference is one of size. Now some of you may say size is of no importance, but how wrong you are. . . !

A mal-imprint goshawk or other hawk trying to implant itself about your body is not nice; a feisty 7-10lb stropy golden eagle is another issue all together. Eagles inspire and intimidate, that is in their nature, but a parent-reared eagle and an imprint are two very different propositions, similarly those reared in open-fronted pens versus

those in seclusion. Some falconers have encountered behavioural problems, sometimes dangerous, after purchasing an eagle because they did not fully understand how it was raised and the impact this has on its development. Knowing what you are buying and the differences in management thereafter is imperative. In Europe we are unable to rely on a wild take so captive-bred birds are the only option, this has its good points for conservation as well as some very bad points as shown when behavioural problems occur.

Falconry has changed, or perhaps more precisely, adapted more in the last 50 years than it probably has done in the previous 1000 years. One major change has been the method of learning this 'Art', traditional mentoring has morphed into self-teaching through new media that are now available to us. While the academic side of falconry is not difficult to grasp through these media the one part that can't be cyber-taught is animal husbandry. We are working with a living thing and no amount of bookwork can impart the knowledge of 'reading' your hawk. No matter how much the newly schooled falconer knows about falconry it will only be after many years of handling a bird that they will be fully proficient in flying their bird to its best ability.

A club will not teach a falconer what to do, but it will give that person the chance to become involved with like-minded people who may be able to help, advise or point the falconer in a

direction that hopefully will improve their knowledge and ability and at the same time improve the well-being and quality of life for their hawks. Us humans, although we are supposed to now be civilised still hark back to our tribal roots, we like to be a part of a group, to socialise with those whom we have an allegiance to or have a similar interest to, that's why clubs are formed. So back to the original question, 'Is there a need for another club?' - well yes. Those who have an interest in eagles want to talk eagles, probably too much, but an eagle club will allow that. With little written information on the 'how to' with eagles a club that concentrates those with some expertise will allow the newcomer to tap into a wealth of knowledge and advice. A club such as the BEHC will not make anyone an eagle falconer but it will be a conduit for those who wish to learn more or take advice about eagles and provide a method of doing so more easily than is currently available.

An eagle club was launched at the last Falconry Festival - but the BEHC steering committee has been informed that this has evolved into an invite-only field meet club and as such is not open to anyone who is looking for information or help with eagle falconry. That is another reason why it is felt this Club will be of benefit to eagle falconers and the falconry community as a whole.

For further information on the Club's aims and contact details go online at <http://www.behc.org.uk/>



# British Eagle Hawking Club



## Welcome.

The Steering Committee of the British Eagle Hawking Club feels that there is a need for an eagle club available to all those who need information or advice on hunting with eagles.

Whilst hunting with eagles in Britain does not have the same tradition as in other European countries, it is practised successfully by a small number of falconers. In recent years there has been a growing interest in eagle falconry and, with captive-bred eagles now readily available, more falconers are searching for information about, and help with, eagles. The aim of this club is to help those falconers.



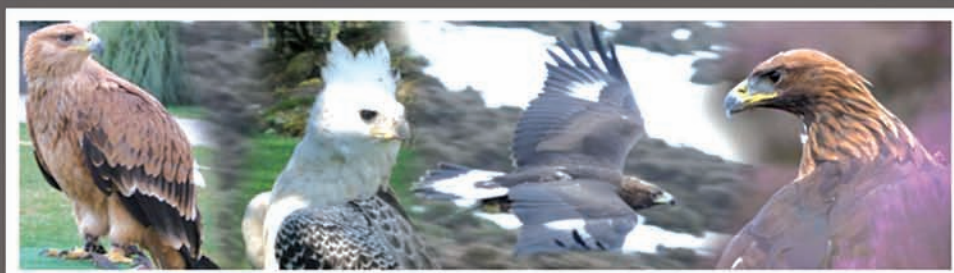
### About us

There is little written information regarding the training and flying of eagles and it needs to be recognised that these are complex and powerful birds of prey. Today's falconers tend not to follow the traditional route of mentoring, so it is hoped that an eagle club will benefit those wanting to take on an eagle as well as encourage the sharing of experience of those already flying eagles successfully.

If you have an interest in eagles and in hunting them, please contact us. The British Eagle Hawking Club has created an internet-based discussion group until such time as formal recommendations are proposed for the structure and direction this club should take.

By contacting David Fox, the membership recorder at: [davidfox78@hotmail.com](mailto:davidfox78@hotmail.com) with your full name, address and contact details, you will be invited to join the BEHC discussion list where you can participate in all discussion relating to the development of the Club and eagle falconry in general. We look forward to hearing from you.

BEHC Steering Committee:  
David Fox, Neil Hunter, Andrew Knowles-Brown, Iain Crowder.





# EAGLES AT WOODHALL SPA

## THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD MEET OF BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB

**T**he outlines of tree branches were just becoming visible against the paling sky. Dawn was breaking and I was parked up in a lay-by munching on a bar of chocolate, taking a short break whilst en-route to the 2010 International Field Meeting of the British Falconers Club (BFC) at the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire. I was feeling a bit anxious because I had never previously flown at this prestigious event, which takes place only once every four years and I held treasured memories of my very first and only previous meeting at the very first Woodhall Spa event which was in 1969 and where I had been personally invited by my good friend, the late Hungarian falconer, Lorant de Bastyai, as I was not a member of the BFC at the time. Here I met many of the well-known falconers of the day, including the German falconer Renz Waller, who was Falconmeister to Field Marshall Hermann Goering, who was head of Hitler's Luftwaffe during the Second World War. Ever since, I had nursed a desire, not only to return to the Woodhall Spa meet, but this time as a full member of the BFC and

to fly my Golden Eagle there. A dream was about to come true – I hoped.

### Last two days

The 2010 meet had begun on Tuesday 5 through until Saturday 9 October, but because of other commitments, I could only make the final two days. I arrived rather early, just as a few sleepy-eyed falconers were beginning to stir and place their raptors out on the large lawns. I had taken Star, my male Berkut Golden Eagle and proceeded to place his bow perch on one of the weathering grounds. However, I was soon informed that this particular area was for the long-wings only and was shown where the short and broad wings were being perched. No problem, I pulled up my perch and proceeded to place my eagle amongst the Goshawks, Harris Hawks and Red Tails. I then discovered that the eagles, few that there were, were being tethered well away at the far side of the weathering grounds, but as none of the eagles were yet present, I decided to leave Star where he was and continued to do so throughout the duration of my stay at the meet.

Any account of the Woodhall Spa meet

is bound to be extremely incomplete, due to the fact that scores of parties ventured out daily to different flying grounds and once one is placed into a particular flying group, that position is expected to remain constant, although there was some changing about as I will relate later. I saw nothing of the longwings or shortwings other than whilst they were weathering in the spacious hotel grounds. Trying to record all the goings on at this huge event is reminiscent of trying to cover every aspect of incidents at Waterloo or on the Somme, it simply cannot be done by one person because it is impossible to be everywhere at once, so as I was with the only eagle group, this is my account of events as I saw them.

I soon became aware of a loud call, resounding across the lawns. It somewhat resembled the call of a Goshawk, but was, if anything, more piercing. I looked across to where the sound was emanating and saw Isis, Andrew Knowle-Brown's female Crowned Eagle. What a stunning eagle this is and I ventured across to take a few photographs. By this time, more and more falconers were arriving and the weathering grounds were beginning



Andrew Knowles-Brown and Alan Walker walk the stubble

to fill. Many of the old falconers from the 1960's were sadly no longer with us, but many equally well-known faces of today's falconry scene were putting in an appearance. A large part of these meets, apart from the flying itself, is the opportunity to catch up and meet with old friends and make new ones as well, so the social side is very important. One of the first of these was Andrew Knowles-Brown himself, long known as a falconer and eagle breeder of excellence. I had seen Andrew at a few game fairs and the International Falconry Festival, but until this point had never actually met, although we had corresponded recently by e-mail, due to the forming of a website for the newly instigated British Eagle Hawking Club.

### Eagles only

A group solely for eagles is, I believe a necessity, for these large and powerful birds are becoming ever more readily available and many would be eagle falconers simply believe that they are merely larger versions of the Harris Hawk! These aficionados are in for a nasty shock, the worst part being that the

eagle is rapidly passed on to some equally ill-prepared falconer and soon becomes passed on yet again. This of course is assuming that someone does not get hurt, for in their first year, Golden Eagles will test the eagle falconer to the limit, as they do their own parents. Check out film of well-advanced eaglets in an eyrie and observe how rapidly the parents arrive with food, drop it and depart hastily; whereas in eagle falconry, initially, the falconer him or herself becomes the "surrogate" mother, and if unprepared, will more than likely be attacked at some point. I must stress here that, with PERSEVERANCE, the situation changes dramatically for the better, and a more confiding game hawk would be difficult to find, but the storm has to ridden in the first instance and there are many who do not have the bottle. Such would be far better off leaving eagles alone and staying with a Harris. At the time of writing, there is little in the way of help for newcomers to eagle falconry and it has been stated that some have ego's so large that they don't even realise, or accept that they need help. This is where the website of the British Eagle Hawking Club should be

such a boon, for questions can be asked of experienced eagle falconers. Additionally, Alan Walker of the North East BFC region and myself have begun a British Falconers Club eagle sub group which not only offers advice and help, but also organises eagle field meets. Of course, one has to be a member to attend the latter except as an invited guest, although non-members are not actually allowed to fly at such meets. However, I have digressed somewhat.

Meeting Andrew Knowles-Brown confirmed that I was flying with him and the aforementioned Alan Walker. In fact, we were the only three present that were actually flying eagles. Alan had his male Golden Eagle "Maximus," who had actually caught one hare earlier in the week. Andrew's hybrid Golden x Ornate Hawk Eagle, "Topaz" was also present but was suffering from a malady that was akin to sour-crop. Andrew had been crop tubing him all week with antibiotics and at one point it appeared that he might lose him, but fortunately he pulled through, but was grounded for the remainder of the meet.

All short-wings and broad-wings,



Andrew Knowles-Brown and his Crowned Eagle

including eagles, were scheduled to leave the Petwood Hotel for the flying grounds at 10am, the long-wings leaving half an hour later. This seemed to be arranged so as to avoid congestion via the one exit and made perfect sense, for it was awkward enough with the first groups heading off. Our venue for the day was a lovely farm near South Kyme Fen, with large, wide-open fields, ideal for hawking hares with eagles. The slipping order was by numbers, but as I was a new arrival, Andrew, who was Field Master, suggested I take the first slip, which I did. Star was well on form and gave some sterling chases and came very close to catching hares on several occasions, as did Alan's eagle Maximus, but the only hare that was actually taken was by Isis, Andrew's Crowned Eagle. Isis had chased a hare into a steep drainage ditch and grabbed his prize before it became aquatic. Andrew had to drag both eagle and hare to the top of the bank, where photographs of this imposing eagle and its quarry were taken. It was a good day's hawking, but we had to walk quite some distance for our slips and were ready for some socialising by the

end of the day. At least the weather had been kind and we had been hawking in shirt- sleeves for most of the time.

#### A chat with Ronnie Moore

Alan had reserved a place at the Vale Hotel in Woodhall Spa for me and so he, Ian his hawking companion and I returned from South Kyme to partake of a take away pizza each. However, the night was yet young, so we decided to set off for some revelling at the Petwood Hotel. Here, we joined many other falconers for a good old chat and I thoroughly enjoyed the evening, not least for meeting up with eagle enthusiast Ronnie Moore, who I had not met since the 1970's. I had been working on a new book on Golden Eagles entitled *The Golden Eagle In Falconry* and I needed to ask Ronnie some questions about "Ailsa," his female Golden Eagle, which he had flown for twenty-eight years. During our conversation, it was highly evident that Ronnie still deeply missed this beloved bird and was visibly overcome with emotion, which made me feel quite guilty about asking further questions. It was well past midnight when

our taxi arrived to ferry us back to our hotel.

The final day of the meet was spent on another large farm just south of Lincoln. We lined up to walk a huge stubble field and completed the entire drive without flushing a single hare, just a couple of partridges. This did not bode well, but the farmer suggested that we try walking the sugar-beet fields, as he felt that is where we would find our wily and elusive quarry. The first, and lowest lying sugar beet crop yielded nothing again, but when we moved onto a higher, and much larger beet field, the action really began. First to fly was Andrew, and his Crowned Eagle took off after the first hare of the day, the latter just making it to a stand of maize.

Then it was Dave Aldred's turn. Dave is the current membership secretary of the BFC and he was flying a Red Tailed Hawk, but had seen virtually no quarry all week and certainly no hares, so he had asked me if he could join the eagle group for the day. I had no objections, but as Andrew was field master, I suggested to Dave that he clear it with him first and obviously there was no objection from Andrew either, for Dave joined the group and took the second flight. Dave's Red Tail had never taken a hare before, but he made short work of the second hare flushed that day and took it in fine style. I have never seen Dave so ecstatic and he wore a Cheshire cat grin for the rest of the day, in fact, I understand he wore this grin for the following week also! This of course put the pressure on us eagle falconers and we could not possibly allow ourselves to be pipped at our own sport by a Red Tail, it was just not on!

As the day advanced, we enjoyed some thrilling flights at hares, but none of them connected and it was beginning to look as though Dave's was going to become the only hare taken that day. He had other very close slips at hares and Andrew stated that if Dave caught another, he was going to buy a Red Tail for himself! However, things soon changed in the eagle's favour, for Star took on a hare and grabbed it in a lovely flight and we all breathed a sigh of relief. Then Dave's Red Tail caught a rabbit in a chase, which began by the rabbit fleeing away, but then turned and ran towards us, whereby it was soon to be taken by the hawk. Dave's face was something to behold. Then a hare was spotted lying amongst



the sugar beet and as it was my turn to fly, the flight was engineered so that Star had a reasonable chance at catching it, which he did over a short flight. Alan's eagle, Maximus, which had flown well throughout the day, was very unlucky not to catch the hare of his final flight. It chased the hare for some distance and connected, but failed to hold it. We all marvelled at the fur still clinging to Max's talons as Alan rejoined the beating line.

### End of a good day

The day was drawing to a close and as we walked up the last patch of sugar beet that would bring us to our parked vehicles, a hare was flushed and Andrew's Crowned Eagle was off the fist in a flash, taking it in fine style. So, at the end of the day, the customary photographs were taken, everyone else returned to The Petwood Hotel for the final evening dinner and I turned for home as I was half-way there anyway and I had forgotten to book for the meal. This was a most congenial meet and also a personal landmark in my falconry career for me. I had long wished to fly one of my birds at the Woodhall Spa International Field Meet of the British Falconers Club and this I had now achieved. Even better, I had added to the score of game taken by those present. The only downside is that I now have to wait another four years before I can attempt to repeat the event. My thanks go to the British Falconers Club and particularly to those falconers in the eagle group who helped to make my stay so pleasurable.



Alan Walker with Maximus, male Golden Eagle



End of the day. L-R: John Hill, Dave Aldred, Barbara Royal, Andrew Knowles-Brown, Dr. David Glynne Fox and Alan Walker

# Black Hawk Down

**H**aving experienced eight or nine years of Harris Hawking with both males and females of that very adaptable species, I was looking for a new aspect to my falconry. I

asked to go out with falconers who were flying various longwings. The first few outings were with a couple of falconers and a Perlin (Peregrine x Merlin), a small longwing capable of taking partridge. It has the ability to wait on like a Peregrine,

but also the habit of sitting on posts like a Merlin, always to the frustration of its owner! The most memorable expedition with this bird (and I use the word expedition for good reason), started off on an area in the South Downs of Sussex. Some eight miles by foot and six hours later, we had located the bird after its' prodigious chases on a few pigeons! We all walked back to our cars, avoiding the marshland we had initially traversed on our tracking, very tired, cold and extremely hungry. The bird was picked up the next morning by its owner.

## On the run

The next most memorable event in my search for a challenge was with a different falconer who urged me, "be prepared to run". RUN! At least I only had to walk a lot last time! He was to fly a longwing out of the hood at crows. "Out of the hood" is the equivalent of a sprinter running "out of the blocks" – meaning an immediate burst of speed from the outset, Goshawk style. We crested a hill on the South Downs, in a massive area of grazing which was dotted by black cows and their mangers of hay.

The crows were some 500 yards away from where he unhooded and slipped the falcon. She shot off the fist powering towards the crows and we started our earthbound run at a fraction of her speed. The falcon had caught up with the crows and snatched one out of the air, bringing it to ground under one of the hay mangers and immediately started to plume her prize. Needless to say, I was still staggering up the Downland slope gasping deeply for air! The falcon was leashed up and allowed to eat well from her catch. We talked about what work goes into making such a falcon. Was I still interested? Definitely.

For various reasons it was 18 months before I had purchased my first Female Peregrine x Saker to be made into a crow-hawk. (Don't ask me why a falcon is called a crow-hawk, it just is!) I picked her out of a hack pen, where newly hard penned falcons are allowed to mix



Peregrine x Saker falcon weathering on the lawn



Peregrine x Saker falcon

and fly freely to develop mentally and physically after leaving the nest. Such hack pens are usually circular, some 70 feet in diameter and 30 feet or so high. The birds have access to high shelf perches, where often five or six birds sit in close proximity and food is abundantly available so that even the smallest or most timid bird can get some. Spending three or four weeks learning their flying control skills (avoiding crashes as groups fly in

opposite directions) and developing their muscles is one of the most valuable starts a crow-hawk can have. So much so that I will only buy such falcons now that I have experienced the difference it makes.

Training a falcon to become a game-hawk, involves encouraging the bird to gain height by circling up and waiting on above the falconer ready to be served the game. This means you expect the falcon to be close and always in sight.

While this is an over simplification, you only need to understand it for the point of comparison to the method for flying a crow-hawk. For hawking crows or rooks, you must first locate your quarry without alerting them to the fact that you intend to produce a falcon. Corvids immediately know the shape of a falcon, so you cannot walk about with one on your fist and expect the crows to hang around – they won't!

### Training the crow hawk

Training a crow-hawk has two elements: 1) getting the falcon to fly away from you and chase black stuff and 2) getting it to come back to you from a long distance, often when it cannot see you. The second is a consequence of the first – if it has unsuccessfully chased its quarry some way (half a mile or more), then it is desirable for it to return to your lure and whistle. Telemetry skills are vital, as in the early days the falcon may not be familiar enough with its territory or skills to gain height and look for you. Or, it may be sat on the ground frustrated that the crow in its grasp was not held well enough and escaped.

I use a black rubber lure made out of an old inner-tube, fringed to look like crow wings. It works a treat and can easily be cleaned, rolled up, stuffed in a pocket, doesn't get damaged by the bird's feet or beak (and they do want to 'kill it') and so far has lasted six years. As with any training, falcons learn by reinforcement so good slips - even if only one per day – are vital.

The bird soon learns that it has to leave the fist quickly or the quarry is unattainable, so one must never throw or cast the bird off. The falcon also has to judge her surroundings, her tactics and whether any of the flock of corvids has a weakness that would single it out as a target.

The accepted view of rook or crow hawking states that you should have access to thousands of acres of land so as not to hawk ground more than once in three or four weeks and that there should be virtually no trees or bushes for cover into which the crows shall escape. Well, I live in Sussex, which is one of the most populated and tree covered counties in the land, so my task was going to be uphill as far as entering a falcon on corvids. However, the bird



Black Peregrine x Saker falcon

has to learn as well for she cannot read books! And learn she did. I would often see her putting herself between the cover and the crows and shepherding them away from cover. She would drive them upwards, drive them downwind but almost never stooped them. Flights were fast and lasted up to four minutes or so – a lot when you consider the speed and effort required. It was nearly three months before she caught her first crow and I found her sitting on the dead specimen right in the middle of the field. The immediate priority was to check her over – no damage thankfully. She was allowed to gorge on it.

### Entering the falcon

The requirement now was to get her 'wedded' to corvids, that is not just killing what she is able to catch, but to concentrate only on black corvids. Thus I could safely fly her in the vicinity of other

quarry that I did not want to catch such as wood pigeons, traditional game, ground based poultry and even rabbits. All these were to be avoided and her training reinforced by slipping at groups of crows at least 10 in number. Given that crows will mob a falcon at any opportunity, you may wonder why I looked for flocks of crows rather than one or two on their own. One must always judge the quarry from the falcon's point of view: at this stage she is inexperienced and needs as many opportunities as possible. If she is presented with just two crows she will quickly decide if either has a weakness she can exploit and therefore she will have a slight advantage in pressing that chosen quarry. A falcon is more likely to be able to spot the weakest quarry when presented with a larger number in a flock. In fact, I subsequently learned that all the falcons I have slipped at crows will ignore single birds and head for a flock

or larger group, presumably for that very reason. The most vivid example of this was the fact that she would always pick a white-winged crow if she saw one – so there was clearly something about these genetic oddities that made them weaker birds.

At each outing the objective was to present her a slip on crows – and only rarely would I work her to the lure. In her first season I had to track her down six times at distances of over half a mile and she caught a number of crows and magpie. Given she was learning novice falcon skills in this difficult aspect of falconry, I was quite pleased with this result.

### Flights away from home

Her second year progressed much more quickly now that she knew what it was all about and such was my confidence in her that I took her to field meets much further away from home. This was backed up by other falconers being present on whose tracking skills I could call upon should it be necessary.

One memorable weekend in February a group of four falconers were invited to Lincolnshire to go crow hawking. A county much flatter and less enclosed than Sussex, so should be easier for the falcons to out-fly their quarry before it put into cover.

Also, a chance for the falcons to travel a good distance out of sight! Being near the east coast and in the winter, we were blessed with a gale and wintry showers (yes, snow!) on our arrival. Our host asked if we still wanted to fly, as they would not have put their game hawks up in such conditions. "Of course!" we chorused and set out to find crows and rooks. My slip was at a group of rooks feeding in a field and I opted for a downwind slip – that is to show the falcon the quarry with the wind behind her. The falcon then immediately turns away from the rooks to climb into the wind, but not to a great height probably no more than 50 feet. The rook thinks she is not going to approach them.

However, the falcon turns towards the rooks and then has the advantage as she can gather greater speed with the wind behind her while she powers towards them. On this occasion the falcon was successful in picking out a rook and she took it to the hedge line to dispatch and



Flying at crows

plume. Actually this was her first rook, as she had only taken crows and one magpie before this. After running across a ploughed field of clay I was able to secure her and let her feed up in safety.

Her second season was better than her first and even with two months of near continuous rain, I still managed to get her out two or three times a week. She managed 18 corvids in her second season and only two major track downs – the longest being about six miles.

However, she also did spend the one night out having gorged on her crow before I found her. To add to the complexity of the recovery, she had taken the crow off a small airfield and was located in a tree right next to the helicopter landing pad! She was now wedded to crows (black stuff as it became known) and she once flew over three skulking cock pheasants to chase a crow. She missed the crow but it was satisfying to see her ignore the pheasants. The Peregrine x Saker later learned how to kill a crow with a stoop and this is now her preferred method, especially on a windy day.

### Challenging flights

I have been flying crow-hawks for six years now and every slip is still a challenge. My second member of the team is a three year old black Gyr x Saker, again from a hack pen. He is a cracking crow hawk and so he should be given his pedigree. I set out to buy this Nick Fox bred crow hawk after reading his books and learning of his particular birds. Flying a black falcon at crows has an advantage for the first 50 yards as he is not always seen by his quarry! However, I soon lose sight of him and have to wait for his now enthusiastic return. He has shown to have more intelligence, or at least more tactics, than the Peregrine x Saker: they are two very different birds to fly.

He tends to use everything as cover during the approach – from ploughed furrows, hedge rows, milking parlours, cows and farm machinery. Not for him the dizzy heights of a stoop. Well, not until his third year anyway. I have just begun to see short corkscrew stoops out of him and perhaps he has yet more to come. He is the only falcon I've had

that will come back and land at your feet, without the need for a lure and when offered the fist will jump right up to it. Endearing – but you had better have some food ready!

This season, I have taken up a  $\frac{3}{4}$  grey Gyr x Saker, again from a hack pen. The black Gyr x Saker was a nightmare to train for the first six weeks, but it has been worth it. I had been expecting a similarly difficult beginning for the new hybrid and was totally surprised with the contrast. His good manners are augmented by powerful strong flights and a natural inclination to climb to 200 feet or so and wait. I am adjusting my training to keep him up there and see how he shapes up. So far he has out-manoeuvred flocks of crows chasing both upwards and outwards when he could so easily have just grabbed one out of the air. I've only had one track down with him (albeit eight miles!), but as soon as he heard the whistle he came powering in to the lure leaving the black specks of crows behind him. I'm sure it won't be long before his absence is due to a well earned success.

# Dream Season

It all started with a phone call in late January 2009. Harry McElroy had tired of a frequently fruitless search for quail in his corner of Arizona. He knew our quail situation in the northwest part of the state had been good for several years. He had a severe case of quail envy and he decided to solve it by moving after 17 years in his southern Arizona home. When he called he asked if I knew of any land for sale in our area and questioned me about our quail population. He scheduled a visit with his wife, Beth, in late February and I began scouting property on the market.

The day we took Harry and Beth on a drive around the area was beautiful winter weather for Kingman: sunny, warm and not even windy. To top it off, every half mile we had to slow the car to allow a covey of quail to cross the road. We saw so many quail that we joked that what we'd actually done was hired a guy with a trained covey to stay one step ahead of us and make our quail situation look too good to be true. By the end of the day Harry was chomping at the bit to move to Kingman in time for the next quail season.

Ironically, Harry bought the very first piece of property we had shown him. It is a lot with a view situated on a hill directly behind my subdivision. Had he known the

difficulty of preparing the pad and building a house on what amounts to a huge boulder pile, he might not have bought it. But he did and they moved in to their beautiful new home less than a year after that first trip to Kingman.

In the meantime, they needed a rental with horse facilities while their home was under construction. Once again, fate seemed to lay her hand on me as I suggested they inquire about the home next door to our own. Harry became my next door neighbor for the entire 2009-2010 hawking season.

## Busy neighbor

But having Harry next door doesn't equate to a dream season without a proper hawk to fly. As most falconers know, Harry has been busy flying Aplomado falcons for several seasons. Midway through the 2008-2009 season his best female, Harlow, was killed by a Redtail while she was on a kill. He also had a new tiercel that year. He had attempted to fly them as a pair, but the male was so immature Harry feared his behavior would end up getting his good hawk killed. So he focused on Harlow until her untimely death. By then the tiercel was being topically medicated for what appeared to be a fungal infection on one of his wingtips. When medication didn't help, Harry began giving him oral antifungal, but one day he found that the wingtip, with three primaries, had fallen off.

Shortly after Harry bought the new property, he e-mailed to thank me again for our help in locating the land. He expressed a desire to thank us in some material fashion. I was just happy that I had been of assistance to a dear friend, but I also know Harry is a bit stubborn and would attempt to thank us in some way no matter what I said. With Harry's propensity for acquiring interesting accipiters in mind, I told him if he ever had a line on something really cool, such as a Black Sparrowhawk, my husband Greg would be thrilled to get one. To my surprise Harry e-mailed back with an

offer of the tiercel Aplomado. He actually apologized for offering us a sick hawk that couldn't fly and even indicated he would assist with his veterinary bills. Once I ascertained that Harry really didn't want the tiercel, I immediately accepted the offer sans financial help. I knew that even if Greg didn't want the little guy, I sure did. I had been enamored with the idea of flying an Aplomado ever since hearing Jim Nelson speak about them at a recent Desert Hawking Classic. But we are frugal people and the idea of spending large sums of money on a bird that is on the menu of almost every other raptor out there just didn't fit our plans.

Harry, bless his heart, thought Greg would be flying the little falcon. Greg is an accomplished accipiter man and quail hawk. However, there is a key difference between Greg and Harry: while the latter will pursue quail with any capable raptor, the former will fly any accipiter at any legal quarry. It just so happens that where we live, quail flights with female Cooper's hawks is about as good as it gets, in Greg's mind. Greg simply had no interest in flying him. To Greg's credit, he knew very well how much I liked the idea of trying out an Aplomado.

So, the little guy quickly became my bird. I dubbed him Shaq, as I am fond of giving my little birds really big names. The day after I got him home an X-ray revealed a severe bone infection in the left wing, in addition to the missing tip on the right wing. We started him on antibiotics and antifungals for eight weeks. I was relieved when he regained flight only three days into the meds.

## Weight reduction time

By mid-July Shaq had long since completed his meds and he seemed to have finished molting, although the missing primaries did not grow in correctly. It was time to begin weight reduction if we had any hope whatsoever of hunting quail the opening week in September. As the grams reluctantly dropped off, the formerly quiet falcon



Deborah and Shaq

got noisier and noisier. I began to wonder whether he would shut up while in the field. When September arrived Shaq was ready to go, lean, loud and clueless.

### Difficult arrangement

Initially I did all my hunting on foot, leaving my five-year-old hawking buddy, Deborah, home with Daddy. Here's where Harry comes back in to the picture. As the days got shorter, this arrangement became more difficult for Greg, since his boss actually expected him to show up at work some time before noon. Harry offered me the use of his horses: in mid-October I took him up on his offer. Deborah and I hunted from horseback about three hunts a week, riding out from Harry's place rather than hauling the horses in a trailer.

The first time out was a bit of a fiasco. Well, really, it was barely controlled chaos every single time. There I was, riding a horse that required constant supervision, with a five-year-old sitting in front of me

in the saddle. On the way out I kept Shaq hooded, so I had to mount while holding him on my left hand. I had to watch the horse, too, because he's a nipper and he was just as interested in nipping Shaq as me.

Oh and did I mention the dogs? They had to stay where I downed them while I saddled the horse, then heel all the way out of the neighborhood until we had reached a safe distance from the busy roads. They are idiots who both think they should be closest to me on heel, so they would squeeze in closer and closer until under the horse's feet. This with a horse who would gladly walk right on over a dog that got in his way.

All these challenges notwithstanding, Shaq flew and hunted well and Deborah loved riding on horseback. Had we not been on horseback when Shaq decided to go after one of a trio of ravens, he likely would have been killed that day. Deborah and I were on Dancer, not the most sure-footed horse around. Shaq left the

T-perch on a mission and I figured he was after quail. But my heart sank as I watched him zero in on a raven. For those of you who aren't familiar with ravens, they are incredible birds. What they lack in killing tools like talons and speed, they make up for in brains and teamwork. They love fresh meat and have been documented killing newborn antelope by pecking the umbilical cord to open them up.

At any rate, when Shaq smacked into this raven, easily four times his size or better, the raven looked surprised. I was already charging at breakneck speed through the desert hoping to get Shaq to give up. But the game was afoot: the raven might as well have said, "I'll teach you, you little @\$%^! Come on guys, let's get him." What ensued was a half-mile chase with the ravens tag-teaming on Shaq, who was desperately trying to get away but lacked the acceleration to make a clean break. They grabbed him several times by either a foot or a wingtip. I just knew he was going to die. I was also mindful of the fact that Deborah and I were in serious danger of a major fall if Dancer lost his footing. The Peruvian Paso was not really bred for galloping, particularly not over rough terrain. Deborah and I were both screaming at the tops of our lungs, "Ha! Get out of here! Ha!" A useless endeavor but what else can you do when you feel so helpless?

### Ravens too close

At last I think Shaq ran out of steam and just landed on the ground. The ravens all landed near him, but with me closing in had second thoughts about committing to the final attack. We were all exhausted, but Shaq was genuinely glad to see me. I fed him, hooded him and rode home, thankful we were all in one piece.

Mind you, most days I was having the time of my life, all thanks to Harry. But Harry's luck was not so good that year. He had a hybrid falcon die of illness before the season even started. He had a nice little tiercel goshawk that was starting to catch quail when it was killed by an eagle. A former apprentice of his, Paul Hilmo, gave him a passage tiercel Harris's that had showed some interest in quail. About that time I began hawking in the evenings, which meant that Harry and I could hawk together. At first it was just a couple of days a week, but soon it upgraded to a daily adventure. Around



Jamaica with Shaq and quail



Deborah, Jamaica and Shaq on Dancer the horse

two in the afternoon Harry and I would meet at the corrals and saddle the horses. After loading them in the trailer, we would squeeze hawks, dogs and Deborah into the truck and off we would go in search of the wily enemy. Often as we drove out he would regale me with some fascinating story from his past, usually something to do with a memorable hawk, a childhood dog, or a crazy falconer he once knew.

### First flight for Shaq

Once we arrived at the field du jour, we always flew Shaq first. His ability to locate quail was truly impressive, as it was a rare hunt that we rode more than 10 minutes before the chase was on. Shaq would fly hard in the direction he spotted them, often several hundred yards distant. Most often he would perform figure eights over the covey, trying to force them to fly. Sometimes he would pursue from there, other times he would land and wait for us to flush for him. Harry taught me that they usually have their target picked and usually will not switch to a different quail. Once the chase was on, it was up to me to keep up as best I could. Shaq would chase hard, but lacked the acceleration and raw speed to take adult Gambel's on the first flush. His method was to keep pace with them and try to catch them as they put in. Usually, they made cover after the first flight. Shaq was very reliable at marking them in and the dogs were there

to help confirm the quail's location. Then it was up to me and the dogs to reflush the quail, which in this area usually take refuge in a packrat nest or a cholla cactus (or a packrat nest under a cholla). Again Shaq would pursue and occasionally he would take one on that second flush if the quail chose poorly and had no cover to get into quickly. More often, the second reflush was required and Shaq almost always took the bird on the ground as it ran from the cover, now too spent to fly.

On one memorable hunt, he spotted them from the truck and was fully involved in the hunt before we were even able to mount the horses. At one point I thought he was going to chase the quail right back to us, but the quail dumped about 200 yards away. When we got to him and reflushed, we lost sight of the

flight and began a telemetry search. We searched for 20 minutes or longer and I was certain he was dead, since the signal was not reliable and we happened to be hawking a field owned by a resident female prairie that regularly took quail we flushed. Harry found him before I did due to his considerably greater experience with telemetry searches and I learned yet another valuable lesson from Harry. We were both so relieved to find Shaq alive and well - the fact that he was happily eating his quail was just a bonus. He was in a completely different area from where he was headed last, so that meant he had flushed the quail on his own and caught it on his own. My guess is he would do that more often if I wasn't there to move things along.

It was truly a gift of the falconry gods that I was able to spend most of the hawking season in the field with Harry. I learned a great deal from him about falconry in general and about hunting quail and flying Aplomados. He also has spoiled my daughter, who recently announced, "When I am a mommy I will not make my little girl go hawking except on horses!"

He taught her the cardinal directions and when she was riding with me she was fond of quizzing me. She would tell me, "Good job, Mommy!" whenever I got them correct. I am very hopeful that the 2010-2011 season will be just as rewarding, or even more so since Harry has acquired a new female Aplomado to fly with Shaq. Harry is a Master without compare, a true gentleman and every day I looked forward to the moment he would say, "Did I ever tell you about the time when . . ."



Shaq on a quail



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# First Belgian International Field Meet – Nov 2010



Belgian falconer with eyass Goshawk

In the early part of November last year I had the good fortune to attend the first ever International Falconry Field Meet to be held in Belgium. Right away I feel compelled to state categorically that it was one of the best organised meets I have ever been to with the organisers having catered for just about every eventuality. Five Belgian falconers that hawk together on a regular basis had approached their national club with the idea of staging the meet. The idea had been rejected on the grounds that such an undertaking was just not possible in a country the size of Belgium, given the terrain and availability of quarry. Undaunted the five friends carried on making plans and one by one solved the logistical problems of hosting such an event. When more or less everything was in place then it was decided to hold the event the following hawking season, which turned out to be last November. Invitations were issued accordingly and the initial response was very encouraging and so the event became a definite occurrence instead of a possibility.

Those that had dealt with the organising had all attended various field meets on the continent over a number of years and had tried hard to use these meetings as learning curves, incorporating the good bits where possible and making sure to eradicate any shortcomings in their own event. Generally speaking it has to be said that most things ran exceedingly smoothly and any problems that came to light were very quickly and efficiently dealt with by the organisers. There will always be those that moan, no matter what the circumstances, but



Good dogs make good hawks

on the whole the mood of the event was an extremely pleasant one and everyone seemed to make an effort to speak to everyone else.

### Fieldmeet venue

The meet was held in Westmalle, slightly North of Antwerp and was spread over three days of hawking and a final farewell breakfast on the morning of departure. Although the registration fee seemed, at first glance, to be quite high, some two hundred and fifty Euros, this quite literally included everything. Accommodation for falconer, hawks, dogs and ferrets if necessary. The weathering was a secure area, lit at night and under the constant supervision of an experienced falconer. Hawk food was freely available as was food for the falconers themselves. This included a hearty breakfast, packed lunch with bottles of wine and water and an excellent evening meal. On the final night a banquet had been arranged with entertainment and a raffle that seemed to have an endless supply of prizes.

Falconers gathered from around

Europe with the vast majority being either of Belgian, Dutch, French, German or English nationality. A good number of hawks and falcons were on the weathering although the selection was extremely limited. The hawks consisted of Goshawks and Harris Hawks and falcons were mainly straight Peregrines with just one or two hybrids. However, without doubt, the undoubted stars of the weathering ground were a male and female Bonelli's Eagle. These attracted a great deal of attention from one and all. For a first time meet of this stature there were in fact quite a number of eagles present with all, other than the two Bonelli's, being Golden.

The only thing the organisers had absolutely no control over was the weather and for the first two days of the meet the elements did their best to conspire against any decent hawking. The first day saw strong gusting winds making conditions for hawks and eagles extremely difficult. Day two the wind eased but rain took its place and made the day an uncomfortable one. The final

day however saw the wind and rain retreat and the sun broke through giving us a truly glorious day.

At most meetings I attend as a spectator I tend to gravitate unquestionably towards the falcons as they are what I mainly fly myself. On this meet I was determined to see other types of falconry and the plan was a day with eagles, then hawks and then to spend the final day with the falcons. Needless to say such plans never run as intended but I did get to very much enjoy two out of three as scheduled with the third being the most spectacular of all, although certainly not as planned.

Day one saw the various groups heading off to their hunting grounds and because of the numbers attending the eagles had been split into two groups. I decided to go with the smaller group which, due to a couple of last minute hitches, turned out to be just two Golden Eagles. Both eagles were in superb condition and one was a twelve year old veteran and the other an unentered novice. The drive to the hunting ground



Novice with first rate Goshawk

was almost two hours but it certainly was a worthwhile venture. The farmland we were to hunt over was flat, very few trees and not too many ditches. The only down side was the wind which was really howling and at times gusting very strongly indeed. Getting slips right as obviously going to be a very crucial part of the proceedings. A local gamekeeper joined us and expressed his opinion that because of the wind hares would be exceedingly difficult to find sitting out in their normal places and so this proved to be. We did get quite a number of slips in the morning but the minute the hares turned into the wind they made good their escape and left the eagles frustrated. This happened time after time and throughout the morning the wind seemed to grow in strength. It was decided around twelve noon to take an early lunch and see what conditions were like a little later on.

The land owners, whose farms we were hunting, joined us for an impromptu meal as did the gamekeeper's wife and a representative of the local hunting federation. A really good meal of soup, ham, cheese, paté and bread ensued all of which was washed down with wine for those that wanted it. As we all sat drinking coffee after a pleasant repast it

was evident that the wind had not abated in the least and talk moved on to calling it a day. The two falconers discussed feeding their eagles early and getting out sharp in the morning if the weather allowed. So one more round of coffee and then we would return to the meet headquarters. As we drank we noticed the wind had suddenly dropped. Not just reduced in strength but dropped altogether.

As quickly as possible we were back in the field and hunting again to take advantage of this break in the weather. A few good slips followed with some excellent chases. However the hares got by far the best of the proceedings although both eagles did come close on a couple of occasions. Just as everyone was really starting to enjoy themselves and anticipate a couple more hours of decent sport the wind got up again and blew just as fiercely as it did earlier. Now it really was time to call it a day and head back to Westmalle and enjoy an evening meal of game casserole.

#### Gloomy day

The next day dawned dark and dismal with the winds being replaced by persistent rain. I was due to go out

with a Goshawk group and the ground we would be hawking was just twenty minutes away. Fortunately for our group there would be a considerable amount of wooded land we could hawk that apparently held good numbers of pheasant as well as rabbits. We would also have the services of two pointing dogs and a spaniel to assist the hawks. The woods turned out to be sufficiently dense to keep the worst of the rain off of the hawks and we enjoyed some thoroughly good sport with several pheasants being taken by the Goshawks. The hawks with us were a mixture of young and old females and one eyass tiercel Goshawk of the year. This was being flown by a novice falconer who, it has to be said, had made a thoroughly good job of manning and training his hawk. It was calm, obedient and chased hard when given the opportunity.

Again we enjoyed a lunch with the relevant landowners, two brothers, and they turned out to be amateur chefs of a high standard. Our lunch consisted



Experienced Golden eagle



Experienced female Goshawk

of game omelette, followed by home smoked salmon, homemade paté as well as smoked goose and duck breast all accompanied by homemade bread and wine. This really was a delicious and very welcome meal taken in front of a roaring log fire in the brothers' shooting lodge. Just what was required after a morning of getting thoroughly wet and cold. It

was almost reluctantly it seemed that the day's hawking recommenced and we set off again in pursuit of quarry. The afternoon proved to be just as exciting as the morning with a good number of flights at pheasant and rabbit. Although you don't judge a day's sport by the number of head killed it follows that good fit hawks working over good dogs will

bring game to bag and the day's total for our group was very respectable.

The final day of the meet dawned bright and sunny with just a light breeze stirring the leaves and I had planned to go out with the falcons. Unfortunately because of the bad weather of the last couple of days the two main groups of falcons had left early. Something a great many people commented on. The land owners from the previous day had turned up at the morning gathering of falconers and extended an invitation for me to join them on some more ground they owned but had not hawked yesterday. So I willingly joined them and another group of goshawks and we all set off after pheasants and rabbits again. We had a simply superb day with a good number of pheasants being taken and some really excellent dog work from the pointers.

### Honouring the game

Once we got back to the base meet the traditional honouring of the game took place which is a fiercely upheld tradition throughout the continent and I always think it is such a shame it is not in vogue in the UK. All the game taken at the meet is laid out with a conifer branch surround and lit by flaming torches. The organisers said a few words to their guests and then very kindly asked me to speak to the English speaking visitors from outside their borders which I happily did. Finally local huntsmen with horns blew various salutes to the quarry taken and the hawks that took it. Once the game ceremony was over it was time to move on to the magnificent farewell banquet. The main course of which was bar-b-cued suckling pig.

After the meal there was a raffle with a vast array of prizes and the night was topped off by a band playing into the small hours. The success of the evening was reflected by the amount of sore heads plainly visible in the morning. A communal breakfast had been laid and once over folks gradually drifted away from what had undoubtedly been a superb meet. I have been back since the meet to hawk with the original organisers and the landowners from the last day have very kindly extended an open invitation to me to hawk pheasant and rabbit on their land next year. Something I fully intend to spend at least a couple of weeks doing next season.

# The Gathering of Eagles

## GOE 2010

Davis hunts in Kansas



**G**olden Eagle falconers and enthusiasts had an opportunity to participate in the annual Gathering of Eagles, also known as the GOE, last November in southwestern Kansas, USA, where a semi-arid steppe climate supports vast acres of commercial grain farming. The International Eagle Austringer's Association (IEAA), a falconry club focused on evolving falconry practice with Golden Eagles, sponsors the GOE. Falconer participation as well as interested attendees reached a new high at the meet in 2010.

Joe Atkinson, GOE Meet Chairman for three years running, has built a sequentially more successful event each

year. Avid eagle falconer, author and former IEAA Chairman, Joe states, "Eagle falconry in the US took a big step forward at this year's 2010 GOE, with many eagles catching jacks. It was a wonderful experience for me to watch the younger eagle falconers have success in the field. By properly preparing their eagles both physically and mentally, they were definitely up to the challenge. Hunting black-tailed jacks is no easy feat. You just don't walk in the field and catch one; your eagle must be ready. The many folks that attended this year's GOE were witness to eagle falconry at its highest level."

The black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus Californicus*) inhabits grasslands and open areas of western USA, inclusive of Kansas.

A black-tailed jackrabbit is actually a hare because it lives above ground and babies are born open-eyed with complete coats of fur. Of the 21 species of rabbits and hare in the United States, the black-tailed jackrabbit is the third largest. Females weigh more than the smaller males; weight ranges from about 5.5 to about 8 pounds inclusive of both sexes, averaging about 6.5 pounds. Long, black-tipped ears providing acute hearing and powerful hind legs, giving bursts of speed up to 35 miles per hour and single leaps as high as six feet, are the black-tailed jackrabbits' main defenses from the predation of coyotes, wolves and pumas as well as Red-tailed Hawks, Ferruginous Hawks and Golden Eagles.



Brian casts off his eagle

Joe and the GOE committee's thorough canvassing of local farmers and ranchers set up thousands of acres of land access for GOE hunters. Local guides were available and took many groups of hawkers to different field locations and to some specialty hunting areas. Maps with contact numbers were available for everyone.

Examples of specialty hunting areas are the now-dry overflow pond cavities, called tail-water ponds, found at corners of many fields in southwestern Kansas. Years ago, watering these humongous grain fields was accomplished by flooding; the overflow drained into these corner tail-water ponds and could be recycled.

Sprinkler systems in current use roll on top of fields, leaving the abandoned tail-water ponds overgrown or filled with tumble-weed which provides excellent cover for huge numbers of pheasants, cottontails and black-tailed jackrabbits.

#### Checking for jacks

Most morning caravans headed for expansive fields, either fallow or harvested, making quick checks to locate THE hot spot for black-tailed jacks before an eagle joined a line of hunters. Many times several trial steps onto a field sent three or four black-tailed jackrabbits sprinting, but sometimes a number of fields were tested before everyone

organized into a hunting party, walking as a compact line across the open plain.

Black-tailed jacks often sprang away near as well as far in advance of hunters and eagles were challenged by their speed combined with intricate evasive maneuvers. Another challenge, especially in November on the open plain, is high wind; GOE participants witnessed interesting passage bird hunting strategies to cope with this complication, including marvelous pitch-ups after a miss, re-attacking and several times connecting in what seemed an unlikely take situation. Many times birds were blown off course; just riding the fist was tough in the blasting wind. Eagles adapted, and everyone had the delight of seeing them become even more proficient hunters.

Raptors are abundant in southwestern Kansas. Wild predation can be seen on the way to hawking fields and sometimes unfolds close-by while hunting. One morning, while an eagle was being picked up with a successful take of a black-tailed jack, a ferruginous stooped across the road from our field, making nine or ten attempts after its prey, twisting and turning, a meager breadth behind its jack; though unsuccessful, the flight was stirring.

#### Guests from around the world

Bill Ahern, IEAA website designer and eagle falconer, explains, "This was probably the best GOE yet for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the number of eagles attending the meet was at its highest point. We also had guests from all forms of falconry; shortwingers, broadwingers, longwingers and other eagle falconers from as far away as Scotland, the UK and Russia. Quarry was also abundant with much of Kansas seeing high cottontail and jackrabbit populations. Anyone who attended the fieldmeet was treated to what can be considered a clinic on the potency of passage eagles as falconry birds."

Watching an eagle fly sideways, wings stretched heaven to earth, predator on prey blazing across prairie grasslands, groundside primaries functioning like fingers touching the jackrabbit to limit escape, is awe-inspiring! So many flights, successful or not, were terrific, breathtaking displays of the Golden Eagle's flying capability and developed talent, making each a rousing day.

IEAA Director and eagle falconer Jack Hubley adjoins, "This year's GOE attendees took eagle falconry to the public through a social gathering with landowners and many local citizens who had heard about the event but knew nothing about falconry. Wide eyes, "oh-oh-oh's", hearty handshakes, and enthusiastic thank-you's were ample evidence that the GOE was well received in the area. There's just nothing like face-to-face communication!"

Speakers on Thursday and Friday nights of GOE 2010 brought the house down. Lauren McGough, Oklahoma falconer, spoke on Thursday. She presented slides that helped illustrate the poignant account of her extraordinary and amazing ten month expedition in southwestern Mongolia where she apprenticed a true master-eagle-hunter, trapped and trained a passage female eagle and hunted her eagle from horseback during one of the coldest, longest winters on record in Mongolia's history. She described pivotal details of trapping, manning, hunting, and special equipment used for foxhunts that held everyone spellbound.

On Friday Bill Voelker and TROY of

the Comanche Nation spoke about many issues both our eagle falconry community and their Comanche Nation share. Regulations, eagle acquisition from the wild and conservation were major topics delved into. Exhibition of a male Golden Eagle named Tomovah, produced in their propagation program this summer, thrilled all present and highlighted the passion and dedication both Bill and TROY have for working with eagles; GOE attendees matched their zeal.

### Vice-Chairman posts on website

IEAA Vice-Chairman Andrew Knowles-Brown, eagle breeder and falconer residing in Scotland, was omni-present in the fields, as he posted detailed, daily GOE updates to the website, always including great photos. He comments, "This was my third GOE and by far the best attended by members, guests and eagles. The camaraderie and friendship shown helped make this meet for me. It was also satisfying to see a falconer whom I met five years ago who aspired to fly an eagle, now have a passage male eagle in

good condition and fitness that took many good flights and had a number of kills.

"Meets in the US differ from Europe in that US falconers normally have to find their own hawking ground, whereas in Europe the meet organizers supply the hawking ground. Joe and the GOE committee changed that by arranging many square miles of hawking ground for the falconers to hunt over. I felt this helped keep the meet much more user friendly, groups stayed together and compared notes to help one another with their hawking.

"Time was also spent helping young, inexperienced eagles be entered, with alternate areas suggested for a particular bird's ability. Some very good hawking was had and I commend the IEAA's development, along with a big thank you to the Kansas landowners for their refreshments and hospitality."

NAFA Eagle Committee Chairman, IEAA Director and eagle falconer Brian Kellogg was enthusiastic, "A huge thanks is due to all the participants who brought such a high level of just pure game hawking expertise to the meet. I saw



Back to the fist



a lot and learned a lot and came back much better for it. The fellowship and camaraderie was unsurpassed from any meet I have ever attended.”

### Summery from the Chairman

IEAA Chairman and eagle falconer Scott Simpson sums up GOE 2010, “I believe it will be a very long time before any of us forget what a great time we had. I seriously doubt we’ll see many more meets with as much game taken as we did in Garden City this year and we’ll have to work hard to come up with speakers of the same quality as Lauren and Bill. I also have no doubt it’ll be a long time before any of us see another community pitch in and show as much interest and enthusiasm as the folks of Garden City and surrounding areas did this year.

“The IEAA thanks the falconry equipment companies and many members for generous donations to GOE 2010’s first-rate raffle. As well to all members, guests, speakers, vendors and landowners the IEAA expresses gratitude for making GOE 2010 an unforgettable meet!”

Joe Atkinson with Jackhammer



Mark’s young eagle tries to close on jackrabbit

# 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**

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

## **The South East Falconry Group**

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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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- Affiliation to the Hawk Board



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

Established for over 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 **NEW** website at: [www.seraonline.co.uk](http://www.seraonline.co.uk)  
or telephone Brian for information on: **01732 463218**



# Independent Bird Register

Telephone 0844 700 8500

## IBR Lost, Found, Reunited & Stolen birds of prey from 15th October to 31st December 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

*BREF RING* ..... *SPECIES*  
55076 IBR55616W ..... LANNER FALCON

### REUNITED x 120

AFRICAN SPOTTED EAGLE OWL..... 1  
AMERICAN KESTREL ..... 1  
BARBARY FALCON..... 1  
BARN OWL..... 7  
COMMON BUZZARD..... 2  
EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL..... 5  
GOSHAWK..... 4  
GYR FALCON..... 1  
GYR HYBRID FALCON..... 19  
HARRIS HAWK..... 37  
INDIAN EAGLE OWL..... 2  
KESTREL ..... 7  
PEREGRINE FALCON..... 8  
PEREGRINE HYBRID..... 12  
RED-TAILED HAWK..... 3  
SAKER FALCON ..... 7  
SPARROWHAWK ..... 3

### LOST x 18 (this is a list of lost IBR registered birds)


*BREF RING* ..... *SPECIES*  
77854 ?7487? ..... BARN OWL  
80573 ?7671? ..... BARN OWL  
70138 ?6804? ..... GYR/SAKER FALCON  
81463 ?1663? ..... GYR/SAKER X PEREGRINE  
9826 ?8WS9?..... HARRIS HAWK  
16909 ?1739? ..... HARRIS HAWK  
40221 ?3682? ..... HARRIS HAWK

44293 ?0JWB?..... HARRIS HAWK  
56603 ?5635? ..... HARRIS HAWK  
56604 ?5635? ..... HARRIS HAWK  
56741 ?5615? ..... HARRIS HAWK  
72665 ?7174? ..... HARRIS HAWK  
73698 ?7211? ..... HARRIS HAWK  
74947 ?7325? ..... HARRIS HAWK  
75740 ?6591? ..... INDIAN EAGLE OWL  
69303 ?5516? ..... PEREGRINE X GYR / SAKER  
69549 ?6776? ..... PEREGRINE/LANNER HYBRID  
81741 ?0938? ..... PEREGRINE/PRAIRIE HYBRID

### FOUND x 15

*BREF RING* ..... *SPECIES*  
57326 ?5478? ..... BARN OWL  
60136 ?5919? ..... BARN OWL  
74268 ?6841? ..... EURASIAN EAGLE OWL  
40822 ?1054? ..... GYR/PEREGRINE HYBRID  
81898 ?DNH? ..... GYR/SAKER FALCON  
43749 ?608? ..... HARRIS HAWK  
81958 ?18DMB? ..... INDIAN EAGLE OWL  
71320 I?6440? ..... LITTLE OWL  
81699 ?DMM1?..... PEREGRINE HYBRID  
81892 ?2452? ..... PEREGRINE/PRAIRIE HYBRID  
29790 ?2780? ..... RED-TAILED HAWK  
69273 ?TH?..... RED-TAILED HAWK  
82000 ?662? ..... SAKER FALCON  
10776 ?1016? ..... SAKER-ALTAI  
81949 ?EPS1? ..... SPARROWHAWK

**IBR web-site**  
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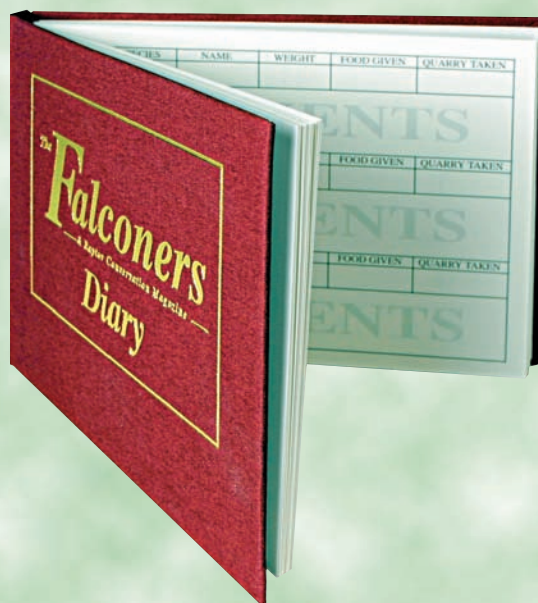
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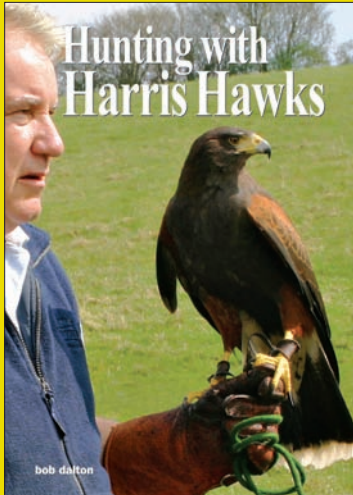
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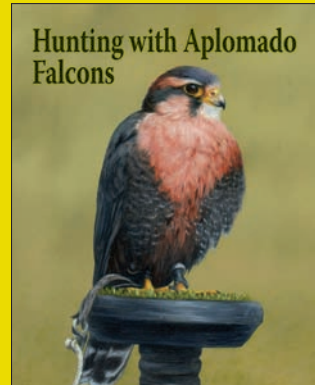
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