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Issue 94

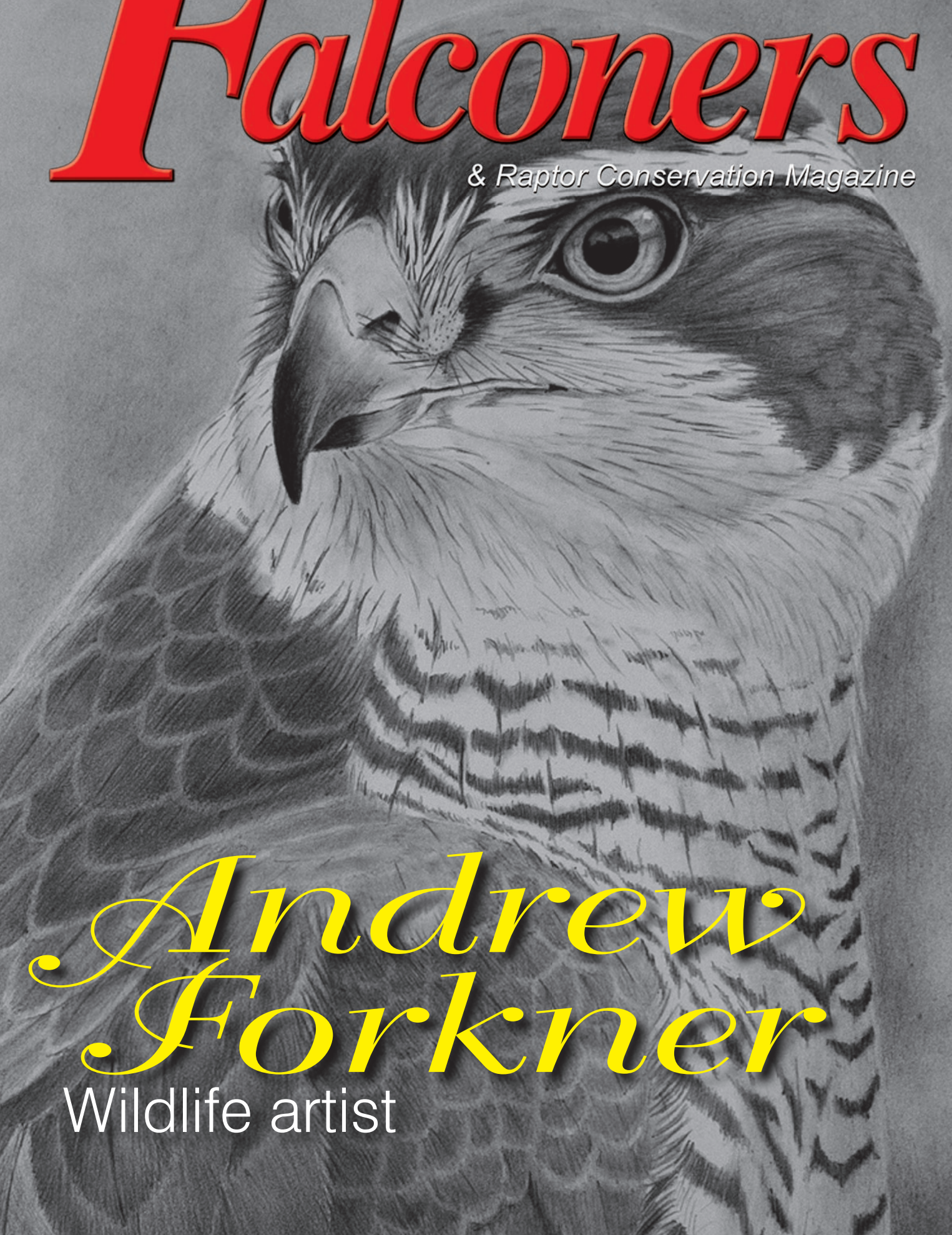
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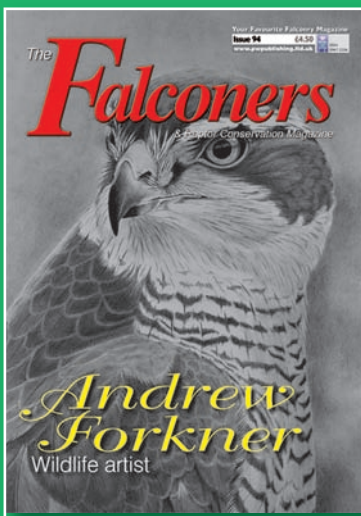
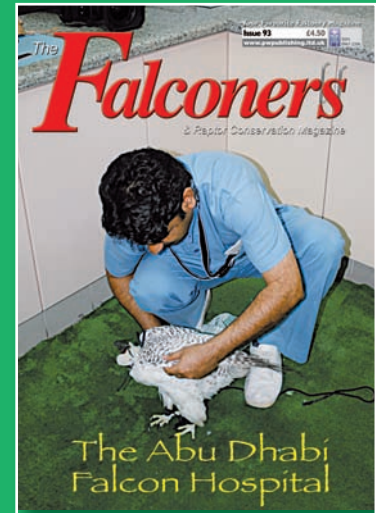


*Andrew
Forkner*

Wildlife artist

The *Falconers*

& Raptor Conservation Magazine



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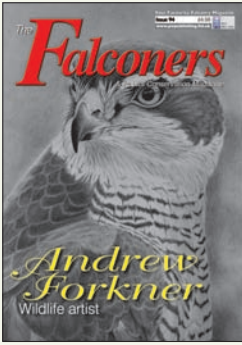
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The Hawk Board Secretary/Co-ordinator Mike Clowes has decided to retire from the position. Interviews for his replacement were held at the HB meeting in June and Rachele Upton was voted in by all that were present - she will take up her duties on 1 January 2014. The HB are looking forward to working with her in the future when there are likely to be lots of changes being made that will affect falconers in this country. Time will tell.

As I write this the sun is shining again and temperatures are up in the 30's, unlike last year when so many events were cancelled because of the heavy rain including the CLA Game Fair. But I was a visitor at that event this year on the Friday and it turned out to be so hot everyone was suffering – and that included the hawks.

I hope you are having a good summer and your hawks are moulting out without any problems. Now is the time when new falconers are looking forward to getting their first hawk (if they haven't already got one) and the training process begins. If you are new to our sport, welcome and I wish you all success for the coming flying season.

In the
meantime, have
a good read.

editorial



news & products

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

Book Review

THE HARRIS'S HAWK REVOLUTION

Reviewed by Marian Eldrett

by Jennifer and Tom Coulson

ISBN 978-0-9858247-0-9

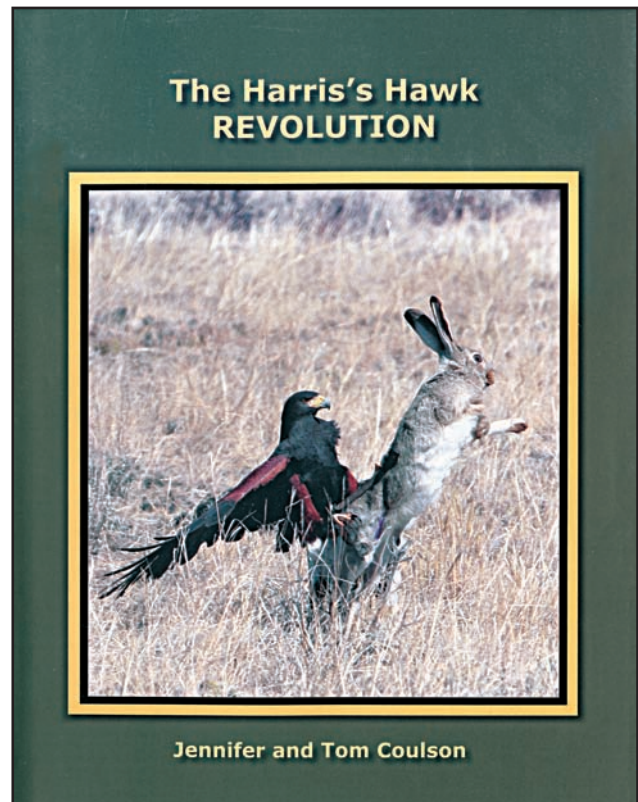
This is a heavy book in more ways than one! It is filled with information on history, housing, diet, care, training, hunting, health and breeding of the Harris's Hawk, with statistics, measurements, reference values and literature references given throughout – and it even has a recipe section for game at the end! The authors, Jennifer and Tom Coulson, are keen to share their experience of the Harris's Hawk – they have bred over 1,000 and hunted with more than 90, so they have much to share. They accept that their methods may not suit all and offer up their practices as what has worked well for them over the years as they have striven to breed better falconry birds.

They both come from a scientific background and this is clear from their attention to detail. The reader may suffer from "information overload" at times, particularly with some of the tables, but the authors obviously want to pass on their wealth of information in its entirety. The facts are supplemented by some excellent photographs which are all relevant to the text and serve to reinforce the points made.

As the authors have lived and worked in the USA, theirs is very much an "American experience" with much of their quarry and hunting

scenarios being unavailable on our shores and some of their methods simply being unacceptable and illegal in the UK. The novice falconer may not be aware of these different practices and should, therefore, seek guidance in this regard. For this reason, I think the book is more suited to the experienced falconer, but I believe that everyone, seasoned falconers and novices alike, will learn much from it.

The book is clearly a labour of love and the authors' aim is to improve both Harris's Hawks and their falconers. They state that their goal is "... to show others the path to more successful and enjoyable falconry, hunting with Harris's Hawks in their fittest condition possible." They also wish to "... promote selective breeding with performance-based goals, pedigreed hunting hawks and a global Harris's Hawk pedigree database." They accept that there is always room for improvement – better breeding, better training and better care of our birds – and they encourage the reader to share their passion for this improvement.



It's a hefty tome, with a hefty price tag of £65.00 – so you really have to have a genuine desire to learn more to make it a worthwhile purchase. But, if you have a thirst for more knowledge about the Harris's Hawk and how to help it realize its full potential as a hunting hawk, then this will be an interesting read.

The Harris's Hawk Revolution is available from :

Coch-y-Bonddu Books
01654 702837
www.anglebooks.com

MARK WILLIAMS ON THE MOVE

Ex Brit Mark Williams who emigrated to Canada from the UK for the falconry back in 1991 is on the move again. Mark will be managing the Gulf operation for Marshall Radio Telemetry and will initially be based out of Dubai. Mark has been a Marshall customer since they bought out Pulsetec about 14 years ago. In the past 7 years Mark has been a senior product tester for Marshall Radio so it was a natural transition when he was approached by the company.

He accepted the assignment to relocate to the Gulf in order to lead efforts in establishing a more permanent local presence for Marshall Radio and to better support their customers. Marshall currently has a lead market share in telemetry sales and their priority is to establish a service centre this year for better support and training in use of their products.

Although it will be a huge transition from the excellent falconry he currently enjoys, Mark is excited to experience falconry from one of its originating cultures and to help take Marshall Radio to the next level as world leader of radio telemetry by supervising their efforts in maintaining and developing valuable relationships at the heart of their business. He also hopes to use his photography skills to capture some authentic desert images and video both of their customers and products in action.



Ruth and Mark Williams at the 2013 Falconers' Fair

His supportive wife Ruth says she is looking forward to the opportunity to live in +40c instead of -40c weather for a change. His timing for the move coincides with some exciting new product developments that he believes their Gulf customers will be really receptive to.

WESSEX FALCONRY & HAMPSHIRE HAWKING CLUB



The Wessex Falconry & Hampshire Hawking Club held one of their get-togethers in May this year. The WF&HHC is a unique club in as much as it is an invitation only club with 11 members, including two professional falconers, one of whom is LANTRA accredited. The club also has a particular interest in the history of falconry in the New Forest and in the UK as a whole. The club is affiliated to the Hawk Board and has been running for approximately nine years – it was born out of the demise of the New Forest Falconry Club. Fieldmeets are held every month in the New Forest area and as you can see it is a family orientated club with members' children regularly attending and enjoying helping out on hunting days.

TWO APPRENTICES – YOU’RE HIRED!



The Hawk Conservancy Trust, Andover is pleased to report a new initiative to provide training for young people under an apprenticeship scheme.

This month, two apprentices will be signed up by the Trust and given the opportunity to experience and study

falconry in a hands on environment.

The first apprentices are James Knight and Ria May, who will serve 18 months as apprentices when they will be learning all aspects of caring for birds of prey including nutrition, housing, training and flying. The Trust hopes that this will become an on going initiative for many years to come.

James and Ria both studied at Sparsholt College. James has been volunteering at the Trust for about a year and Ria got the “bug” for raptors from an Experience Day she enjoyed at the Trust.

THE FALCONRY WEEKEND

31 AUGUST AND 1 SEPTEMBER 2013

**THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR BIRDS OF PREY,
NEWENT, GLOS, GL18 1JJ**

The summer is racing away, the weather is glorious and the Falconry Weekend is coming up fast!! Plans are in place, if you have not booked a stand you need to get a move on, the booking is on the website www.thefalconryweekend.com just copy and paste it and email to us. I have to put in the final order for tents soon, so don't miss out.

Nigel King will be here flying birds as will Gary Biddiss and his lovely Merlin/Peregrine. Mark Habbon has promised to fly his Goshawk, and Bob Dalton is going to fly as well – a bird, not him! The ICBP birds will be flying as usual and with this line up the demonstrations will be second to none. I don't think my Sparrowhawk will be through the moult sadly, but our Steller's is on duty and Chris O'Donnell has put one of his Martial Eagles here, so that is looking magnificent in the Eagle Barn.

Food and the bar are organised and the grounds look great. A new book about Philip Glasier will be launched and a second book from the George Edward Lodge Trust as well. There will be four free seminars this year, with a gap in the outside arena so you have time to go and listen or ask questions.

For all information go to the website www.thefalconryweekend.com and don't miss out on a fabulous weekend.



The 2014 International Festival of Falconry



The Festival Organisers are delighted to announce that the next International Festival of Falconry will be held in Abu Dhabi on 7-14th December 2014!

Hosted once again by the Emirates Falconers' Club, the event promises to be a dream trip for falconers from all over the world. Put it in your diary – you will kick yourself if you miss it!

The venue

The public Festival will be held in the spacious grounds of the Al Forsan International Sports Resort at the southern end of Abu Dhabi city. The nearest airport is Abu Dhabi International Airport, about 20 minutes away. Al Forsan has world class facilities for the event and is close to many hotels and to road links. It has the biggest grass area available in the city, so we will have more space than before. Bringing the Festival to town will enable many more local people to attend.

We are moving the Desert Camp too. This time we are taking you deeper into the desert, about an hour south of Abu Dhabi. The new hunting ground is about seven times larger than the old one – 21 km across. This should enable three or four groups to hunt at the same time so that even more people can experience genuine hunting in the desert, tracking houbara and hares in the traditional manner on camels and horses. For less hardy types there will be shorter camel excursions nearer camp. Whatever your skill level, cheerful Khalid will make sure you have a mount to suit you. Hunting in the desert with local Emirati falconers

is an unforgettable experience and will be available only to invited guests and registered visitors, so if you want to come, register as soon as you can! But be warned, this hunting ground is more severe than the old one. Although the dunes are not so high, there is less vegetation and the sand is soft. So it will not be easy to rescue you with a vehicle! (We got stuck in 500 metres and so did our rescue vehicle!)

We also have some planted forest areas next to the Desert Camp, consisting of low trees and bushes. We are investigating the possibility of hunting hares in them, using Goshawks and Harris Hawks.

Art work contribution

There will not be an Art Competition or a Photo Competition this time. Instead we are asking each country to contribute a painting, a three dimensional art or craft work, and a photograph for a special Exhibition. Each piece will represent the unique aspects of falconry in each country. Details will be announced in due course. We will also be inviting people who are contributing to the Festival, helping with running it, training the birds, organising the stands and exhibits. If you wish to participate, please contact us and let us know what you are able to contribute. Remember, there are no 'free' tickets, everyone who is sponsored will have a task to do to help make the Festival work. We will also invite representatives from 77 falconry countries, with a special emphasis on fresh faces. We are aiming for about 75% of the sponsored guests to be people who have never been funded before. So if you had your ticket paid for you last time,

please make way for someone else to have the opportunity. Of course we hope that you will want to come again, this time paying your own flight.

We will be changing the format of the conference to a workshop/panel format to allow for lively debate and question and answer sessions. We also plan a strong educational programme for local school parties.

Arena events

We are planning a varied programme of arena events and activities. If you are a group with an idea for an arena event, please contact the International Office. We are also looking for falconers able to entertain at the Falconers' Feast, with music, song, poetry or dance, related to falconry.

In order to keep costs down we hope to have tented accommodation for most of the falconers during the Desert Camp period, rather than hotels. From there we will have bus trips for day excursions to places of interest such as the Falcon Hospital and to Falcon competitions. The Desert Camp will be only for falconers, not for the general public.

Web-site info

The International Office at IWC in UK is managing the international visitors and exhibits. Keep an eye on the website www.falconryfestival.com for further information. The team at the Abu Dhabi Office will be handling all the local arrangements as well as flight bookings and visas. Watch out for www.falconryfestival.ae. Looking forward to seeing you in Abu Dhabi!

Andrew Forkner

Artist



I am often asked by people “what’s your favourite subject to paint?” My answer to this question is that I don’t really have a clear favourite, but in common with many other artists who paint animals and birds, I am irresistibly ‘drawn’ to the predators of the natural world. They just seem to demand my attention.

So, over the years I have drawn my fair share of big cats and wolves, but the subjects that I return to repeatedly are birds of prey. Whether I encounter them in the wild or in a falconry scenario I never fail to be excited by seeing these birds.

As an artist I work in a variety of different media, but for birds I would always choose either pencil or acrylic. The control afforded by graphite pencil allows me to create accurate and detailed monochrome images, while for colour work my acrylic of choice is Chromacolour, because of the richness and vibrancy of the colours.

My working methods in either medium are slow and painstaking. Each picture is composed of many layers and this allows me to create subtle changes in light, shade and tone, to hopefully give the image a three-dimensional, realistic quality. For my acrylic paintings I prepare 4mm or 6mm MDF panels with several coats of Gesso primer, sanded to a smooth finish. This surface allows me to achieve highly detailed results and, when varnished on completion does not require to be framed under glass. The quick-drying nature of acrylics such as Chromacolour, gives me the facility to add repeated layers to a painting during



one session in the studio. There is no lag-time, as in oil painting, while you wait for a layer to dry and this means that I tend to work on just one painting at a time. I may occasionally put an incomplete piece to one side, while I attempt to resolve a

problem that has arisen, but thankfully that happens rarely.

Of course the studio work is only part of the process involved in creating a successful painting or drawing. Knowledge of your subject, extensive

reference material and that spark of inspiration ignited by an encounter with the potential subject are also vital elements. So it is not difficult to justify repeated time away from the studio on reference/inspiration gathering trips.





in confidence when an eminent falconer correctly recognised one of the birds I had painted as being her own Peregrine.

I have painted birds and animals now for over 30 years, but it was only six years ago that I finally made the jump into art as a full time career. I count myself very fortunate to be able to do this for a living and I have to admit that I still struggle to describe it as 'work'.

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These can take many forms, from a morning walk across the fields with my dog, watching Buzzards, Red Kites and Sparrowhawks, to helping out at my local falconry centre gaining hands-on experience of Harris Hawks, owls and falcons. I also take every opportunity to venture further afield in search of birds and notably in 2012 my wife and I travelled to Romania where we were lucky enough to encounter sixteen different raptor species during the ten day trip.

Yet another important part of being an artist is the effort that you put into marketing yourself. Exhibitions and shows form a very enjoyable part of my work and an important opportunity to talk to people about my art and to hear their views. One such event is the British Falconry and Raptor Fair, where I have exhibited on the last two occasions. It can seem a little daunting to display your work before so many knowledgeable people, but it does give the opportunity to evaluate if you are indeed making progress. During the show this year (2013) I was given a tremendous boost



Back Packing your Falcon

I am sure many of you have a preferred method of how to mount your transmitter on a falcon, so I am not trying to convert anyone.

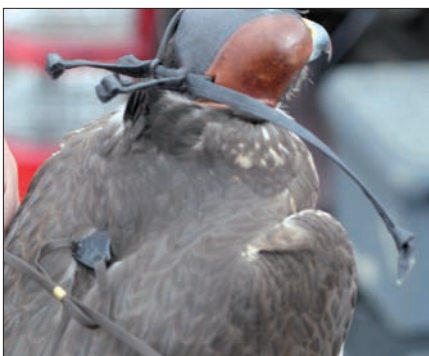
What I can demonstrate here is how easy and how safe I have found it to use the (Marshalls) back pack method. When fitted correctly it can stay on a bird for a couple of years as there are no 'wear and tear' parts to fail - provided you correctly crimp the brass ferrule!

Occasionally birds have been known to take (i.e bite) the thing off in the summer – when bored or heavily preening new feather growth.

If a bird is observed closely for the few days after fitting, you will soon be able to tell if it is not comfortable with it. Most accept them with a couple of hours of preening in.

What you will need

- Suitable sized back pack kit (there is even an Eagle size)
- Sharp pair of scissors
- Pair of crimping pliers (small flat nosed pliers)
- Needle and thread (waxed or normal)
- Super glue and a small triangular piece of card
- A pencil or artists paintbrush (brush size doesn't matter – we're using the handle)



Mounting plate sits between the shoulders



Checking location of cross-over of braces

- Your transmitter (just test it inserts into and removes from the back pack before fitting)
- A falconer assistant
- Your falcon – with an EMPTY crop

Sizing the back pack to the bird

If your falcon is a pure-bred, the sizing chart (shown later) is fairly accurate, but if you have a hybrid of any type, it is as best to use the following 'test measurement' method. Choose the size of the bird nearest to yours from the list, noting the cross-over measurement point. Then put two over-stitches in the pair of braces at this point AFTER crossing left over right, and tie the thread ends temporarily as you may need to alter or remove the stitches. Now place

it over the hooded bird such that the braces are at the front and the mounting plate is between the bird's shoulders at the back. Then locate the cross-over stitch on the bird so that it is just above the top of the sternum but clear of the crop.

Checking location of cross-over of braces

Whilst holding the cross-over in place at the front, pull down the mounting plate to check how far down the back it reaches. It should locate as the picture shows. If it needs altering, remove it and alter until satisfactory. Getting this part right is what makes it comfortable for the bird. When you have this right, make some additional stitches at the cross-over point and then tie off the thread ends.

Avoid making this too 'lumpy' as it will sit against the bird's skin. Do not use glue here!

Threading the braces

Once the kit is over the bird's head the braces need to be brought under the wing and up to the mounting bracket whilst remaining FLAT without any twists.

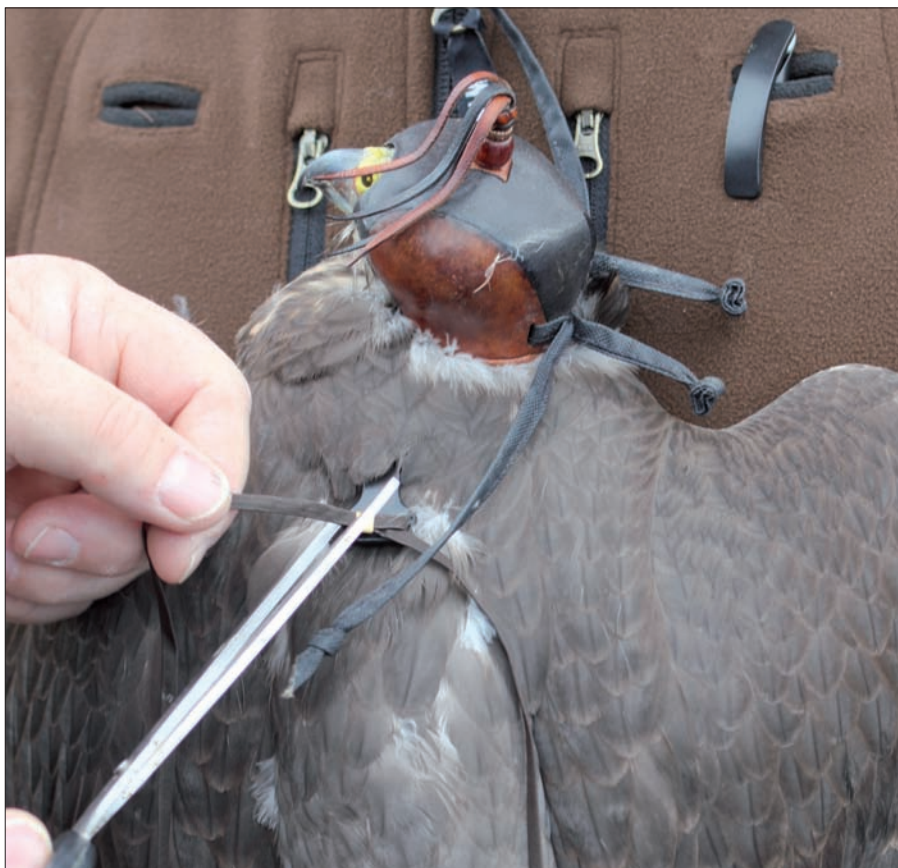


Threading the braces

This is best done whilst the falcon is spread-eagled flat across the assistant as shown here (the technique is described at the end of this article). Insert each end of a brace into the corresponding opening slot at the bottom of the mounting bracket, still keeping it flat. The brace ends are already pointed and stiffened to make this easy. Now tie the braces in one loose knot (this is temporary) and allow the falcon to regain the fist. Once the bird is settled, manoeuvre the back pack so that it sits in the correct place in respect of the front cross-over point (as above). Then place your index finger between the braces and the bird's body



Final adjustments



Finishing off

at all points along them. If you cannot do this it is too tight, and if there is space for more than an index finger then it is too slack. Adjust by pulling the braces through the mounting plate slots.

Final adjustments

Now is a good time to help the bird preen in the braces by using the pencil or end of an artist's paintbrush so that it sits under the feathers. After this, make a final check on the position of the front crossover, and the gap between the braces and the bird's body. The bird's behaviour will indicate how comfortable it is. They usually start preening it in themselves.

Preening in

Check that the length of each brace as it exits the mounting plate is identical – if not something has gone awry and must be corrected before you continue. Locate the small brass tubular ferrule that came with the kit. Undo the temporary loose knot you made in the braces which held the ends in place. Hold the tube so that it is horizontal – holes are left and right. Thread one end of a brace through the

ferrule keeping it flat without any twists, and then the other brace from the opposite side of the ferrule.

Pull the braces tight through the ferrule so it lies flat against the mounting plate. (As in lower picture on previous page). Using the 'crimping' or flat-nosed pliers, flatten the brass ferrule which will then grip the braces.

Finishing off

You will now need to spread-eagle the falcon again for ease of access, as the mounting plate will start to disappear into the feathers! You should now be completely certain that the back pack fits well and sits well on the bird as you will be cutting off the excess length of the braces. This is the point of no return. Cut the excess length off each brace taking care not to trim any feathers in the process!

As a final security measure, put a dab of super glue on the ends of the braces where they exit the ferrule. It is a good idea to place a small piece of card under the mounting plate whilst this is done to avoid any glue coming into contact with the feathers. After about a minute to

allow the glue to set, remove the card and allow the falcon to regain the fist. Wasn't it nice not to anaesthetise the bird?

In use

As with any change to equipment on a bird, it is as well to keep an eye on it and the bird for at least a week. If a bird shows reluctance to fly or any discomfort then examine the bird where the pack touches it, and the gap between the braces and the bird. Birds gain and lose weight, but I've not seen this affect a back pack even over a two year period. Only you can decide whether it is easiest to insert the transmitter with the bird on the fist, or on the cadge. I have found using a signal sensor a great timesaver especially when flying several birds. They can all have their transmitters mounted at home before leaving, and then each one switched on or off easily when needed for the field.

If for any reason you do remove the back pack, replacement kits can be obtained and the mounting plate re-used (unless damaged of course). You get maximum signal strength as the antenna is usually in the clear, and it doesn't ground (the signal) when a falcon sits. Now, if you can trust the falcon to fly with only anklets and no jesses, there are no excuses for it not to get a clean foot on that grouse!

The spread-eagle technique

In fitting the back pack, we have developed a simple method of casting the bird in order to route the ribbon under the wings and finish the installation when crimping the brass sleeve. Having looped the stitched assembly over the



The pack has now been fitted and is in use

hawk's head with the bird hooded and sat on the fist, the falconer should hold the jesses short as normal, then run the un-gloved hand up the back of the hawk's legs to the top and firmly but gently push the hawk flat onto his/her chest. The un-gloved hand should remain flat against the hawk's legs, and the hawk's legs gently extended by the gloved hand secure with jesses. The bird will naturally open its wings fully and spread them across the handler's shoulders while resting against the falconer's chest. This will allow the assistant fitting the back pack to quickly route and thread the ribbons with minimum obstruction and fuss. This can

be repeated several times to ascertain the best fit without overstressing the bird. Each episode should take less than 30 seconds. This method should only be employed on hawks that have been adequately manned. Birds straight from the pen should undergo basic training first. Many back packs have been fitted using this method, and in many cases the bird has been flown straight after fitting with no after effects on the bird.

*Many thanks to:-
Brian Morris and Graham Finegan of the BHA for their assistance and patience.*

SIZING INFORMATION

Lay out the Trackpack so that the two braces are flat alongside each other and can be measured. The measurement is to be taken from the top of the mounting plate to the centre of the stitching point.

Merlin	approx 7.8 cm using Micro Trackpack
Sparrowhawk	approx 10.0 cm using Micro Trackpack
Peregrine Tiercel	approx 11.3 cm using a Standard Trackpack
Peregrine Falcon	approx 12.8 cm using a Standard Trackpack
Sakeret	approx 13.5cm using a Standard Trackpack
Saker Falcon	approx 14.5cm using a Standard Trackpack

These measurements are averages from experience, and variations can and do occur. Use this data as a guide and adjust the measurement to suit the hawk being fitted. Hybrids will need to be assessed using the above data due to the broad range of sizes by type.

The British Falconry Fair 2013

After last year's abysmal weather conditions which, as we are all well aware, resulted in the cancellation of many fairs throughout the summer, including two valiant attempts at putting on the British Falconry Fair, it seemed reasonable to expect record crowds through game fair starvation, but not a bit of it. The turnout was surprisingly poor. At no point was it impossible to see all around the fair due to the crowds being so thinned out. This was very disappointing and when I questioned some who didn't attend,

the reply was, "What's the point, it's the same old, same old?" This statement really irks me, if only for the reason that it is extremely difficult to think of new angles to make any worthwhile changes. There is only so much that one can do without bringing other non falconry-related themes to the venue – then it would hardly be a falconry fair would it? Fewer visitors creates a knock-on effect, for if there are not enough enthusiasts to purchase equipment etc, the dealers have a hard time and eventually find that the fair is not lucrative enough for them and so they in turn fail to appear. End

result, the fair becomes smaller annually to its detriment. Why do I care? I care because it is the best fair of its type virtually anywhere and I would personally hate to see its demise. Yes, we can all purchase gloves, hoods and suchlike via the internet, but at the fair, we can try these on for that perfect fit, which you cannot do online or by mail order. You can flick through all the books on offer before deciding on the one for you and perhaps the most important aspect of all, the fair is a great meeting place for all those falconers we see only occasionally and even better, meet others and make



The Eagle weathering ground in front of Althorp House



Cuddles takes a bath

new friends. The camaraderie side of the fair can be exceptional and such great fun. So, having got that off my chest, I will now continue with the fair as I saw it.

Back to Althorp

After the success of the eagle weathering ground at Ragley Hall in 2011, I was asked by Bob Dalton to once again repeat the BFC Eagle Group contribution for 2013, and in this I was happy to oblige. Only this time, the venue was to be back at its old home, Althorp House in Northamptonshire, home of Earl Spencer and the final resting place of Diana, Princess of Wales, after her tragic death in a road accident in France.

I set off on Friday afternoon with my wife Gill in our motor home, in which we were to stay for the duration and arrived at the entrance just over an hour after leaving home. Surprisingly, there were literally no road signs indicating the directions to the fair, which made me think, "Have I got the right weekend?" Only a mile or so from the venue did the first sign materialise, for until that point, I was relying entirely upon my satnav.

Setting up

Ron Morris, the fair organiser, greeted us at the gate and very kindly escorted us to the eagle weathering ground, which was to be our home for the next two and a

half days. This was situated at the farthest end of the fair perimeter, smack in front of Althorp House itself. The immediate problem was that the weathering ground was fully exposed to the elements with not even a tree for shade. This concerned me deeply and so I suggested to Ron that if the eagles began to suffer from possible heat exhaustion, I would have to move them to a grove of trees a hundred yards or so from the current location. As it turned out, despite the hottest weekend of the year so far, none of the eagles showed any signs of panting or anything else. The second weathering ground, housing all the other display raptors suffered no such handicap however, and were all properly housed and roofed over, which seemed a little unfair on the eagle lads who had travelled from all corners of the country to exhibit their eagles, free of charge, at this prestigious event. Perhaps this oversight could be rectified at next year's fair?

Gill and I were the first to arrive and so after settling my Golden Eagle, Star, on his perch in the weathering enclosure, I set about placing our display of eagle photographs etc. in our marquee. I was halfway through this when Jim Moss of Crown Falconry paid me a visit. Until this point in time, Jim and I had never met personally but had worked together on an eagle arm brace recently and which

has now found favour with a number of UK eagle falconers. We met up again a couple more times during the duration of the fair but as with most stallholders, myself included, there was not a lot of time for wandering around. In fact, quite a few falconers came to visit whilst I was setting up the tent, which was very nice.

Geoff Surtees and Stuart arrived next with Geoff's male Golden Eagle "Asten." Geoff was closely followed by Alan Walker and Derek Abbey, who brought with them Alan's female Golden Eagle "Vodnanny," both of which were named after the places on the Continent from where they were purchased. With three eagles now on the weathering ground, the place began to appear something like a weathering ground. These three eagles were joined that evening by two more Golden Eagles belonging to Wayne Chesterman. These were "Cuddles," Wayne's eight years old female and "HeShe," a second year male. The latter was originally purchased by Alan Walker as a female, but turned out to be a male, hence his name. Wayne was accompanied by two of his falconers who help him run his falconry experiences centre in Derbyshire, namely James Morrison and Shane. James took the images for this article as my own camera was in for repairs. These five concluded the number of eagles on the lawn for the Friday,

but others were due to arrive on the morrow. In the meantime, with Wayne and myself owning motor homes and Alan and Derek arriving with some falconer friends in a caravan, it wasn't long before a good campsite was set up with cooked food and beverages soon flowing. During the evening, a number of other falconers, including Steve Barton, joined us and a very mirthful event ensued, before we all retired to our respective beds. The eagles were left out overnight on their perches as they were safe enough in their compound of railings and the night security was exemplary.

A busy first day

Dawn broke the horizon with full sunshine and bright blue sky, which boded well for the fair in general. Sleepy heads soon gathered around for morning coffee, tea and bacon sandwiches and suchlike before we got ourselves in readiness for the arrival of the expected thousands of visitors. I had copies of my

recent book, "Eagle Falconry, A Personal Perspective," for sale at the fair, so this meant that I was basically confined to barracks for most of the time, but the other lads had a good wander around. In the meantime, Chris Miller arrived with Skye, his female Golden Eagle to swell the numbers on the weathering ground and Adam loaned us his hybrid Golden x Steppe Eagle. In addition to all the Golden Eagles, Mike Hewlett of Icarus Falconry, very kindly loaned us his staggeringly beautiful male Verreaux, or African Black Eagle and another falconer whose name regretfully escapes me, also loaned us his Tawny Eagle to boost the six Golden Eagles already present, giving us a pretty formidable looking collection. We may have been positioned at the furthest extremity of the fair, but that did not stop a constant stream of visitors all weekend from coming over to view the eagles.

As always, the time at the fair passed rapidly and before we knew it, it was time for our Saturday night barbecue.

Chris Miller had brought with him a large fresh salmon, but we had used up our portable barbecues the night before, so we spent much time trying to borrow a suitably sized barbie upon which to cook this piscatorial delight. In the end, we had to dig out the one we had previously used and then cadge some charcoal briquettes off Adam. We wrapped the salmon in foil and placed it on the embers, along with heaps of other tasty items and so we all enjoyed a sumptuous meal, ensuring a great time being had by all those present.

Barbara and Keith Royle of the Independent Bird Register joined us. It was good to see Barbara again after she had endured a rather painful knee replacement operation, even though she was still hobbling around with the aid of a pair of crutches.

The American singer, Holly Lamar also joined us for the evening and she told us that she had just purchased a pair of Bateleur Eagles to add to the one she already owned. Time passed all too



Gill and David Fox in the Eagle marquee



Wayne Chesterman talks to the crowd

quickly into the small hours with much frivolity and feasting until one by one, we all drifted back to our respective camps.

Time to catch up

Day two dawned even brighter, but there were considerably less visitors this day. For some strange reason, the second day of the fair has been traditionally known, rather disparagingly, as Joe Public day and so the takings are normally lower than the previous day. Many traders have told me over the years that if they do not do well on day one, then day two will be a comparative disaster.

For once, I sneaked a rare chance to have a wander around the fair, as I needed to buy some essentials, such as new telemetry mounts from Marshall and books from Paul Morgan of Coch y Bonddhu books. I only intended to be a few moments, but I soon bumped into a load of acquaintances and friends and so the ensuing conversations rendered my return to the eagle weathering ground somewhat later than planned.

It is always a pleasure to catch up with good friends and this is just one of the reasons why I like the British Falconry Fair so much. There was everything on offer that every falconer could wish for and that in itself made the fair very

worthwhile. If equipment was the reason for one's visit, then one was spoilt for choice, for everything one could think of was present. There were new traders too, including an art dealer who had some lovely paintings for sale, including works by George Edward Lodge, Archibald Thorburn, John Cyril Harrison, David Reid-Henry and many others.

I have a passion for raptor art and falconry history and the latter was well represented by Mark Upton's display for the newly formed British Archives of Falconry. Brian Bird was again present with his stunning display of art and artefacts belonging to the George Edward Lodge Trust. Chris Christoforou made a welcome return with his wildlife art tent showing some stunning work from several artists including Carl Bass and the well-known Andrew Ellis. The falconry displays were excellent and were conducted by such worthies as Jemima Parry-Jones MBE, Nigel King and Mike Hewlet.

Memorable fair

The fair began well for me when Chris from Mac Falcon, an equipment supplier from the Netherlands, sought me out to present me with a pair of bells to try out on my eagle. Chris is a very welcome

attendee at British fairs and I always purchase my eagle leather requirements from him. Several years ago, Alan Walker and I were perusing leather at his stall when Chris suggested that we try and break some leather he was offering, stating that if we could break it, we could have everything on his stall.

This was an offer too good to refuse, so Alan and I grasped each end of a jess, made from this new leather, and then proceeded to swing each other round in cartwheels, doing our utmost to snap it and take over Chris's stall.

We could make no impression on it, but it made an impression on the pair of us, and I don't mean the abrasions on our fingers caused by our efforts. Since then, Chris's "secret" leather has been our number one choice for eagle jess and ankle leather and we have all since become firm friends.

In conclusion, the visitor numbers may have been lower than expected but as for myself and those of the British Falconers Club Eagle Group who attended the 2013 British Falconry Fair, it was an event to be remembered for all the right reasons and I cannot wait for its return next year. So for all of you who could not be bothered to attend this year, you missed a good "un."

We were Falconers

Richard De Clanay Grant-Rennick

1923 – 2004

Part 2

By the time the first annual report came out for 1970 the Hawk Trust had over 80 members which included noted falconers such as John Cooper, Nick Faithfull, Paul Fields and Nick Fox. Over the years Grant-Rennick attended dozens of game fairs and country shows manning the Hawk Trust stand. He was responsible for a vast amount of fund raising, recruiting members and educating the public. He worked with game keepers to stop the shooting of birds of prey and was successful in getting some to join the Trust. The Hawk Trust news for November 1971 records the following by Geoff Hodson:

“The Hawk Trust stand at the Game Fair was very successful due almost entirely to Richard Grant-Rennick whose efforts brought in 13 new members and £91 profit. Two members from Northampton helped Richard and the Trust appreciates what they and Simon, Richard’s son, did.”

The 1972 annual report records the Chairman, Phillip Glasier, commenting: “To our gallant Captain, Richard Grant-Rennick, whose fundraising efforts are only one amongst many other things he does for us” .

In 1978 Grant-Rennick became Chairman of the Trust. At the AGM in 1981 he very shrewdly forecast the future for the Trust. It was founded to start a captive breeding research programme in view of the many threats to birds of prey in the wild and minimal knowledge of rearing birds of prey in captivity. During the 10 years much had been learned. There was also a marked recovery in wild British birds of prey. Because of these factors and the large cost of captive breeding, Grant-Rennick led the trust in deciding to end the programme and expand on five fronts: wardening, education, science, seeking land suitable for reserves and member participation. At the AGM in 1982 he stood down as chairman and was presented with a painting of a Greenland

Falcon by the Trust in recognition of the incredible amount of work and time he had dedicated to The Hawk Trust. Retirement, however, was not a word that Grant-Rennick had in his vocabulary. He promptly took up a position as one of the Vice Presidents and continued working.

Another organisation formed

It was also the late 70’s that saw the formation of another organisation that Grant-Rennick was heavily involved in. In March 1977 the Advisory Committees on the Protection of Birds for England, Wales and Scotland established a joint working party to look into the questions of Falconiformes in captivity. Their terms of reference were to consider the desirability of legislating to regulate the possession of captive hawks and to consider the practical aspects of operating a control scheme. In the course of time the working party issued a comprehensive report which the Government agreed to treat as a



Grant-Rennick – first Hawk Board Chairman

consultative document for consideration by representatives of those involved with captive birds of prey. The British Field Sports Society was approached and agreed to form an 'Umbrella Body'. Grant-Rennick, along with other falconers was heavily involved. He made contact with many individual falconers and got names of other clubs as many thought that the only falconry club was the British Falconers' Club and of course this was not the case. One of the suggestions put forward by Grant-Rennick and others was to adopt a system similar to that of the United States, a variation on the medieval guild system of apprentice-journeyman-master. Such a system would be the least onerous on falconers and would also have the least governmental intrusion in the practice of the sport once the regulations were set.

Jemima Parry-Jones, in summing up some of the history of what took place wrote the following:-

"And so it was that on a freezing cold day in January 1979 when the snow lay thick and stopped some people

from getting to the meeting, some 200 falconers attended a conference at The National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire to consider a legalised control scheme. The discussion was lively to say the least. From this conference was born The National Voluntary Panel on captive Hawks. It is interesting to remember that at that meeting proposals to have licenses for individual falconers was put forward, and sadly it was crushed by the majority of the attendees, who felt that they didn't need tests and licenses".

Seeing into the future?

Perhaps Grant-Rennick and some of the other falconers may have visualised what was to come in future years with changes that always occur with legislation.

The Panel was made up of representatives of falconers, zoos, veterinary surgeons and hawk keepers who had been elected. They held their first meeting in July 1979 bringing together the differing views of the various interests and to give the Government practical guidance for the legislation

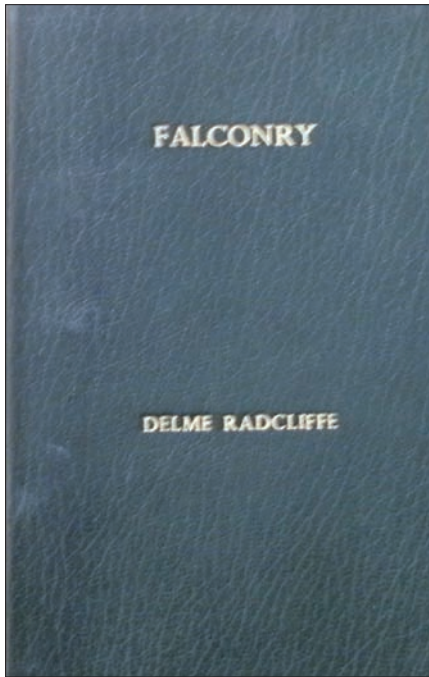
which was required to be introduced within the terms of the EU directives to which the UK was committed.

Much was discussed and an incredible amount of work was done. Subjects such as registration of hawks, inspection, enforcement, a general code for all keepers of captive hawks and specialist codes for falconers, breeders etc, were batted about. The Panel were aware that the Wildlife and Countryside Bill was expected to give specific directions on a number of aspects of keeping captive hawks and they wanted those to benefit both raptors and the people dealing with them.

Initially the objects of the panel were attained to the satisfaction of all under the able Chairmanship of Sir Marcus Kimball M.P. In 1981 the name of the panel changed as did its chairman. The group was henceforth to be known as The Hawk Board, and its new chairman was none other than Richard de Clanay Grant-Rennick. During his chairmanship he enthusiastically championed birds of prey and all activities related to them.

After many years of marriage and three children that brought them great joy, the Grant-Rennicks slowly grew apart and dissolved their union. Mary died, after a long illness, on December 26, 1980. Grant-Rennick, who had married Jennifer Lang, an authoress, in 1979, was nevertheless broken up by his first wife's passing. Only three years prior his beloved mother had died at Christmas time as well, so this most festive time of the year would forever be tinged with sadness.

Grant-Rennick had sold the Lichborough Hall estates in 1969 due to the huge expense of keeping them going when returns on agricultural endeavours faltered. He and Jennifer now lived in a more modest but delightful rectory in Cherington, Gloucestershire. The living room was magnificently decorated in an oriental motif, having a pale green carpet, floor to ceiling shelves painted green with oriental ginger pots and collectibles from Japan and China. The paintings were lovely. The dining room had a large wonderful portrait of Grant-Rennick commissioned by his son Simon. The round dining table was big enough to hold King Arthur's court, and was often quite full with the Grant-Rennick's many visitors. In his office Grant-Rennick had a



First book published by Grant-Rennick and Phillip Glasier

set of paintings/drawings from Michaelis' Birds of the Gauntlet painted by a friend who was staying with them.

Grant-Rennick goes into publishing

Grant-Rennick became a publisher of books, many of a sporting nature. He started his own publishing company, The Standfast Press, in 1971. It was named, in part, after the Grant family motto of Stand Fast, Stand Sure. His first venture was with Phillip Glasier, a reprint of the book *Falconry: Notes on the Falconidæ* used in India by Lieutenant Colonel E. Delmé Radcliffe. Twenty-five copies were printed and bound in green cloth as a test. Glasier thought it would be better if the cover mimicked the original, so 1000 additional copies were printed in a pictorial card cover.

As this book was going to press, Grant-Rennick and Glasier decided to embark upon a much grander project. Grant-Rennick thought that the time was ripe to produce an exceptionally handsome folio sized work on British falconry, much in the manner of a *Traite de Fauconnerie* or *Brodrick's Falconers' Favourites*. Phillip would write the text, he would commission drawings from Sir Charles Tunnicliffe, and they would work with the renowned Circle Press to publish the book. Tunnicliffe completed 10 remarkably lovely drawings for the project, the handsomest being a portrait of Ronald Stevens' gyrfalcon. It soon became apparent, however, that the project costs would be staggering and the book was abandoned. In 1975, thinking that the artwork might find an audience, the Circle Press decided to issue a portfolio of the Tunnicliffe prints rather than completely abandon the stone lithographs Tunnicliffe had so painstakingly created. Ninety sets were issued in a paper portfolio, two of the prints being signed by the artist and the rest initialled by him.

Grant-Rennick did, however, publish a number of other books that proved quite popular. Probably the best known book which falconers will recognise is John Cooper's *Veterinary Aspects of Captive Birds of Prey* (1978). Another with a falconry claim is Michael Brander's *A Hunt around the Highlands*, a book chronicling Brander's charming trip following the 18th century tour of falconer Colonel Thomas Thornton. Some of the Standfast Press's most popular books were those by humorist John Tickner, which still delight country sportsmen to this day, and books by sporting photographer Jim Meads and artist Michael Lyne. Perhaps the one

which most pleased Grant-Rennick was *Coursing: The Pursuit of Game with Gazeounds* (1976) which he edited himself.

Sporting agency started

During the 1980's Grant-Rennick started his own sporting agency which he ran from his home in Cherington, Gloucestershire. He arranged grouse shooting, stag hunting, and salmon fishing trips for many parties in Scotland, and also scheduled woodcock and snipe shooting forays in Ireland. A shooting man himself, he thoroughly enjoyed this line of work. He was very forthright in his views on bag numbers and stated, "There is nothing wrong in shooting a bag of large numbers providing they are good sporting birds, shot under sporting circumstances by people who know what they are doing. In any case, I think the days of very large bags are strictly limited and sporting days not necessarily linked to big bags, will be the trend for the future. You know it's all a matter of attitude. I've never had a bad day's shooting in my life, just some that are better than others."

Grant-Rennick continued working into his 70's and once commented about "retirement" saying: "Dear Boy, there's not many of us left and, by God, I intend to keep going while others fall by the wayside." This he did for as long as he could. As he moved into his very late 70's his health started to deteriorate and he had to spend some of his time in a wheelchair. On the 18th September 2004, Richard De Clanay Grant-Rennick passed away having outlived the wartime prophecy of his life expectancy by some 60 years.

Around Britain and in America his friends and family still feel a great sense of loss over his departure from the



A print from *Coursing: The Pursuit of Game with Gazeounds* (1976)



Falcon painting by Sir Charles Tunnicliffe given to Grant-Rennick

sporting fields. When told an article was being contemplated, many asked to have a word or two to say about him, or permitted the copying of words previously written:

“His cheerfulness and courage in the face of terrible adversity was an inspiration to all who knew him, and he bore his last illness with the fortitude and stoicism with which he did everything. He loved life, he loved his friends and family, he loved people, he loved animals, the countryside and every season of the year. He never complained and he never gave up. His motto was ‘Think that you can and you will. It’s all in a state of the mind’”. Jennifer Grant-Rennick

“He never failed to give the Trust his fullest support, energies and enthusiasm. He was a classic example of a falconer caring deeply about the conservation of the birds which had given him so much pleasure in earlier days flying from the fist. His disabilities did not stop him doing anything he set his mind to.

His courage and determination were phenomenal. Such qualities were vital to the Trust. A true pioneer spirit, Richard will be remembered for his cheerfulness, encouragement, sense of values and love. Those who knew him well are deeply grateful for his contributions to the Trust’s development. He was delighted and proud to see how the Trust is now, so let us celebrate his zest for life and his generous spirit, and mourn his loss”. Jane Fenton for the Hawk and Owl Trust.

“My husband Don and I spent many delightful days with Richard and Jennifer when we visited England each summer over the course of many years. Richard was a fascinating man, a born raconteur, very social, and we looked forward to our visits with him very much. It was virtually a non-stop party from start to finish. Richard loved to take driving trips to restaurants and every new guest was an excuse to do so. He drove at a high rate of speed - always - and used to frighten me no end. Because of a war wound

he couldn’t use his right arm. In order to shift gears, therefore, he had to let go of the steering wheel, steer with his right knee, and move the gear shift with his left hand. Riding with Richard was always an adventure. He was very much a people person, delighting in telling you his latest stories and hearing yours.” Natalie Nicholson, American falconry bookseller.

“Richard Grant-Rennick came into our lives fairly early on at the start of what was then The Falconry Centre, he was working over at what was then the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge (both of us have had name changes, us rather more than most). His love of birds of prey was obvious and his desire to make sure that not only birds of prey but also falconry had a continuing future was patent. He and my father Phillip Glasier were instrumental in starting what was then the Hawk Trust, now the Hawk and Owl Trust, and he unfailingly supported the concepts it embodied. He was always to be seen at the CLA Game Fair every year, with a cheerful smile and a wave of his arm, often from a distance as he was particularly good at finding VIP’s and escorting them to the Hawk Trust stand! I never heard him say a bad word about anyone, his style and class was such that his charm always shone through, he was good for birds of prey and for falconry.” Jemima Parry-Jones

Debt owed by falconers

“Few falconers currently practising in Britain are fully aware of the immense debt of gratitude they owe Captain Grant-Rennick. A life-long supporter of falconry, Richard was a long-standing member of the B.F.C. Indeed it was at a meeting of the Club that the initial proposals for regulating falconry under the forthcoming Wildlife and Countryside Act were recommended to the membership. Richard, always a man of the people, objected to the restrictions this would place on many of those wishing to practise falconry, as he believed that with the advent of captive breeding, falconry should not be restricted to a favoured few who were fortunate enough to benefit from a wild take. He voiced his opinions so enthusiastically that he turned the meeting around and himself agreed to contact those drafting the bill to see what could be done. He was one of the

most courageous, enthusiastic, cheerful and determined people it has been my privilege to know and call a true friend. We shall all miss his presence, friendship and enthusiasm". Martin Jones

"I owe Richard a particular debt of gratitude for publishing, as part of his Standfast Press series, my first book *Veterinary Aspects of Captive Birds of Prey* (1978, with update in 1985). Originally written as a thesis when I was in Kenya in the early 1970's, this text became the authoritative work on the subject. Richard anticipated this but I admired his optimism and was relieved that my writings lived up to his expectations. By publishing *Veterinary Aspects of Captive Birds of Prey*, Richard contributed to the establishment of 'hawk medicine' as a bona fide subject and helped pave the way to the spectacular advances made by veterinary clinicians, pathologists and others, from many different countries, over the succeeding 25 years". Professor John E. Cooper, Vice President British Falconers' Club

Richard Grant-Rennick had his regrets:

that he couldn't be as active a falconer as his friend Glasier though he loved it so; that his shooting, while adequate, wasn't what it could have been were his right arm useful; that there wasn't enough time in his life to participate in all the country sports he wished to. He had successes and failures in business, ups and downs in personal relationships, and high points and low that all encounter throughout a long life. But, at the end of the day, Richard de Clanay Grant-Rennick had a full, fascinating, and lengthy span of years. He left behind books that sportsmen will treasure, organizations that are on a better footing because of his input, and a smile on the faces of all who met and were embraced by his friendship.

Trademark phrase

Grant-Rennick, in bidding farewell to people he had just spoken to, had a trademark phrase he would bestow on them. Turning his left hand about so he could grip the right of his departing guest, he would smile, meet the eyes of his companion full on, and say, "Well

met." For Grant-Rennick, this meant he delighted in having had you in his company and that this was only the beginning of what comes next, not an ending at all. And so we say the same to him, a man who embraced falconry, a love of birds of prey, and a zest for sport the equal of any: "Well met, Richard de Clanay Grant-Rennick, Lord of the Manor of Lichborough, Patron of the Living of Maidford, soldier, sportsman, family man, and gracious friend."

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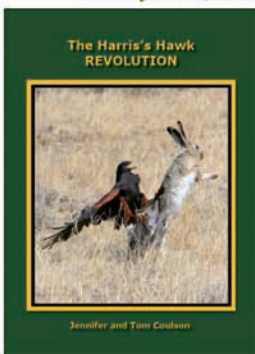
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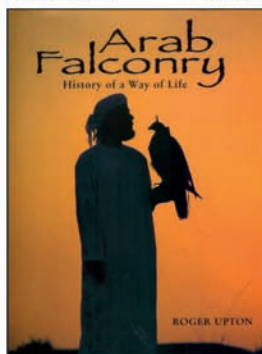
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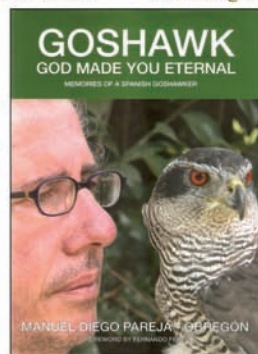
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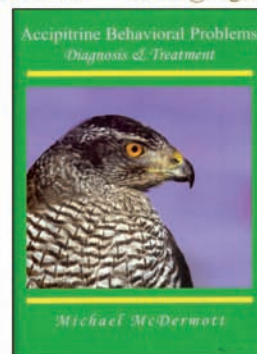
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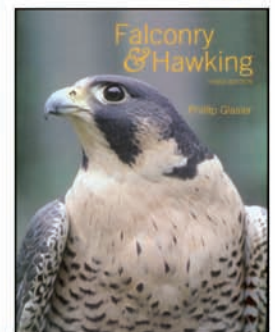
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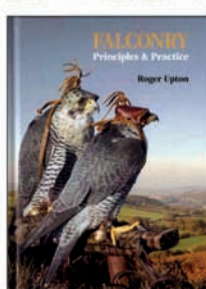


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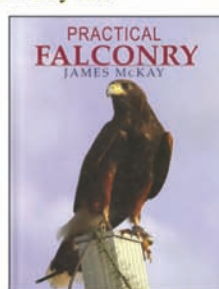
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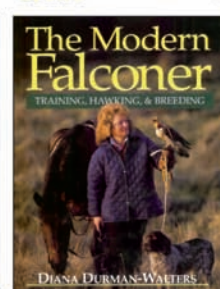
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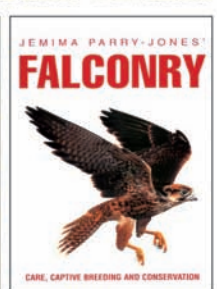
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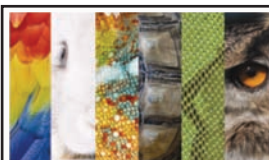
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Tracks in the Snow



Joe Atkinson with his Perlin, Tinkerbelle

Anyone that gets involved in the sport of falconry soon learns how odd or, as I have said before, funny this sport is and when I say funny I mean not the ha ha kind of funny but more the peculiar kind of funny. Because in falconry the falconer works and works and then gets a very brief pay off.

Particularly with longwings one can drive for miles and miles looking for a slip and then have the slightest thing go askew like a car door closed too loudly for instance or your dog moving out unnoticed blowing the slip, the list my friends can go on and on. Some say Murphy's law and falconry follow each other around playing jokes on falconers. There is I think a lot of truth to that, but I like to think that it's not Murphy's law

so much, it's just that there are so many variables that need to be dealt with and sometimes the falconer just simply does not cover all the bases.

Let's compare two different styles of falconry, hunting with a golden eagle off the fist at jack rabbits as we call them here in the States (but in truth they are actually hares) and flying a falcon at upland game. Both styles I have some experience with so I feel I am able to compare the two kinds of falconry drawing from my own personal experience.

My falconry world is made up of falcons and eagles and it has been that way forever. Flying eagles at jacks and flying falcons at ducks, grouse, quail, Huns or pheasants. For the sake of this writing I'll choose two of my birds that are to say

the least extremes from each other. First Jackhammer a six year old male golden eagle that flies at 8.5lbs and Tinkerbelle a four year old female Perlin that flies at 13.5oz – one being at the top of the food chain and the other slightly farther down – however both very aggressive hunters in their own right. One chases after 8lb speedy jack rabbits that depend on their speed which has been timed at 40mph and the use of clever moves for escape. The other is my Perlin chasing after the 15oz valley quail known for its great burst of speed and uncanny knowledge of where cover is and the fastest way to get there.

More equipment needed

Flying Tinkerbelle requires more equipment than flying Jackhammer. They



Jackhammer after a successful flight

both have tail mounted transmitters however Tinkerbelle's is much smaller (the micro kind) because after all she is a small bird. Aside from telemetry, dogs would be the next most important item because flying valley quail without dogs is simply a waste of time unless of course you feel compelled to dive head long into heavy cover and flush the quail yourself.

A falcon recall device or lure is required as I do like to be able to call my falcon back when necessary. I have come to use a frozen hen pheasant for two simple reasons:- Tinkerbelle likes it and she cannot carry it. Tinkerbelle has never carried and using a heavy lure such as the pheasant insures that she won't. However calling her down to a frozen pheasant has proved somewhat problematic because for a time Tinkerbelle figured she was supposed to catch pheasants. She could fly them down but soon realized that she was over matched and has now given up on the live version thankfully. Next on the list is the dreaded e-collar as one of my dogs feels that she is a much better judge of when to flush than me! So for my sanity and the safety of my dog she wears the collar. It is funny I don't even need to

have the collar turned on but just have it around her neck.

Jackhammer or JH to his friends, with his equipment requirements are fairly simple. He has a tail mount transmitter and he also has some specially made nylon braided jesses that are 14 inches long, and I have a good eagle worthy glove and that's it. I carry a lure but have never used it, JH comes to the fist and will come a very long distance. Both birds require a vehicle to transport them from home to hunting fields and they both need places to hunt. When I look for areas to hunt JH in there are a few important things to consider. I look for things like could there be any dogs in the field, or domestic cats both tame and wild. Here in the States wild cats or feral cats as we call them can be a big problem; they can pop up anywhere and at any time. JH went through a period when he caught a lot of cats, none I am happy to report had a pink collar and a cute little bell attached.

They have this annoying habit of lying down flat in the field and holding until you walk right up on them. Then they flush just like a jack rabbit and I can hardly fault

JH for pulling the trigger on them – purely just a mere reaction no doubt.

Golden eagles can handle cats easily enough but cats also bite and scratch and bites from cats can lead to possible infection. I hope JH has learned his lesson – after all he doesn't like the taste of cats and has been bitten more than a few times. Maybe he is getting smarter or at least looking at what he is going after, or not – he did latch on to a male badger, but that's another story all together. Dogs can also be a big problem and care needs to be taken that there are none in the field. I have found that fields that dogs run in don't have many jack rabbits which is a good thing.

A field for JH is one that has jack rabbits in it with low cover shorter than knee high which is best but native grasslands are good too. Tall cover is difficult as eagles will not generally slam into cover, at least here in the States.

Hunting with JH

Excerpt taken from my eagle journal, to read more on eagle hunting please go to: www.joatkinsonseaglejournal.com

Fall is definitely here — the mornings



Tinkerbelle with Vegas looking expectant

are cool and the grass is wet with dew. I went to the 10 acre alfalfa hay field. I haven't hunted that field for a while and seeing that I was out early this morning I figured I'd give it a try. The alfalfa is tall, almost knee high, and in this field there are large areas that the jacks have eaten down to almost bare ground. When flushed the jacks will come out of the thick hay and bolt into the open ground at full speed. It seems dumb because if they would just stop in the thick stuff JH could no longer see them and they would be fine, but jack rabbits are born to run and run they do!

The interesting thing is JH knows that if the rabbit stops running in the thick hay he will lose it so, with this in mind, JH really explodes off the fist and flies very hard and fast to get on top of the running rabbit. What I do is walk 20 or 30 feet into the hay, kind of following the edge of the eaten down parts. The parts that the rabbits have cleared look like a huge single piece from a jig-saw puzzle. I'm also testing out the second pair of hunting pants I purchased and thankfully, yes, they are water proof. There was so

much moisture on the hay that water was running off my legs. This is not all that good for eagles. Eagles soak up water like sponges and because of their large size the water seems to affect them a lot.

I walked a long ways out in the field and the whole time JH was standing tall and looking for any sign or movement. He knows these fields and is supremely confident. All I can figure is that JH saw an ear move or something because the second I saw the jack move JH was already gone. The rabbit burst out of the cover and was hauling across the open ground which is short like the front lawn of someone's house. The jack rabbit did not have time to do anything but run and it did not get very far. I have said over and over . . . to see an 8 pound bird with a 6 foot wing span fly that fast and overtake a jack rabbit is quite unbelievable. I hope that everyone who reads the eagle journal can someday see for themselves what I'm talking about . . . you will be amazed.

Tinkerbelle's field requirements are anywhere there is quail in more open places which in most cases when you're

talking about valley quail finding them in areas that are hawkable with a waiting on falcon are very hard to come by. Fortunately here in eastern Oregon quail can be found in flyable situations. I do have to look for the unseen stuff like fences, creeks and irrigation canals.

Over the years I have had to swim my share of water ways to retrieve a falcon that caught something on the other side. One particular time my daughter and I were flying our perlines at doves. The male Perlin had bound to a dove and landed on an island in the middle of a sizeable cattle watering pond. It was a cold and damp day not one that brings swimming to mind.

We both stood at the water's edge looking at the little darling plucking away. To my daughter's credit she did say "Dad he's my falcon I'll go get him". Smiling, I removed my outer layer of clothes and waded into the very cold water. I was instantly swimming free in open water, dog paddling my way across to the island and managed to crawl over the fence that circled it. I reached out for the little darling only to have him release the dove



Tinkerbelle on the fist

and fly off! Clearly I must have looked to him like the monster rising from the black lagoon. I swam back with more than a few choice words. Anyway crossing water in the winter is not fun and I like to avoid it when ever possible.

Hunting with Tinkerbelle

I have her on an afternoon hunting routine as I have found that the quail are out and about more in the late afternoon. I have always preferred to hunt in the mornings as I do not like racing the sun for the day's last slip. With that said lately morning quail slips have been difficult to find, so I switched over to afternoon hunting. I start by loading up the dogs, checking Maggie's e-collar and Tinkerbelle's transmitter, making sure that all are working. I remove all of Tinkerbelle's jesses and set her on the perch in the front seat of the truck. I make sure that my hawking vest is ready with lure and food and is within reach as when a group of quail is spotted

things must happen fast. The other item I feel necessary to have is my 9mm semi-automatic pistol. Now don't get me wrong on this, I am not a gun happy person I don't go around shooting things, in fact I don't shoot anything. However, when a mountain lion kills a full grown horse in the next door neighbors' corral and has been sighted numerous times in the area and I have found kill sites where a deer was plucked and dragged off in the same area where I hunt Tinkerbelle, carrying a weapon seems like a smart thing.

So when I spot a group of quail in a flyable spot first thing is to get Tinkerbelle in the air so she can pin the quail, then out comes the dogs, on goes the hawking vest and off we go! Now comes the part where I play the most important role – my job if you will is I must quickly ascertain which direction the quail want to make their escape and position myself and the dogs to come in for the flush between the group of quail and their

desired direction of escape.

With quail hawking it is all or nothing. Rarely is there any reflush – they give you one chance. In fact a single quail that has been put in by a falcon is extremely hard to catch; they know where each and every clump of cover is and will use each one as a means to get away. I have walked away from flights where my dog is on point and Tinkerbelle is over head and we flush only to have the quail fly straight to another small clump of something and get just that much closer to huge cover and escape. I realize after the flight that we just got played by Mr. Quail – he just used any and all cover regardless of how insignificant it was to work his way back out of the wide open field to safety! Sometimes though things work out.

Hawking journal

Tinkerbelle: female Perlin 13.7oz.

I went to the end of our ranch and found a large group of quail that saw me coming and blew out to the far edge of the field. The ground is covered with one to two inches of fresh snow and with all the trees having dropped their leaves the quail are easy to spot. The entire area is covered with quail tracks – it is quite easy to see where they spend their day. In this particular area there are so many valley quail they have actually made trails in the snow.

I launched Tinkerbelle and raced over in the direction I saw the group go. My dogs went in and quail exploded in all directions resulting in mass confusion. Tinkerbelle stooping in all directions and me trying to keep an eye on her through the small stand of trees. As the quail numbers thinned out and single birds flew past me Tinkerbelle came in and knocked one down and I marked the spot, called the dogs over and waited for Tinkerbelle to get in position.

With Tinkerbelle dead over head I sent in the dogs and out came the quail. I looked up to see Tinkerbelle do a wing over and pump straight down, level off and close on the quail that was just about to make the heavy cover.

Having to duck around the leafless trees to keep track of the flight I lost her for a split second then saw her bind to the quail and land! On this day everything worked out and Tinkerbelle was successful but on other days . . . all we get are tracks in the snow!

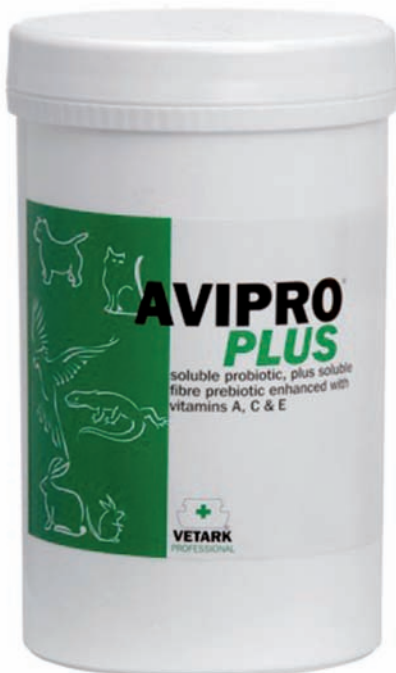
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Sources of captive food

Why add vitamins, etc.? Properly fed young birds will grow perfectly and you don't need supplements. Sounds fine but it's rubbish. Young birds in nature are dependent on what parents supply – this depends on what is available to catch. Problems do occur in the wild. In captivity, hand feeding with quail, rabbit, hare etc. is fine as a protein source but often it's too easy to miss out on the calcium or vitamins.



Any hand/captive rearing of chicks, juveniles or adults can easily result in dietary deficiencies.

Some of the problems

As they have not eaten any food themselves, day-old chicks could be looked on as uncooked eggs in a somewhat different form (without the benefit of the calcium rich shell), and contain large amounts of phosphorus and cholesterol and a correspondingly very small amount of calcium.

Calcium deficiency may lead to underlying (and unnoticed) deficiencies of nutrition. Chicks may get bow legs because the legs can't support their growth, young growing bird's bones are undermineralised and may bend or break easily, they may grow poorly or have fits. Adults may break legs easily when bating, or have difficulties in egg-laying.

Day old chicks are very deficient in calcium. The calcium:phosphorus (Ca:P) ratio required by all birds in their diet is 1.5:1; but that of a day-old chick is probably only of the order of 0.25:1 so the diet will need supplementation with calcium

Meat, even prime beef is incorrectly and dangerously considered by many as a good food source for carnivorous creatures but carnivorous means flesh-eating (i.e. whole-carcase-eating including what the animal itself has just eaten) and not just muscle-meat-eating – even prime beef has a Ca:P ratio of only 0.5:1.

So what sort of supplementation is needed?

Breeding birds have dietary requirements different from working birds – both require adequate Ca:P ratios and a supply



of readily available calcium, but the latter need more energy. Chicks from deficient birds may develop rickets.

A better food source is one which is comprised of individual adult animals (birds, mammals or fish for the piscivorous species) which have eaten food themselves (they are what they eat too!) and different supplements can be provided depending on the birds' varying requirements. Adult mice and rats have a calcium content of about 2.5% of their dry matter, and are therefore a better source of calcium than day-old chicks. So a frozen store of dead mammals and healthy adult bird carcasses is worth much more than all the day-old chicks in the country (they do have other issues however). Bear in mind that quail and lab rodents are fed artificial diets and do not always equate nutritionally with a wild quail or rat.

Supplementation is available in many different forms and the range of choices is often confusing to the bird-keeper: Calcium phosphate (bone flour) has been used but it adds phosphorus to the diet,

and therefore rather defeats the object of calcium supplementation. The Ca:P ratio of many vitamin products is 1.2:1 and therefore they do not contain enough calcium to redress the relative excess of phosphorus in a day-old chick.

Supplementation

NUTROBAL has a high Ca:P ratio (46:1 - enough to redress the day-old chick deficiency) and is especially important for young growing birds.

AVIMIX (also sold via vets as ARKVITS) with a Ca:P ratio of 30:1 is based on NUTROBAL but with extra vitamins A,C & E. AVIMIX is an excellent general purpose vitamin for adult birds, whilst young growing birds growing bone benefit from the higher D3 and calcium levels in NUTROBAL.

Support for sick birds

Vetark are also probiotic specialists. As a first line in support of dull birds their water soluble probiotic (culture of friendly bacteria) AVIPRO PLUS can be put on the food or administered in water

through a tube. This will help if birds have been stressed or injured, or are being treated with antibiotics. Critical Care Formula can also be given by tube to birds that are not eating, it can keep birds alive while they are healing or waiting for veterinary treatments to 'kick in'.

Cleansing and disinfection

Some falconers make the basic assumption that because nobody cleans up after birds in the wild that they can be allowed to live in filthy mews or flights. There is also often a statement alongside this suggesting that being too clean makes them sterile and have low resistance. This is just wrong – birds need cleanliness. In the wild the rain and sun clean their nests, etc. – they are not forced to live within close proximity to old mews etc. Birds of prey are very susceptible to Aspergillus fungal spores – these are inhaled and grow inside the lungs and air sacs. Vetark Ark-Klens is a fantastic disinfectant cleanser – it removes all the common bacteria, fungi, psittacosis and many viruses such as influenza.



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In Praise of Brittanies



Kevin on arrival and Dixie aghast – Kevin sitting on a set of scales

There isn't a day that goes by when I don't thank the Lord for inventing Brittanies.

About 20 years ago when I was living in

Berkshire I invited Bill Pearson over to join me for a day's pheasant hawking. Bill turned up with his Goshawk and a pretty little orange and white Brittany bitch called Ellie. Over the course of the day Ellie's ability to find, hold and flush

game knocked my socks off. It was totally inspirational and relegated my bush-kicking technique into the dark ages and from that moment I set about finding myself one of these magical little dogs.

I discovered that the Brittany as we know it today originated in France. It was quite a haphazard mixture of Pointer, Setter and Spaniel which came about in a number of accidental matings mainly due to gentlemen in France who, after

finishing their season's shooting left their gun dogs where they fell upon one another with great gusto.

For the sort of rough ground we cover the Brittany has it all. With its silky double coat water, gorse, bracken, briar and bramble are no problem added to which it has incredible scenting abilities. Our current Brittany dog Kevin has pointed rabbits (both above and below ground), hares, pheasant, grouse,



Kevin on point backed by Dixie

partridge, woodcock and squirrels (even if they're up a tree!). Also in its favour is its compact size which enables it to get into and work tight hedges.

I found my first Brittany in the east end of London

I managed to track down a litter of Brittanies in the East End of London of all places. I didn't have a choice – she was the only one left, and so at eight weeks old Dixie came to join us and our two Dobermanns at Sandford Mill Cottage.

I still had my female Goshawk on a bow perch prior to putting her up for the moult so it was a good opportunity to gauge the new pup's attitude to a bird of prey.

I need not have worried as Cruella and Dixie got on very well. The timing could not have been better.

I knew next to nothing about training a working dog but at least I had a few clear months to do some light basic training with this intelligent little bitch. She was quick to learn and when she got to about 6 months old I bought in some pheasant

poults. I put a couple of these poults into a cat carry cage and took them into the woods at the back of the house and pushed them into a bramble patch.

Several hours later Dixie and I would go for a walk where our return trip would take us back past the woods where the pheasants had been 'planted'.

As she looked at me I sent her into the woods with a hand signal – she busied about and after a couple of minutes her nose went up – ah! had she found them – suddenly she stopped dead – one front foot went up – she was still about 15 feet away so I encouraged her on a bit and then she had them – there it was – the perfect point. I gently told her to 'leave' and gave her lots of praise and I couldn't keep the smile off my face all the way home.

After a month or so of 'seeding' my poults in several different areas I took her and the poults out and put her in a 'stay' as I released the now mature pheasants right under her nose. As they clattered away she never moved a muscle. Right - phase one was complete.

The training never stops

I didn't work her seriously until she was over two years old and she and the Goshawk got on very well together. In the intervening time Dixie had also started pointing rabbits and she could be a little impetuous, especially if quarry was thin on the ground but she never gained the ability that Kevin, our current male Brittany has of marking a warren. She would sometimes put up a rabbit that would run and pop down a bury and I would take her to the hole and encourage her to 'show' me – then she would pull her 'glum' look out of the bag – mouth down at the corners, ears out like open taxi doors.

Things didn't ever improve on that score but, if that was her only fault I for one wasn't complaining.

People often ask me 'when do you stop training a dog?' The answer is NEVER – it's an ongoing daily thing that never stops – there is always something new to learn – a bit like falconry itself – you never stop learning. She worked tirelessly for seven seasons



Kevin and assistant

and then one day we noticed that as we prepared to go out hawking she had stayed abed. Normally she would have been round and about trying with some success to trip us up but this morning everything had changed. She eventually rallied herself with some encouragement and she worked pretty well – we hadn't been out long when torrential rain bought a swift end to our sortie that particular day and in retrospect it was just as well.

The end of an era

The following day things had got worse as no amount of persuasion could rouse her from her bed. I suppose we had been putting off the inevitable, an inability to accept that things were going wrong and changing our daily routine that had been so full of fun for years. A visit to the vet confirmed our worst fears as tests

showed that she had a cancerous lump in her intestines. An operation failed to improve the situation and we then suffered a guilty conscience for putting her through major surgery. We felt utterly bereft as we returned home to an almost empty house. In a few months we'd lost our dear Dobies and our happy little friend Dixie who'd enriched our lives for years.

Six years before we lost Dixie we had contacted a Brittany breeder who offered us a 4 month old male puppy which we had to go to Crufts to pick up – so it was off to Birmingham. We were aghast when we first saw this 'pup' because he was so fat he resembled an orange and white seal. What was even funnier was that as he'd not had any of his jabs Chris had to carry him for about half a mile through the car park.

When we got home, sitting him on the bathroom scales confirmed our suspicions as he weighed in at a porky four and a half stones. Also, he turned out to be a bit of a forceful character which earned him the nickname the 'Fat Controller'. He was much 'sharper' in his temperament than Dixie and if he wasn't actually working he would see off just about any other dog. When working, he could be surrounded by other dogs and would ignore them. We named him Kevin.

In retrospect getting a dog for working at 4 months old was a big mistake – in future anything over eight weeks old is a no-no. However, he did come good after lots of hard work and he did one thing that Dixie never did. We were out with them both one day and we noticed Kevin stop and mark at a warren – he wouldn't move – I can remember thinking, 'what the hell is he doing' – I'd never seen a dog do this before and Dix just lay down beside him pulling that 'glum' look.

Eventually it clicked – we put the ferret down and bingo – a rabbit ran. This suddenly opened up many possibilities – no longer standing for hours ferreting empty warrens.

The start of a new partnership

The day after we lost Dixie we went to Scotland with my female Harris hawk and Kevin. This holiday had been booked for a year and it actually made Dixie's loss easier to bear as it took us away from home and all the memories for a while.

He'd never had the chance to work hares around here so we were very pleased when his first point in heather flushed a Blue Hare which the hawk brought to book in short order. Initially he was tending to bump the Grouse and Partridge but eventually he became solid on these jumpy game birds, none of which ever graced our game book.

From the age of four Kevin really started to hone his skills – there was no hedge too thick, no cover too dense – he just improved with every outing. We would stand open mouthed as he folded himself into tight hedges that a Jack Russell would have been hard pressed to get through and once he got to know a piece of land his memory never let him down. I remember one occasion when quarry had been particularly hard to find he suddenly dashed off 500 yards away to a warren that, over the years, had never



No doubting this one

held anything. He worked around the holes and suddenly stiffened and one foot went up. Was he getting just too anxious to find something for us? No, he was right as usual and a quarter-mile slip for my Goshawk, Eddie, proved him right once more.

What a dog – what a hawk – what a ferret – what more could one want?

Strange scenting conditions?

Recently, we have had a couple of strange episodes with Kevin that have had us completely puzzled and we've put it down to the weather conditions. This almost endless 'inundation' as the weather men so quaintly put it, is the only thing we can think of.

One of our sites is liberally sprinkled with bush gorse – no more than a foot high – tight and sharp and normally very holding. We set Kevin off with high hopes this particular day, weather mild and breezy. Perfect. Within minutes he had a firm point – we moved up – rattled the bush - nothing. He ran on – and pointed again – we moved up – rattle, rattle – nothing. He moved off and again, point and nothing. He was now becoming quite troubled – there seemed to be scent everywhere – but finding the source was becoming a problem for him. Eventually

we gave up – we were all getting rather frustrated and apart from that the incessant 'inundation' had started again.

Having spoken to several falconers over the last month or two we are not the only ones having these sorts of problems – so everyone has come to the conclusion that it's weather driven conditions.

Apparently these low, tight 'balls' of gorse can hold scent for days so if a passing rabbit has used one as a shelter for an hour or so it's residual scent can last for days especially when the ground is very wet. Fascinating!

One particularly memorable point that Kevin had was in Derbyshire this year. We were walking deep plough, and as it's already been said the incessant rain had turned this particular part of Derbyshire into a quagmire – plough in dry weather is hard enough but this was a joke.

Chris was working Kevin on the far side of a hedge when I heard Kevin's pointing collar beeping. With the hawk sitting bolt upright I moved down the hedge until I got to a gap where I could see Kev – about 300/400 yards into the field bent round in a U-shape – one leg up and solidly on. I couldn't actually see what he was marking – maybe a wisp of reed, well, that's all I could see. Anyway,

I held Eddie up and as Chris told Kev to 'get in' a massive Brown Hare exploded into action.

My relatively small hawk took off in hot pursuit and thank heavens the hare made it safely into a patch of briar.

Our good little dog had held that point steadily for nearly ten minutes whilst I had slowly and uncomfortably moved into position.

The clue's in the posture

Occupied warren – moves up, bellows start – front leg rises – eyes turn.

Above ground – rigid back, head out, tail quivers.

Game bird – whole body elongated, foreleg up accompanied by whole body quiver.

Sometimes he looks like a Setter, at other times a Pointer and sometimes the Spaniel in him comes to the fore – he's a good mixture of all three.

As I write this appreciation of Brittanies our new pup is ordered – Kevin is in his tenth year and may need a good little partner to help ease his way into our next few hawking seasons.

Let's hope that all falconers' birds everywhere have a good moult and come out looking good for the next season.

Club Directory

The South East Falconry Group

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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 Village Hall, Station Road, Groombridge, Kent TN3 9QX

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

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The Welsh Hawking Club

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IBR Lost, Found, Reunited & Stolen birds of prey from 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2013

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

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

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

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

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

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

STOLEN x 1

BREF	RING	SPECIES	AREA LOST
83063	?835?	BARNOWL	Feltwell, IP26

REUNITED x 88

SPECIES	
AFRICAN SPOTTED E.O.	3
BALD EAGLE	1
BARBARY/SHAHEEN	2
BARN OWL	19
BENGAL EAGLE OWL	1
BUZZARD	1
CARA CARA	1
GOSHAWK	5
GYR HYBRID	1
GYRKIN	1
GYR/PEREGRINE	1
GYR/SAKER	7
GYR TRIBRED	2
HARRIS HAWK	12
HARRIS HAWK HYBRID	1
KESTREL	5
LANNER	9
LUGGER	1
PEREGRINE	2
PERE/LANNER	3
PERE/SAKER	4
PRAIRIE FALCON	1
REDTAIL	3
SAKER	2

LOST x 20

BREF	RING	SPECIES	AREA LOST
93527	?998?	PERE/SAKER	Maidstone, ME17
52657	?007?	EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	Morpeth, NE61
94999	Microchip	HARRIS HAWK	Bath
95054	?2MJ?	PERE/SAKER	Berwick, TD15
53610	?168?	HARRIS HAWK	Wickford, SS11
93989	????	GYR/PEREGRINE	Partington, M31
93346	????	PERE/BARBARY	Partington, M31
89885	?685?	BARN OWL	Brocton, ST17
58901	?811?	HARRIS HAWK	Wickford, SS11
80453	?664?	BARN OWL	Lee On Solent
93815	?993?	BUZZARD	Aspatria, CA7
95154	?8VS?	TAWNY OWL	Bath, BA2
96221	?FCC?	HARRIS HAWK	Kent, ME12
93381	?997?	GYR/SAKER	Bognor Regis
78897	?639?	HARRIS HAWK	Bestwood, Notts
96534	?3YL?	LANNER	Accrington
51845	?932?	LANNER	Stoneleigh
61734	?976?	HARRIS HAWK	Kidderminster, DY11
22066	?987?	BARN OWL	Blackburn
86507	?250?	BARN OWL	Lanark, ML11

FOUND x 25

BREF	RING	SPECIES	AREA FOUND
94721	??5W?	COMMON BUZZARD	West Midlands
61325	?965?	HARRIS HAWK	Edinburgh
76688	?381?	EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	Moreton, CH46
95130	?265?	HARRIS HAWK	Wootton Bassett
95246	?P34?	GOSHAWK	Solihull
63479	?189?	HARRIS HAWK	York
92094	?771?	BARN OWL	London
95390	?5DM?	VERMICULATED E.O.	Lancaster
77756	?559?	LANNER FALCON	Langworth, Lancs
33006	?733?	BARN OWL	Northampton
81622	?907?	HARRIS HAWK	Stockton on Tees
95710	?MC9?	KESTREL	Chiddingfold
92622	?875?	BARN OWL	Wadhurst, TN5
95884	?74R?	REDTAIL	Somerset
95998	????	HARRIS HAWK	Northwich
95956	?2BC?	KESTREL	Litchfield
96128	????	HARRIS HAWK	Wellington, TA21
96276	?OS0?	BARN OWL	East Devon
96640	?637?	BARN OWL	Ecclestone
15551	?463?	EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	Farnham, Hamps
97056	????	HARRIS HAWK	Chobham, Surrey
76773	?319?	BARN OWL	Mansfield, NG19
97157	?SLA?	BARN OWL	Welton, NN11

FOUND DEAD X 14

BARN OWL X 5
 EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL X 2
 HARRIS HAWK X 5
 KESTREL X 1
 LANNER X 1

LOST UNREGISTERED BIRDS X 34

AMERICAN KESTREL X 1
 BARN OWL X 2
 EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL X 2
 GOSHAWK X 2
 GYR X 1
 GYR/LANNER X 1
 GYR/PEREGRINE X 1
 HARRIS HAWK X 8
 KESTREL X 2
 LANNER FALCON X 3
 PEREGRINE X 2
 PERE/SAKER X 5
 RED TAIL X 1
 SAKER X 2
 SPARROWHAWK X 1

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Eagle Falconry A Personal Perspective

EAGLE FALCONRY A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE



Dr. DAVID GLYNN FOX

This new work covers a relatively new branch of falconry, at least, so far as the UK, Europe and America is concerned and fills a long-awaited niche regarding eagle falconry. The author has been flying eagles for half a century with varying degrees of success, but is mostly concerned with the Golden Eagle. This book covers the history of eagle falconry in these islands and more importantly perhaps, takes the reader on a journey into the not too distant past to discover those early falconers who saw merit in this stunning bird despite all the bad press the species received back then. The book also gives short biographies on those eagle falconers who are still with us today, giving insights into the achievements of Ronnie Moore, Alan Gates, Andrew Knowles-Brown, Geoff Clayton, George Mussared, Joe Atkinson and many more.

With the upsurge of interest in eagle falconry, the author, together with Alan Walker, formed the British Falconers Club Eagle Group, a small but passionate and successful group who regularly fly their eagles at organised meets throughout the country. The author has brought together his experiences, and those of others, in a highly readable format to help newcomers to eagle falconry. Although the book is not, and was never intended to be, a "How to," fly eagles monograph, there is a wealth of information within its pages to enable any tyro to get a feeling for the sport of eagle falconry. The author stresses the point that these birds are not toys and can be frightening to those unfamiliar with eagles. He warns that great dedication is required to take on these fascinating raptors and takes the reader through his own trials and tribulations whilst training his own eagles, highlighting the problems that can be associated with eagle falconry.

The book contains over 230 pages of text and 32 pages of stunning full colour photographs, many taken especially for this work and is reasonably priced at **£35.00**. The author will be signing copies of this work at the UK Hawking Event near Evesham on 11th and 12th August and again at the ICBP Falconry Weekend on 1st & 2nd September. Alternatively, copies can be purchased directly from the author by e-mailing davidfox78@hotmail.com

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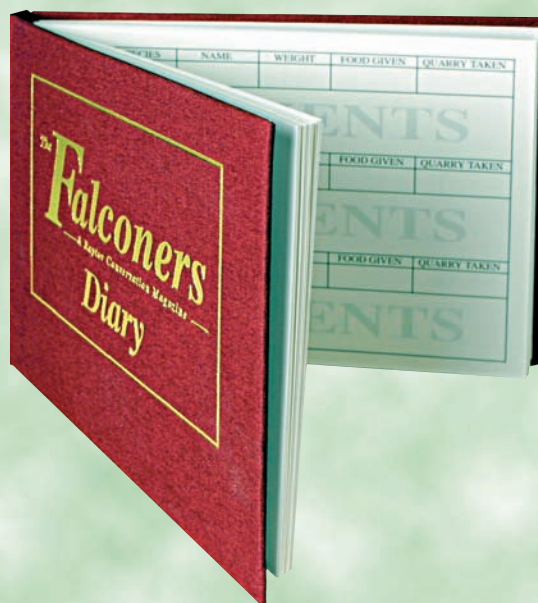
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