

Your Favourite Falconry Magazine

Issue 96

£4.50

www.pwpublishing.ltd.uk



ISSN
0967-2206

The **Falcons**
& Raptor Conservation Magazine



Helping out in
AFRICA



Take out a
subscription for just

£18.00

The **Falconers**
& Raptor Conservation Magazine

You can subscribe or renew on-line. Just visit our
subscription department website:-

www.mysubcare.com

For credit card orders. Most credit cards accepted

TEL: 01442 820580

FAX: 01442 827912 E-mail: falconers@webscribe.co.uk

or write to: The Falconers & Raptor Conservation Magazine,
Unit 8, The Old Silk Mill, Brook Street, Tring, Herts HP23 5EF

Cheques/Postal Orders made payable to PW Publishing Ltd.



Front Cover:
Secretary Bird image by
Bob Dalton

Winter 2014 / No.96

Editor: Peter Eldrett
Knowle View, Kings Lane, Woodlands,
Wimborne, Dorset BH21 8LZ
Telephone: (01202) 826181
E-mail: peter.eldrett@tiscali.co.uk

ALL EDITORIAL
INFO TO THIS
ADDRESS

Art Editor: Steve Hunt
Telephone: 0845 803 1979
E-mail: steve@pwpublishing.ltd.uk

Advertising and Marketing:

Sales: Roger Hall
0845 803 1979
Production: Peter Eldrett
PW Publishing Ltd., Tayfield House,
38 Poole Road, Westbourne
Bournemouth, Dorset BH4 9DW
Telephone: 0845 803 1979
E-mail: sales@pwpublishing.ltd.uk

ALL
ADVERTISING
INFO TO THIS
ADDRESS

Finance: Alan Burgess
Telephone: 0845 803 1979
E-mail: alan@pwpublishing.ltd.uk

Subscriptions:

UK & Eire: £18.00
Europe: £21.50
Airmail: £29.50

Send your details to our Subscriptions Department:

Falconers Magazine,
Subscriptions Dept.,
Unit 8 The Old Silk Mill
Brook Street, Tring
Hertfordshire HP23 5EF
Telephone: (01442) 820580
Fax: (01442) 827912
E-mail: falconers@webscribe.co.uk
Web: www.webscribe.co.uk

Cheque/Postal Order payable to: **PW Publishing Ltd.**

The views expressed in this magazine are the views of the authors. No responsibility for the quality of goods or services offered in this magazine can be accepted by the publishers or the printers, and all advertisements are accepted in good faith.

© PW PUBLISHING LTD. 2014.

Copyright in all drawings, photographs and articles published in *The Falconers & Raptor Conservation Magazine* is fully protected and reproduction or imitation in whole or in part is expressly forbidden. All reasonable precautions are taken by *The Falconers & Raptor Conservation Magazine* to ensure that the advice and data given to our readers is reliable. We cannot, however, guarantee it and we cannot accept legal responsibility for it. Prices are those current as we go to press. *The Falconers & Raptor Conservation Magazine* is published quarterly for £18.00 (UK) per year by PW Publishing Ltd., Tayfield House, 38 Poole Road, Westbourne, Bournemouth, Dorset BH4 9DW. Printed in England by Holbrooks Printers, Portsmouth, Hampshire.

contents

- 4 News & products

- 8 Africa – A Helping Hand
Bob Dalton helping out in Dullstroom, South Africa

- 13 ICARE Conference 2013
Avian conference held in Germany with John Chitty

- 14 Dr. Nick Fox, OBE
Nick awarded for his hard work over many years

- 18 Sparrowhawks
Part 1 of a fascinating article on spars from Ben Crane

- 24 George Edward Lodge – his final resting place
Dr. David Glynne Fox finds the grave of this famous falconer and artist

- 26 The International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) - Life as its President
Adrian Lombard tells us what it's like to be the president of this organisation

- 29 A Bird for All Seasons
Barry Houghton flying his Lanneret falcon

- 32 Owls – A brief look species by species
Lee Hall tells us what Owls to look out for in the wild

- 34 Club Directory

- 36 IBR Lost & Found

Firstly, huge congratulations to Nick Fox on receiving an OBE for 'Services to Falconry and the Conservation of Raptors'. After many years of hard work and tirelessly working for the good of raptor conservation and falconry all over the world, Nick has now been rewarded – and quite rightly so.

My thanks go to all those who have contributed to this issue including Ben Crane for his fascinating article on his favourite hawk, the Sparrowhawk. This is part one of a two part article and I for one look forward to reading part two.

Also, I would like to thank Dr. David Glynne Fox for his continued support with his various articles including the one published in this edition concerning the grave of George Edward Lodge.

I hope everyone has come through the awful weather we have been experiencing in Britain and your hawks and falcons are all well. As I write this, the sun is shining and the wind has abated somewhat. But now I have the flu – if it's not one thing it's another!

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

A Damp Day

The members and visitors of the Northumberland Crow Falcons have raised £1041.67p for the Great North Air Ambulance. Donations were collected from the Meets throughout the season and at a Farm Ride attended by 30 riders. Nick Fox said 'I'm pleased to say we have not needed the Air Ambulance for four years now, but apparently it costs about £2000 for each call out. We are hawking remote areas away from vehicle access and it is a huge comfort to see their helicopter appear from nowhere and cheerful paramedics able to take control. We are very grateful to them.'



A First For Falconry

by Judith Wrighte

Falconry for Schools and Alula Falconry were invited to attend a Countryside Day for schools at the Bereleigh Estate, East Meon, Hampshire. The educational charity, Hampshire Country Learning based at Sparsholt College, organises estate and farm visits for school children in and around Hampshire in order to better understand the working countryside and food production. Hampshire Country Learning has been part of The Country Trust since 2007.

Hampshire Country Learning contacted The Countryside Alliance Foundation and Alula Falconry after having heard about the work that the 'Falconry for Schools Project' is doing to conserve falconry's heritage, birds of prey and promote outdoor education and outdoor pursuits. This Countryside Day was designed to enable pupils to explore their local environment, discover rural activities and meet some of the people that work to preserve such rural activities.

Throughout the day the pupils from the schools visited a carousel of various activity stations across the Bereleigh Estate. These activities included gardening, forestry, gamekeeping, crops and machinery, pond dipping and falconry. "It is the first time at a Countryside Day for Schools that falconry has been an activity we can offer the children", explained Felicity Davis, the Countryside Education Practitioner for Hampshire Country Learning.

At the falconry activity station, the pupils became 'Apprentice Falconers', learning about health, diet, fitness and safety of the birds and also training a bird of prey. Practical activities included 'mix and match' games on health and equipment and a balanced diet for the birds. The pupils also had to guess the weight of a bird and then weigh the bird to see how accurate their guess was. The safety activity included tying a falconry knot and correctly attaching a swivel to mews jesses. The fitness training activity involved the pupils swinging a swing lure at a target, all before having a bird fly to the glove.

If you would like to find out more about the project, 'Falconry for Schools', please contact:

Judith Wrighte and Alula Falconry: judithwrighte@tiscali.co.uk, www.alula.co.uk or via The Countryside Alliance Foundation: info@countryside-alliance.org



Change of Co-ordinator at the Hawk Board



Outgoing Mike Clowes

Mike Clowes has now stepped down as co-ordinator for the Hawk Board after many years service and

below is a brief history of what he has done in his own words.

My involvement with the Hawk Board goes back to 1995 when I became the representative for the Welsh Hawking Club. In 1997/8 the position of Co-ordinator was formed with the assistance of the Countryside Alliance and Ian Timmins became the first person to hold the position. After a couple of years Ian decided to emigrate to Canada in 1999/2000 and I took over as Co-ordinator. A couple of years later I also took on the role of Treasurer.

It has been a very hectic 13 years but in 2013 I became eligible for my State pension so decided to retire at the end of the year.

I will not be losing touch however as I

will be remaining on as voluntary Treasurer of the Hawk Board and Campaign for Falconry.

I would like to wish my successor, Rachelle Upton, the very best of luck for the future.

Incoming Rachelle Upton



Rachelle was born in Marlborough, Wiltshire – the 5th daughter of a well-known farming family. Through her childhood she spent the majority of her free time eventing through the summer and hunting through the winter. After leaving college Rachelle moved to London where she worked in the City for 13 years, starting in IT and then moving on into Risk Management and Compliance. She worked for the majority of her City

career at Cazenove & Co (later to become JPMorgan Cazenove), but finishing in the City as the Vice President of Compliance for Piper Jaffray.

The leading factor in leaving the City was, not only a desire to move back to Wiltshire, but Mark Upton proposing marriage. After marrying and having two children Rachelle decided against going back into a full time career and set up as a freelance PA, this gives her the freedom to be there for the children as well as being able to go beagling, hunting and of course hawking.

Rachelle's interest in falconry started in the mid eighties when Roger and Mark Upton were hawking on her father's farm. This interest was then furthered on various trips to Scotland to watch them grouse hawking. Since being married she has gone to Scotland every year with Mark and her children have also been hawking. Amelia's first taste of the moor was in a back pack at nine months old and Robbie at three months old – there are not many women out there who have walked a moor not only with a nine month old in a back pack, whilst pregnant but also leading the dogs and of course not forgetting the occasional carrying of the cage!

Silent Bell Frank Bond 1943-2013

From North American Falconer's Association (NAFA). Our friend Frank Bond passed away on Christmas day. In our falconry family we have not only lost a friend, but we have lost a giant in the global falconry community. Frank Bond was a champion of falconry across the globe unlike any other. He was a supremely effective advocate for our sport in arenas as diverse as local city councils, state legislatures, the U.S. federal government, and international negotiations. He worked comfortably in the rarefied atmospheres of national politics and international diplomacy, but always remained firmly grounded in the day-to-day realities of falconry, biology, and sportsmanship.

Frank was incessantly upbeat, chronically well prepared, permanently poised, unfailingly cordial, and possessed of a rare grace that put both presidents and apprentices at their ease. Best of all, these traits were contagious. The level of civil discourse always rose a few notches whenever Frank was in the room.

He served the North American Falconers Association as General Counsel for decades, capably advising presidents and directors on an endless array of complex issues. As its President, Frank led the International Association of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey to new heights of global advocacy for the sport he loved, cementing valuable relationships among

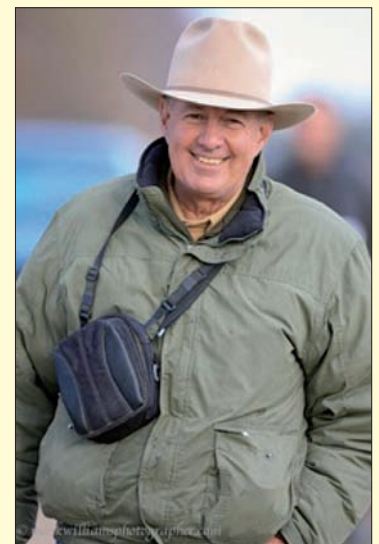
falconers worldwide. He was directly responsible for UNESCO's recognition of falconry as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. He also served the Peregrine Fund on its Board of Directors.

Frank was a true gentleman. He was generous with his time and knowledge with world leaders and beginning falconers alike. He touched thousands of falconers with his easy charm and obvious expertise in many subjects.

Frank's death leaves a terrible void in our family.

We will miss our friend Frank in a myriad of ways, for even though he often worked at national and international levels, he affected each of us individually, and uniquely.

The NAFA Board and Officers send their deepest sympathy to his family and his thousands of friends around the world.



Book Review

Memoirs of an Artist Naturalist

George E Lodge

Published and edited by Brian Bird, chairman of The George Edward Lodge Trust.

ISBN 978-0-9562946-1-6

Reviewed by Peter Eldrett

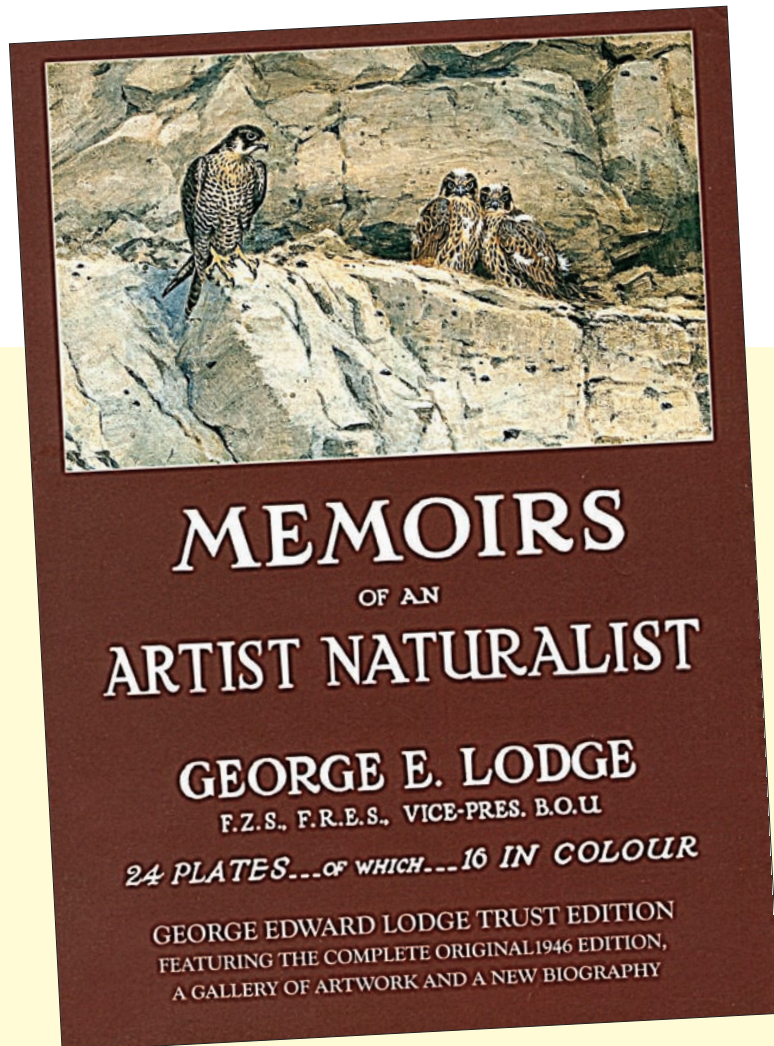
This book is mostly a facsimile of Lodge's 1946 edition but has pages dedicated to illustrating some of his art. The book also contains an extra section by Lodge's great niece Judith Magill who writes a biography of Lodge and I was lucky to meet her last year in September at the Falconry Weekend in Gloucestershire. This book should appeal to a number of people such as falconers, taxidermists, ornithologists and historians alike and I have to say it is a very enjoyable read. It takes us back to another age when life was very much different to the one we live in today.

This edition is split into five parts. Part one entitled Hawks and Hawking gives a description of various birds of prey which can be flown for falconry purposes such as the Peregrine, Gyr Falcon, Merlin, and Sparrowhawk but it also contains sections concerning the Red Kite and Osprey. It gives a detailed description of the raptors' flight patterns and plumage and so would appeal to both artists and bird watchers alike.

Part two deals with Woodland and Marsh birds - the Short-Eared Owl, Snipe and Woodcock, Bearded Tit, Crested Tit, Crossbill and Woodpeckers. Again a detailed description of each of the seven species is given and this section will be of great interest to many people who are interested in life in the countryside.

Part three is titled Some Shetland Memories with two short sections on The Great Skua and British Gulls. This section also describes the friends Lodge went with up to the far reaches of the Scottish Isles including looking at the headland overlooking the lighthouse on Muckle Flugga the most northerly point of the British Isles.

Part four concerns the game birds that



can be found in Great Britain including the Red Grouse, Partridge, Capercaillie and of course, the Pheasant.

Part five is Lodge's recommendations on how to paint birds. Throughout his life Lodge was a well travelled man and always took some drawing or painting materials with him to record something that he was observing at the time. He never liked painting from photographs preferring to capture the moment there and then.

As I have already said, there is a section by his great niece Judith Magill which covers his family, childhood and schooling. Also, Judith describes the studio Lodge built onto his house when he moved to Camberley and he called the house Hawkhouse. The studio had to be a large room to accommodate the many paintings he produced over many years.

This book also contains many of the illustrations that Lodge produced, not only of paintings but line drawings as well. Near the front of the book there is a picture of what must be one of his most famous paintings of Black Jess, the intermewed eyass falcon as flown by Kim Muir.

I have to say that I really enjoyed reading this book and as already stated, it should appeal to many people whatever interests they have in nature. Lodge is famous as an artist and illustrator and as the final line on the inside jacket says "The illustrations speak for themselves". Highly recommended.

You can purchase a copy for £38.00 from Coch-Y-Bonddu Books, who kindly advertise in this magazine.

www.anglebooks.com

Westweald Falconry
Staying Ahead in the Field



21 years in falconry equipment supplies

We are constantly bringing new items into our already vast range. We also carry ferreting kit, dog's stuff and over 450 stock lines make us probably the largest suppliers in the UK. We wish you all a very happy new year for 2014 and hope that it stops raining just long enough to go hawkking! We have a jaw dropping stock range and still set the standard for customer service and quality. No frills, no gimmicks, no gifts, just good kit at a good price and a wonderfully non-PC website!!

www.westwealdfalconry.co.uk
www.facebook.com/westweald.falconry
 Shop open to callers but strictly by appointment only.
 Westcombe – Uphill, Callington, Cornwall PL17 7PE
 Tel: /Fax: +44 (0)1579 363613 or 07973 379736 and speak to Brian.
 E-mail: info@westwealdfalconry.co.uk



EAGLE FALCONRY WEBSITE

Dr. David Glynne Fox
 Falconer, Natural Historian, Wildlife photographer, author and Zulu historian for over 40 years.

Visit my new website – in Yahoo.com
 Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1579 363613 or 07973 379736 and speak to Brian.
www.davidfoxfalconry.com

- Articles
- Falconry
- Lectures
- Photography
- Wildlife art for sale
- Zulu history

Telephone:
0115 937 4877
 E-mail:
davidfox78@hotmail.com


We're here to make advertising better.
 (Not to make better advertising. Sorry.)

Here at the Advertising Standards Authority, we judge ads on whether they're harmful, misleading, or offensive. Not on whether they're funny, clever or they look good. Which is just as well, really.

Telephone 020 7492 2222 www.asa.org.uk



Eagle Falconry A Personal Perspective



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

Dr. DAVID GLYNNE FOX

Africa

A Helping Hand



A display for local township children

Both myself and Alan Gates from Mere Down Falconry had the opportunity recently to help out at The Bird of Prey and Rehabilitation Centre which is located in Dullstroom, South Africa. The owner needed to be away from the centre for a period and Alan and I sorted out between us that we would both go out for a month and overlap our visits by a week so that we helped with coverage for the centre for seven continuous weeks.

Alan was spoilt by his wife in that she brought his air ticket as a birthday present and he flew direct from Heathrow to Johannesburg at some exorbitant price. I flew out from Gatwick via Dubai for about £300 cheaper but at

the expense of a journey that was almost double the length in time. Alan duly went out to Dullstroom and it would appear that from the messages I received from him he was enjoying the experience other than being frustrated by some of the restraints imposed upon him by a seemingly somewhat negative member of staff there. As I understood things there was a full time member of staff and an unpaid volunteer at the centre and this is who I would be working with once Alan, who was later joined by his wife Alison, returned to England.

I arrived some three weeks later and the following morning readied myself to set to work with a high degree of eagerness and excitement. The centre is primarily a rehabilitation one where the

emphasis is on helping injured indigenous raptors and putting them back into the wild wherever possible. The centre raises money by donations, sponsorship and visitors to the centre paying an admission charge. There are two flying displays each day which, whilst being extremely entertaining, are designed to educate the audience as to the plight of birds of prey in South Africa and their place in the overall scheme of things. When I arrived the shows were very basic with three Owls, a Greater Kestrel, a Pied Crow and an exceedingly unfit Lanneret being the main stays of the displays.

Retraining and regaining fitness

But then that is why Alan and I were

there to help get things buzzing again and generally be of help to the centre. Alan was obviously quite frustrated at the degree of help he was being allowed to give which to be fair I didn't really understand at first. On my arrival it appeared there were young Lanner Falcons to be taken out of the aviary and trained as well as some residents from the centre that merely needed a little re-training and then they could be used

when asked to come to and then chase a lure. The Lanner Falcon was trained by the full time member of staff and their methods differed somewhat from mine.

As well as the eyass Lanners from the aviary there was also a superb Tiercel Peregrine to be got going again and one or two others that needed just a little reminding of what they do. Also, there was the question of the Lanneret that flew so badly and with no energy. This

breath so quickly, flying him became a daily pleasure truly to be savoured. His meandering around the centre before starting the serious business of stooping got longer and longer and then when he did work at the lure it took all my experience to keep it away from him. He would throw up almost vertically and then turn himself over backwards in an effort to catch me out. This was combined with always coming at me



Norman the Greater Kestrel

in the displays again. So plenty to do and very enjoyable work it should prove to be too. The young Lanners were duly taken up from the aviary the next day and furniture was fitted and training commenced straight away. It turned out there was a Lanner Falcon and a Lanneret, both of which were superb looking eyasses with not a feather or a single web out of place. Because they had been reared by their parents in an open to the public aviary their training, especially manning, was extremely straight forward and rapid. In fact without any form of rushing or pushing in anyway the Lanneret was flying free in a display eight days later. The female Lanner was slightly behind in terms of going loose and a long way behind in knowing what to do

was very easily resolved by putting three ounces of weight on it and treating it as the Lanner Falcon it indeed was as opposed to a Lanneret which it certainly wasn't. In no time at all the falcon in question was doing in excess of 20 passes to the lure and flying with the sort of strength it should have been. The Peregrine Tiercel had been superbly trained by whoever did so initially and came well on a creance the first time of asking. The following day I put telemetry on it and let it take to the air in its own time. It flew very strongly circling the display area and then put in a series of very quick passes to the lure, very nearly catching me out such was its speed.

As muscle built back up on the Peregrine and he didn't get out of

directly out of the sun whenever possible. At the same time the Lanner Falcon that had previously been considered a Lanneret was gaining significantly in strength and also was a sheer pleasure to fly. The two displays each day became something I really looked forward to participating in as opposed to something that had to be done.

The Spotted Eagle Owl and the two Barn Owls flew well and, as with more or less any bird of prey show anywhere in the world, had a tendency to be the favourites with the audiences. For me however the undoubted star of the whole proceedings each day was Norman, the Greater Kestrel. This is the largest species of Kestrel and is also known as the White Eyed Kestrel. Norman didn't



Picking up Tiercel Minor Peregrine

have white eyes yet as he was still in juvenile plumage. This particular kestrel was a real character and would fly very obediently to the fist and also could be encouraged to hover very easily. In fact in the early part of his display workout each day he would hover just inches from my face trying to intimidate me into giving him a reward. Apparently he did it with all new people that helped out at the centre. Because an inexperienced hand may well have given food for such an intimate display of flying Norman always seemed to think it was worth a try. As he

got to know the new person he would give up these tactics and revert to being an exceptionally well behaved participant of the displays.

Corvid fund raiser

The other star performer for me was Colin a Pied Crow. Colin had been rescued from a person selling him on the side of the road as a youngster and this lovely person had cut flight feathers on the crow to prevent it flying off. In due course it came to the centre at Dullstroom and after moulting into a

new set of feathers set about earning his keep. Pied Crows are very intelligent, like most members of the corvid family and can be taught various tricks. Colin was no exception and soon had a small repertoire of tricks to delight the display audiences and raise vital funds for the work the centre carries out. These included picking up discarded and crushed drinks cans and putting them in a bin, and turning over flower pots to get a food reward. But his fund raising party piece was to collect money from the audience and put it into a metal bowl.



Coping a Crowned Eagle – not for the faint-hearted

People loved it and nearly every display that Colin participated in raised funds for the centre.

Other raptors that were got back up to speed were a Secretary Bird called Rooney, a Black Eagle called Sam and a Rock Kestrel called Eric. The Rock Kestrel is very similar to the Lesser Kestrel and I have to confess when I first saw Eric this is what I assumed he was. Being a Kestrel Eric ate on the fist in front of a group of friends first night out of the aviary and several days later was ready to go loose. The Black Eagle Sam was simply a case of reducing weight and manning and he was soon flying to the fist again. The real fun was with Rooney. Having never worked with a Secretary Bird before everything was new to me and I just went on common sense and general raptor experience as regards training, or rather re-training as he had been used in shows previously.

Our introduction to each other was interesting to say the least. Rooney was kept in a decent sized aviary with a good sized bath and an excellent shelter to

allow him to get out of the midday sun or the frequent rainstorms that occurred.

Rooney kicks out

The first day I went in with him he was curious and picked up the chick legs I threw on the ground close to him. He wandered over to me and took food from my hand and then wandered off again. He would then come back, get a couple of chick legs I had thrown down and a bigger piece of food proffered from the hand. This all went well until I decided to leave the aviary and Rooney ran round in front of me and just stood there. I showed him my open hand to let him see there was no more food in it and in a split second he was up in the air and kicked my hand with stunning force. This was followed by launching himself into the air and kicking me in the side of the head. The speed with which he launched the attack was almost as staggering as the effect of the kick itself.

I fully understood just how easily these magnificent birds can deal so effectively with snakes. The kick to my

head certainly made me see stars for a moment or two and was sufficiently hard to slightly disorientate me for a few seconds. Once more during our time of working together Rooney decided to teach me a lesson and actually jumped up onto my shoulder and kicked me three times in very rapid succession. Because I didn't back down and didn't leave the aviary, which is his territory, we had no more similar instances and training continued at pace and in a style that suited us both. Rooney was a big hit with the audiences who all enjoyed watching him stomp a rubber snake.

As well as all the fun working with and training or re-training raptors each day there was also basic husbandry and maintenance jobs to carry out. Probably coping some of the residents of the centre was the job that took the most organising and in fact for some of the bigger eagles we arranged a coping morning with the local falconry club. Several members joined us one Saturday morning and we caught up and coped a number of powerful eagles, including

Blacks, Crowned, Tawnies, as well as some of the larger hawks. The Crowned Eagles are mightily impressive and the female is something of a character in that she was originally illegally taken, imprinted and then released. She had to be caught up and homed as she had taken to killing dogs in her area as her principal food source and was known to have taken at least nine for certain.

Visits to the Kruger National Park

When at Dullstroom the lure of the Kruger is always present and this magnificent opportunity to view wildlife is less than three hours away. Twice during my time at the centre I got the opportunity to visit the Kruger and came away each time in awe of the wildlife. Seeing eight different species of eagle in one day as well as Wild Dogs hunting, a pride of Lions on a kill and an enraged bull Elephant are all memories that will live in my mind forever. But then the centre itself acted like a magnet to wild raptors and many species were seen during my stay. These ranged from Long Crested, African Fish and Crowned Eagles, through to Gymnogenes and African Goshawks. Sightings of Lanners and Peregrines flying over were almost too numerous to mention.

All too soon my time at Dullstroom came to an end and it was time to head



Angelique Engles with a cast of Lanner Falcons

back to the UK to the cold and dark nights. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there and enjoyed all aspects of the work and came away feeling it certainly was time well spent.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Angelique Engels, the volunteer

at Dullstroom during my time there, for being so helpful and so thoroughly committed to the work we did. I would certainly have never managed to have achieved so much without her enthusiasm and energy. Also, she did an excellent job of arranging the Kruger trip for me.



Alan Gates, Angelique and Alison Gates

2013 ICARE Conference



Three delegates at the conference from animal health company Merial who were also a conference sponsor

This April saw the first ever International Conference on Avian, Herpetological and Exotic Mammal Medicine held in Wiesbaden Germany. This seven day meeting saw four organisations (European Association of Avian Veterinarians (EAAV), Association of Reptile and Amphibian Veterinarians, Association of Exotic Mammal Veterinarians, and the European College of Zoological Medicine) all hold their combined scientific conferences together. This attracted over 500 delegates from almost 40 countries. The week contained masterclasses, practical labs, and scientific papers on the entire range of exotic species seen in practice- from amphibia to kangaroos.

The avian portion of this meeting was the 12th EAAV meeting and was larger

than ever with, as always, a number of papers on raptors.

Eye problems (both disease and injury) have always been issues in birds of prey and accurate diagnosis of such problems is not always straightforward. New techniques therefore are always welcome and several were presented here. These ranged from the less technical (though still fiddly!) validation of the phenol red thread test to evaluate the tear film over the eye to the very high tech use of optical coherence tomography (that allows visualisation of the layers of the retina and its lesions) and chromatic pupillometry that gives an indication of whether the retina is actually functioning and the bird can see. Surprising as it may seem this is not always easy to tell and diagnosis of blindness often rests on assessment of

behaviour. Another technique presented was 3-dimensional ultrasonography. 2D ultrasound has been used for many years and is extremely useful, however 3D gives a much more detailed picture of the whole eye and thus a better view of lesions. It is true that these measures are very much in their infancy and may eventually prove to be impractical or simply too expensive for general use, these conferences give an opportunity to see what is possible and certainly what may be possible!

Other papers covered various aspects of raptor medicine - fracture repair, prolapses, pain relief, and aspergillosis to name but some. It was good to hear a paper describing monitoring of rehabilitation birds post-release and how these success rates tied in with the initial injuries. While many previous reports suggest poor survival rates, this centre showed that birds can do well even after severe injury. As ever, the key would be in good therapy and excellent rehabilitation technique.

Another topic that caused a lot of discussion was that of Peregrine Wasting Syndrome. Two groups (one in the UK, the other in Spain) published on this syndrome and showed different results though the overall feeling seemed to be that there was an initial infection that incited a significant inflammatory reaction and failure to digest food. The other aspect that came across is that this syndrome occurred as an "outbreak" but has not been seen recently- the hope is that this is the case, but the discussions and presentations have allowed raptor vets a much clearer plan of how to investigate and proceed should this syndrome return. Ultimately, determination of the initial cause will allow us to actually prevent the disease rather than hope it goes.

Like all conferences, the real activity took place away from the lecture theatres (yes, in the bar! And where else but Germany would have a free beer tap in the exhibition hall?) and the discussions between leading vets from Europe and around the world allows the development of new projects as well as exchange of experiences.

The next ICARE meeting will be in Paris in 2015 and, hopefully, the fruits of these discussions will be seen there- it's a conference that we will all be excited to attend, but this one will be a tough act to follow!

Congratulations to Dr

Dr Nick Fox has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List. The award is for 'Services to Falconry and the Conservation of Raptors'. As far as we can ascertain, this is the first time such an award has been given for falconry and it is encouraging to see our sport 'put on the map'. Nick, who is Vice Chairman of the Hawk Board and a Vice President of the British Falconers' Club, is well known for his falconry books and films. A keen falconer, he and his wife Barbro have completed 23 seasons running the Northumberland Crow Falcons, which holds mounted meets two or three days a week throughout August and September.

After six years working with UNESCO, the United Arab Emirates and many national falconry groups, Nick was instrumental in pushing through the bid for the Inscription of Falconry on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind on behalf of 11 countries. This was finally successful in Nairobi in 2010 and two further countries have since joined. In support of this, Nick and his IWC team have organised three International Festivals of Falconry, with the fourth due to be held in December 2014 in Abu Dhabi. Nick has also set up and chaired



the Falconry Heritage Trust for many years, providing a charity-based archive of falconry and an Endowment Fund for falconry scholars.

In the 1970s he worked on the BFC Goshawk Re-introduction Scheme, and in the 1980s on Mauritius Kestrels and Welsh Red Kites. His study of New Zealand Falcons both in the wild and in captivity is now in its fortieth year. He has worked on Sakers both in the wild and in captivity over 25 years and his

Mongolian Artificial nest programme, now capably run by Dr Andrew Dixon, clocked up 1929 Saker chicks last year. This project, the largest of its kind in the world, has been recognised by CITES as a model for sustainable use of a wildlife resource.

Nick's current ventures include setting up a charitable country school on his farm in Wales. His hobbies include restoration ecology, designing buildings, and sailing.

Dr Nick Fox OBE - Services to Falconry

New Zealand

Nick did his PhD at the University of Canterbury 1974-78 entitled 'The Biology of the New Zealand Falcon'. This 421 page book is still the authoritative reference for the species, quoted by all subsequent studies. It entailed four years fieldwork alone in the high country of the Southern Alps. He has written over

130 scientific papers and articles on falcon conservation, falconry and animal welfare.

During this time he pioneered the captive breeding of this species and successfully bred New Zealand Falcons for the first time. On returning to UK he brought over 6 founder birds and has maintained a closed breeding colony

for over 30 years. Many BSc, MSc and vet students have used this colony for research studies, and he has funded and trained 12 young New Zealanders here in UK who have returned to NZ and continued the work.

In 1975 he formed the Raptor Association of New Zealand, pulling together falconers, conservationists and

Nick Fox - OBE

all people interested in helping birds of prey. RANZ is still going strongly and some of the members have created the Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust.

He continued to go back to NZ to work on the falcons and in 2005 raised funding for a project called 'Falcons for Grapes', re-introducing falcons into the Marlborough vineyards to chase away the pest birds. This was successful and has now become the Marlborough Falcon Conservation Trust. About 22 young people were given internships on this project.

Mauritius

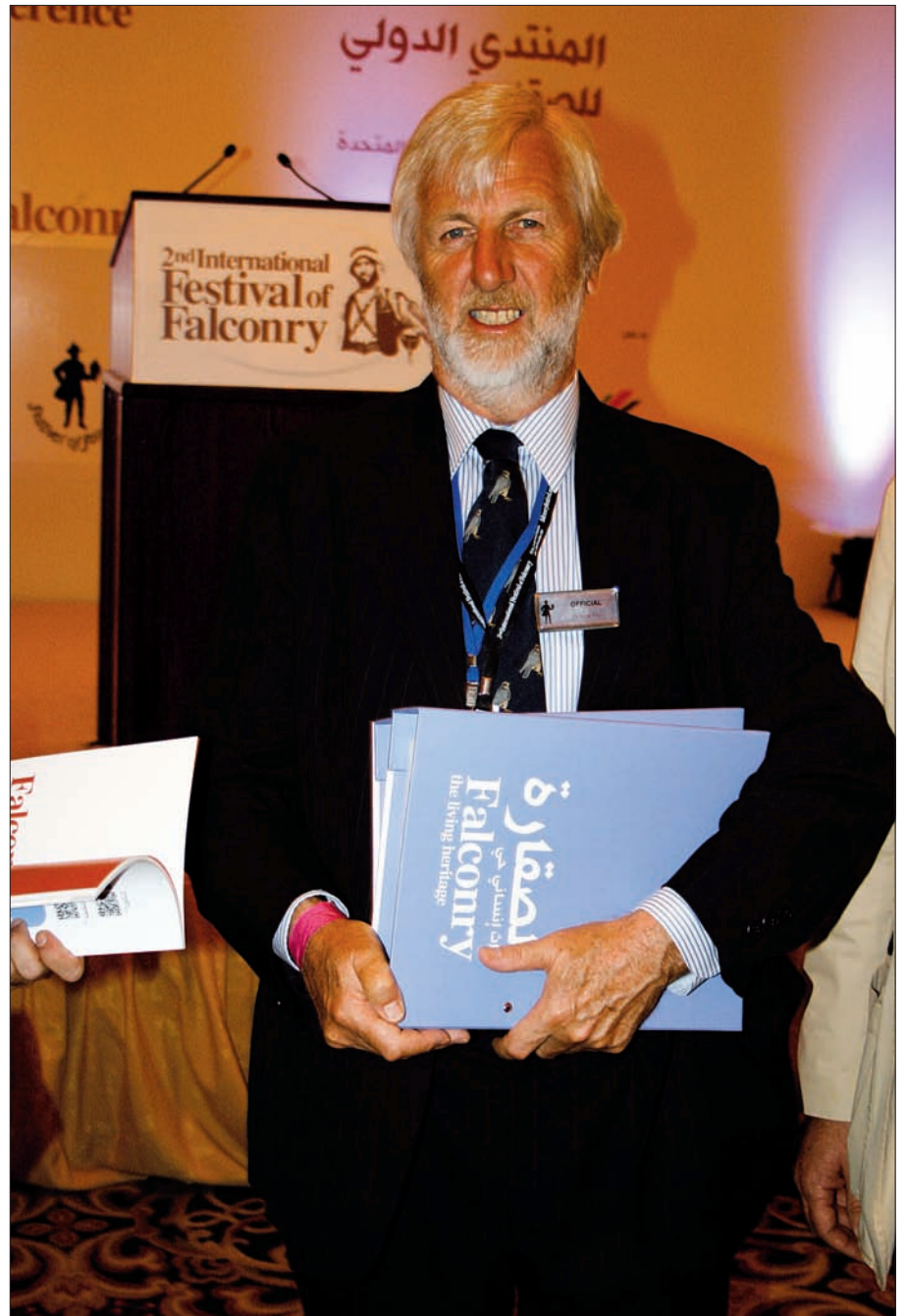
In 1984-5 he took a small team to Mauritius and produced a radio-tracking study of the last free-living wild pairs of the endangered Mauritius Kestrel.

UK Red Kites

In 1987 Nick approached the Red Kite Committee in Wales when the species was down to about 25 pairs, suggesting that they take 'spare' eggs and bring them to him for incubation and hatching. This was successful and Nick hatched and reared the first 53 baby kites over 7 years. This gave confidence to move forward on a release programme for kites into England and Scotland and Nick personally drove the first two Kites over to England in his old Cortina. Now kites are once more plentiful in UK.

United Arab Emirates

In 1989 Nick was approached by the government of Abu Dhabi to undertake falcon breeding and conservation. Nick has taken a pragmatic and holistic approach to falcon conservation and the issues raised by Arab falconry. Nick's company, International Wildlife Consultants Ltd, which employs 19 people in Wales, breeds about 250 falcons each year for the Middle East, which is acknowledged by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) as a conservation tool: *Activity 5: Monitor bird of prey populations, carry out conservation*



Dr Nicholas Fox BSc, CEd, PhD, OBE

Background information:

Born 23rd December 1949. Married, two sons.

Educated: Blue Coat School, Birmingham
St John's School, Leatherhead
St Andrews University (BSc Hons Zoology)
Dundee Teacher Training College (Certificate of Education)
University of Canterbury, New Zealand (PhD)

research and take appropriate remedial measures.5.7. Seek to promote appropriate programmes of captive breeding so as to alleviate the pressure of wild harvests on populations of birds of prey.

The IWC falcons now include a falcon belonging to Her Majesty the Queen, and another belonging to HH Prince Andrew, Duke of York. These were bred by Nick and have been diplomatic gifts from the Royal Family of Abu Dhabi.

Nick understood that communication, education and teamwork are the keys to conserving international wildlife resources. So in 1994 he formed the Middle East Falcon Research Group to pull together field biologists, veterinarians, falconers and administrators by means of conferences and a biannual magazine called *Falco*, published in English and Arabic. This is going strongly. He also set out a strategy plan for managing the resources and published a book in English and Arabic *A Global Strategy for the Conservation of Falcons and Houbara* published by the Environment Agency. He organised the conferences (including a three day scientific conference held in ger tents on the Mongolian steppe) and co-edited the proceedings.

The main species of concern was the Saker Falcon and Nick has spent 20 years managing conservation programmes on this in Mongolia, China, Tibet, Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Pakistan and eastern Europe. Again he has looked for pragmatic outcomes, not talking shops. This has involved developing teams of local biologists and students, training them in modern techniques and supervising them in the field, so that even when the programmes are completed, expertise remains in each country to support wildlife conservation. Since 2002 he has pioneered a programme of artificial nests on the Mongolian steppe and in 2013, 1929 young sakers were microchipped from these nest barrels. Additionally several thousand kestrels and buzzards were produced. This not only produced an offset agreement, recognised by CITES, whereby the Mongolian government could sell permits for harvesting falcons sustainably, it also provided a pest control programme for local herders who are plagued by Brandt's voles. To date this has been by far the most significant contribution to falcon conservation in Asia, where legal enforcement routes have failed.

In order to make the nest programme

work, local people have to 'take ownership' of it and understand the benefits and safeguard the nests. So Nick's IWC team organised an international schools programme, linking schools in Mongolia, the United Arab Emirates, UK and USA with special teachers' packs on falcon conservation and Arabic falconry culture. This is expanding all the time and using the issue as a springboard to promote international understanding in the young generation.

UNESCO

In 2004, Nick was approached by the government of Abu Dhabi to prepare a submission on falconry under the 2003 UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). He organised meetings with 45 countries, attending conferences and arranging workshops. Nick wrote the core submission document and in 2010 UNESCO inscribed Falconry on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind. The submission was made by Abu Dhabi on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain and the Syrian Arab Republic. It is expected that Austria, Hungary, Croatia and Slovakia will also join the submission soon.

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

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

Included in the submission, Nick produced a film featuring the 11 countries, and a book: *Falconry: celebrating a living heritage* in English and Arabic.

The International Festival of Falconry

In support of the UNESCO submission, Nick decided to raise funds to hold an

international festival based at Richard Benyon MP's Englefield Estate near Reading. He pulled a team of falconers together, with all the falcons, horses, dogs and tents and raised sponsorship for all the overseas nations to send representatives. The first was held in 2007 and was so successful that a second was held in 2009. The latest one was held in 2011 in Abu Dhabi and attracted 78 nations over 8 days. Included in the festival was a three day conference on falconry issues, educational and conservation exhibits, national tents and dress, arena events and hawking with falcons in the desert for four days on camels and horses in traditional manner. The festival, celebrating so many cultures and nations, often divided by religion, politics, war or economics, is a move towards world peace and understanding. This was a particularly tough assignment and it was only through the vision, persistence and determination of Nick and his small team that it happened and was a huge success. The next festival is planned for 2014.

The Falconry Heritage Trust

In 2004 Nick chaired a meeting in Wiltshire to form The Falconry Heritage Trust. He spent three years fulfilling all the requirements of the Charities Commission, registered it as a charity and raised an endowment fund of £1 million through a kind donation of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The FHT provides an electronic archive on falconry heritage freely available online to people all over the world. It also supports cultural events and provides scholarships for students and falconers around the world to undertake research and document in text, photography or film the heritage of their own countries. Many of the original Board have now retired but Nick continues chairing the Board of the FHT and has brought in fresh blood and enthusiasm.

British Falconry

Nick started falconry as a child and over the years has trained most of the species in the different disciplines of falconry. In 1991 he and his wife Barbro formed the Northumberland Crow Falconers who hawk on horses in traditional manner on 150 farms. They hold mounted meets of about 30 people 2-3 times per week in August and September all over the

county and each year provide a big barbecue and ceilidh for the farmers, supporters and children. All the work is done voluntarily and a cap is collected for the Air Ambulance.

In 1995 he wrote and illustrated his first falconry book *Understanding the Bird of Prey* in English, Spanish and Italian. Now in its second edition, it is an international best-seller and has become the 'bible' for many practitioners. When hawking was prevented in 2002 because of Foot and Mouth, he wrote and illustrated *Classical Falconry: a treatise on crow and rook hawking* documenting the methods used in Northumberland. Two films have also been made about him. He wanted the lessons learned not to be lost.

It was clear that many of the younger generation struggle to learn from books, so Nick made ten 90 minute films *The Bird of Prey Management* series in English and Spanish with handbooks, for distance learning. These films are still extremely popular and are in steady use. Whereas Nick used to teach courses in falconry face to face, through the films he has now managed to teach an estimated 25,000 people. The titles include *Behaviour and Learning, Nutrition, Basic Training, Anatomy, Healthcare, Fitness Training, Preparation for Breeding, Imprints and insemination, Incubation and Hatching and Rearing*.

Concerned about welfare standards, Nick, together with a small team of specialists from the Hawk Board, pioneered the LANTRA Awards for Falconry, which are now being taken up widely and have just released their Unit 4, with Assessors all over UK. <http://www.lantra-awards.co.uk/Products/Falconry.aspx>

Closer to home, Nick has maintained an Internship Scheme in Wales since 1982 for falconry and raptor students from all over the world. Over 180 students have spent up to 6 months on internships at the facility in Wales. Many of them have gone on to establish their own businesses, or to obtain employment with birds of prey, or to become veterinarians. Most of the students have been British, but some have come from New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Morocco, Bangladesh, Pakistan, UAE, USA, Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, France, Germany, Mongolia, Kirghizstan, Kazakhstan, Austria,

Denmark, Holland, Peru, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Canada, Mexico, Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile. He still receives many letters and messages from past interns, one even wrote a book about her internship: *Falcons and Foxes in the UK*. 2003. It documents her internship in 1995, a life-changing experience.

Nick served on the Council of the British Falconers' Club for many years, was Editor, and is a Vice-President, as well as Honorary Member of the Welsh Hawking Club and the Irish Hawking Club. He has served on the Hawk Board for 30 years, the last dozen years as Vice-Chairman. The Hawk Board represents falconers and hawk-keepers to the British government.

Hunting with Dogs

Having been a farmer all his life, Nick has been concerned about hunting issues and animal welfare. In 1994 and 1997 (second edition) he published a study called *Welfare Aspects of Killing or Capturing Wild Vertebrates in Britain*. This led on to a further study on behalf of the All Party Parliamentary Middle Way Group on Hunting with Dogs resulting in a film and a paper in the Journal of Animal Welfare entitled *Wounding rates in shooting Foxes*. On 10th July 1997, on behalf of Falconry, he addressed 120,000 people at the Hyde Park Rally. He gave evidence at the Public Hearings on Hunting and produced a document entitled *A Legal Solution to the Issue of Hunting with Dogs*.

His concern has been to take the politics out of animal welfare and wildlife management, engage with scientific investigation and results, and create realistic win-win solutions for both the animals and the different human groups involved, including the interests of rural communities and those who actually look after the welfare of wild animals and populations.

The Bevis Centre or Country School

Having worked all their lives, Nick and Barbro have gradually, from zero, established a farm of 278 acres in west Wales. Since 2005 they have been working to develop it as a charity after their deaths to enable groups of people to learn about and enjoy the practicalities of country living, skills and sustainable use. This includes a restoration programme for the farm which has progressed over

30 years, building ponds and planting trees. Now some of the buildings needed for the Bevis Centre are either built or under construction and they hope to open it by about 2015. He himself suffers from a congenital handicap which required nine years of operations in hospital, and the Bevis Centre is intended to include disabled persons, in particular war veterans.

Falcon Breeding

This was all thought to be impossible in the 1960s, when pesticides were decimating wild birds of prey. Nick was involved from the start, developing the techniques, artificial inseminations, incubation, with many studies on nutrition, egg quality, behaviour and so on, and then teaching the next generation what he had to learn by experiment. Nick has bred falcons for 40 years and his stud in Wales produces about 250 young falcons each year.

Hobbies

Horses. Nick has kept horses for hunting and hawking all his life. He designs and makes his own saddles and was for many years a Registered Farrier.

Farming and conservation. Over the past 23 years Nick has personally planted an average of 3 trees per day, turning 25% of the farm to woodland and conservation. A recent achievement was to mill planks from trees that he had originally planted, to make a beaver watching hide. He has dug 17 ponds on the farm, including a 350 metre lake.

Designing buildings. Nick has designed and built many buildings, from simple farm buildings and pens, to log cabins, offices, houses and a research centre in Abu Dhabi.

Sailing. Nick and his wife Barbro have International Bare Boat Sailing Certificates and enjoy sailing their boats in the Marlborough Sounds, New Zealand and Milford Haven in Wales.

Director and Chairmanships:

International Wildlife Consultants (UK) Ltd
Hawk Board (Vice-Chair)
Mickelbo Ltd
The Falconry Heritage Trust
Wingbeat Ltd.
Contact details: office@falcons.co.uk

Sparrowhawks

Part 1



My young assistant edged forward and on the command gave the high blackthorn hedge a quick tap.

From between the slowly yellowing leaves the quarry dipped low into the ditch, picked up speed and took flight with a whirring blurring burst of wings. The musket was primed and ready. On seeing the hawk, the thrush (one of five allowed on my license) quickened her pace and made for the far blackberry bush about 30 yards in front. Just as the passerine slowed ready to enter a small gap, the musket closed it down and with a deft swipe, took her cleanly in the air before crashing, wings spread into the bush. It was a text book flush and flight, ending spectacularly with a kill. The time from the glove to success was as slight and as quick as the quarry and the hawk themselves; the speed and pace over such a short distance simply staggering. Once on the floor and with the quarry dispatched, my musket Max, was allowed to feed for a short while and then smoothly he stepped up from the open carcass to finish his reward on the glove.

From my own personal perspective, the best falconry, the one that challenges and extends my understanding of the natural world, can only come from flying indigenous raptors at truly wild indigenous quarry. For this reason alone, I choose to fly Sparrowhawks and muskets at all licensed quarry available in the United Kingdom. This is not to say I do not admire or respect other falconers' choices or even the flight style of non-indigenous raptors, far from it. We are, or should be, a united front regardless of personal preferences or bias. But because I see falconry as an extension of the natural world, one which evolved from trapping and training traditions in specific environments, then logically any variation or manipulation of this seems to lessen the impact of the flight and to a certain extent, lessen the potential of the hawk themselves.

Understanding the flying ground is a priority

For any falconer (or one who is a newcomer to this branch of the sport) contemplating flying a Sparrowhawk or musket (and long before purchase)

the first priority is to have a complete understanding of the ecosystems and biology of the land you wish to fly over. My land is predominantly arable, flat, with long hedgerows, bogs and low cover. It has a wide variety of quarry including lark, blackbird, snipe, woodcock, magpie, pigeon, thrush and partridge. This makes the complex job of flying a Sparrowhawk a lot easier, as most of these quarries are taken naturally by spars or muskets in the wild and so the quarry base and chance of killing quickly/consistently is raised exponentially. However, it has to be stated clearly that if a musket is your chosen raptor, then the legal head count will be far lower than that of a spar. The effort and time required for a musket is therefore absolute, as the key factor for a stable and psychologically well-rounded imprint Sparrowhawk are daily flying, large rewards and consistent kills. This is not easily achieved with the smaller male of the Sparrowhawk species and many behavioural issues will be compounded by boredom brought about by not flying a minimum of five days a week.

My choice for the 2013 season was a musket and the plan was to take him from a second clutch (therefore later in the year) of Sparrowhawks hatched and reared by respected Welsh breeder Rob Cole. When flying previous spars and muskets, I have generally taken a chick to imprint from a first clutch and as young as five days old. Consequently, this has meant that when ready to hawk (just after hard penning) the cover is still lush and thick – thus many flights are wasted. This can build frustration and anger on behalf of the spar or musket reducing the chances of a clean slip and precipitating all manner of negative behaviour. With a spar this is easily remedied by hawking jackdaws or magpies until the proper season begins.

These legal kills can be walked up on foot, or a vehicle can be used if the law surrounding mechanical

Max at 20 days old



Early lure work in the house



Early lure and anti-carrying in the garden

pursuit is fully understood in advance. With a musket these larger prey are generally too big and dangerous to seriously contemplate. As such, anyone flying a musket will need to be prepared for and be able to handle a hawk's 'personality' while the cover interferes with a huge headcount.

New muscat collected

Maximus Decimus or Max was picked up fairly late at around 20 days old. Most of the initial imprinting had been done by Rob, purely because he had raised his Merlins and Sparrowhawks together in his kitchen. This provided a solid background and human frame of reference for

the youngsters, so swapping Max over for me to finish off, was not in the least bit problematic. Over the years imprinting accipiters has taken on an almost mystical, slightly overwrought nature. This need not be the case. In fact it took many conversations and exchanges with the UK falconer Nigel King to 'de-mystify'



A nice bath



A missed flight and a cool bath with Etta in a pond



Well mannered on a kill



A legal Thrush and well mannered on an open carcass.

the whole process. Interestingly when discussing imprinting techniques with Harry McElroy, he was also of a similar, though slightly differing, opinion. So my approach is now one of simplicity combined with an understanding of how each individual Sparrowhawk behaves regardless of how prescriptive certain imprinting techniques are. Imprinting is but one part of the whole equation and each hawk will react and behave and have specific characteristics which will be unlocked by the process. Many of these characteristics will not fit a 'recipe' or even be truly understood by the falconer. Imprinting a hawk should be as much a learning process for the hawk as the falconer. The fun (a huge factor never mentioned in many books) is not in following a directed scientific approach, but in developing methods and means which suit the individual hawk and falconer's circumstance. Having said that, there are some basic building blocks which need to be in place from the very start.

Put into very simplistic terms, the hawk does not need to be over fussed or exposed to everything. Hand feeding or a food association needs to be eradicated until training and recalling. Food needs to be of the very best quality and anti-carrying techniques and dogs need to be introduced from the very beginning. Manning and training still need to be carried out despite the hawk being an imprint, but this should be kept to a minimum. Above all else speed is of the essence as the hawk needs to be obedient and out hunting as quickly as possible.

One could argue that flying an imprint is not necessary and that parent reared Sparrowhawks provide a way around imprint behaviours. I will avoid specific examples of outstanding parent reared hawks as there will always be exceptions to any rules. My preference for imprint hawks (despite some of their more colourful behaviour) stems from a desire to unlock natural characteristics and observe how a raptor behaves without overt fear.

I personally find imprint Sparrowhawks to be more aggressive hunters, easier to understand and therefore train, fly at safer higher

weights, as well as displaying a myriad of traits otherwise hidden from the falconer through fear. Often these can be negative, however all of them teach the falconer far more than perhaps any book could list and taken as a whole produce a falconry experience that is difficult to improve upon.

With specific regard to muskets I have in the past, for a number of reasons experienced the vice of carrying. Carrying can be divided in two types, the first occurs due to field conditions and speed, the second through fear and mishandling. Carrying due to the shape of the field is inevitable at some point with a musket. So in order to alleviate this problem anti-carrying and the correct use of the lure is paramount. Right from the start, Max was introduced to the lure, required to walk and 'hunt' for his food on the lure, fed in wide open spaces and at all times my presence was known, but not in any way a hindrance or related to the food on offer. This process was continued throughout his training and now he is entered it is continued on non-flying days and at various intervals when in the field.

If and when he carries any legal kills, or even begins to lift on my approach, I feel more confident in tossing out a lure rather than having to solely use a glove as a recall device. At various intervals I often throw down small morsels of meat and observe his behaviour. Once again while he is on the ground I make my presence known and as he is finishing the offering, recall to the glove while kneeling or indeed offer him tidbits from the glove while he has the meat in his foot. All of these processes condition Max to my presence and thus reduce the chance of him carrying his kills into trees or onto bushes.

Weight not set in stone

Weight and condition in Sparrowhawks is rightly a paramount subject for the newcomer. The slight stature and the degree with which a Sparrowhawk's weight has to be managed, has led to many myths regarding how quickly they succumb to death. From personal experience with both spars and

muskets weight should never been seen as something set in stone. After the initial weight reduction during training and the first few kills, the weight of a spar or musket will begin to shift considerably. Muscle mass, drive, psychological independence and conditioning will mean the weight at entering has no relevance to that at the end of the season. The weight range can be quite impressive, from roughly 220 grams up to and including 270 grams for a spar and between 140 grams up to and including 180 grams for a musket. It is imperative that as you begin weight increase that you observe your hawk carefully as mistakes can easily be made. With my current musket I pushed his weight up over the course of a week to 10 days and the hawk began making better and more determined flights. Finally, I reached the top weight of about 180 grams and after a missed flight Max treed up and spent a night at hack. Thankfully, I was flying him towards the end of the day and located him in the top of a tree before dark. First thing in the morning he was lured down and then rested and fed a large crop. Hawking then commenced again but with a 4 gram reduction. I would far rather have a high hawk than one needing electrolytes or even worse dead in the field.

There are many other issues that the newcomer needs to be aware of when flying a Sparrowhawk. In part 2, I shall further discuss some of the behaviours that the imprint spar will display when weight reduction happens and also examine field conditions, the law and aspects of health and welfare.

Sparrowhawks: A falconer's guide by Ben Crane is published by Crowood Press and will be released around June 2014. Excerpts of which will be available and published in this magazine. The book features contributions from IAF representatives in Ireland, The UK, Croatia and Turkey. His book is a no nonsense approach to imprinting, training, trapping, breeding and flying the European Sparrowhawk.

George Edward Lodge

His final resting place

For a great many years, I have been fascinated by the history of falconry in general, but one or two names seemed to stand out more than others; one of these was the artist/naturalist George Edward Lodge. Why this is so, particularly as I could originally find no real evidence that Lodge was ever a falconer in his own right, although there are a number of photographic images of George Lodge holding many different falcons which span many years of his life. Also, the fact that he was present on numerous hawking field trips is beyond doubt, his personal diaries are testament to that. However, Brian Bird of the George Edward Lodge Trust informed me that Lodge did actually train and fly a few raptors. For example, while living in London, he trained and flew Merlins to the lure in Regents Park, but the main love of his life was his art and this, plus travelling, obviously took up most of his time. His life was intrinsically bound up with falconry and falconers and he was well known to all and sundry in the falconry world of the time and ever since for that matter. His superb paintings adorn the walls of many falconers even today and it is his painting career, particularly his renditions of birds of prey that earned him lasting respect.

Visiting Dick Treleaven's home in Cornwall

I was fortunate enough to visit the late Dick Treleaven at his home in South Petherwin, Cornwall a few years back and also met him on occasion at the Society of Wildlife Artists annual exhibition at the Mall Galleries in London, and was instantly struck by the style of Dick's paintings, because they closely resembled Lodge's style of painting. Lodge obviously had a great influence in shaping Dick's artistic future. Whilst at Dick's home in Cornwall, I noticed several original Lodge paintings hanging from the walls of his bungalow and one in particular, caught my attention, for it was a large painting of a white Gyr



Dr. David Glynne Fox at the grave of George Edward Lodge

Falcon. Dick noticed me admiring this lovely work of art and asked me if I was interested in Lodge's work. I replied in the affirmative and the conversation was then racked up a few pegs. I learned that Dick had been Lodge's last pupil, which was mind blowing to me. I was only six years old when George Lodge sadly passed away in 1954, the same year my wife Gill was born, so I never had the chance to meet him, even though I knew of his work back then, along with Archibald Thorburn and Joseph Wolf, for their images appeared in many of my bird books. My late father was an accomplished artist and this is why I guess that I took an interest in the works of others. Meeting Dick was like spanning the time gap. Here was a man in front of me who had been Lodge's last pupil. I cannot put into words, the aura I felt that day. Dick told me many stories about Lodge and his parting gift to me, which I will always treasure, was a post card, written by Lodge himself and addressed to Dick Treleaven. A gold nugget the size of my fist would have been less valuable to me.

Many have criticised Lodge's work and some, it has to be said, for whatever reason, are less accomplished than others and many, such as the images for David Bannerman's 12 volume series on the Birds of the British Isles, it has to be remembered were accomplished when he was over 80 years old and suffered from double vision in one eye, hence the patch seen in some photographs. These critics should see his large gallery paintings for they are stupendous and full of life. Even the rocks and lichens seem to resemble the real thing and are in a style all of Lodge's own and instantly recognisable.

Seeking Lodge's final resting place

When Lodge died in 1954, I felt that the world had lost another great man, just as I did when David Reid-Henry died in 1977. So much talent lost. David's brother, Bruce Henry, whom I came to know quite well, told me that David's ashes had been scattered in Lake Kariba, in what was then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and this led to me

thinking, what became of Lodge's final resting place? For years, I had no answer except to assume that he was probably buried in Camberley, Surrey, which is where he lived at Hawk House until his demise. However, he was born much closer to where I live in Nottingham. He was born at Horncastle, Lincolnshire and his father, Samuel, was rector of St. Benedict's Church at Scrivelsby, just outside Horncastle. However, as George had moved south many years previously, it never occurred to me that he would be anywhere else other than Camberley or Brookwood cemeteries.

I know this might seem a bit morbid, but whilst I was working on my degrees in Zulu and South African history, I began a long-term study of trying to discover memorials and graves to British soldiers who had fought in the Zulu War of 1879. My research led me to many such graves and I soon built up a large slide library (this was before digital cameras) of this subject.

I discovered that there were quite a few soldiers from this conflict at both Brookwood and Camberley and whilst at Camberley, I searched for the final resting place of George Lodge. I was to be disappointed and assumed I either must have missed it somehow or he was in an unmarked grave, like so many of our British soldiers, even those who fought at Rorke's Drift. It was here that story rested until I attended the Falconry Weekend at the International Centre for Birds of Prey, Newent, Gloucestershire, on 31 August and 1 September 2013 together with the British Falconers Club Eagle Group. On this occasion, the aforementioned Brian Bird of the George Edward Lodge Trust was launching a new work on Lodge. In fact, much of the work was a facsimile reprint of Lodge's only book that he wrote himself, namely *Memoirs of an Artist Naturalist*. Also included was a biographical section written by Lodge's Great Niece, Judith Magill, who was also present signing copies of this work. Obviously, I could not resist purchasing a copy and when I read Judith's inclusion, my quest for Lodge's final resting place was revitalised. It appeared that Lodge had been cremated at Brookwood but his ashes had been interred beside his parents and a brother and sister, at St. Benedict's churchyard, Scrivelsby, Lincolnshire.

Later that week, Gill and I decided to go to Scrivelsby and try to locate Lodge's



George Edward Lodge gravestone

grave. I drove through Horncastle and out towards Scrivelsby and had not gone far when I spotted the Liongate. This stone edifice was originally the entrance to Scrivelsby Court, which was destroyed by fire many years ago. The young Lodge children had a hidden nail with which they used to pick at a small hole, enlarging it each time they passed. Only a small indenture can be seen today for the gate has been restored and is a lovely piece of stonework, topped by a large stone lion. I stopped and photographed the Liongate before driving onwards to the church, which we spotted through the trees on our right. Gill opened the first gate and we drove down to the second where I parked the car. It was then a matter of wandering over to the church, which was unfortunately locked, and searching amongst the gravestones. Within a few minutes, I spotted the white headstone bearing Samuel Lodges' name and beside it was a smaller stone cross which bore the epitaph in leaded letters; In Loving Memory Of George Edward Lodge. Born

1860, Died 5th February 1954. I could not believe it. After all these years, I was looking at the hallowed ground that held the remains of George Edward Lodge.

Ambition fulfilled

This was a special moment. I had expected Lodge to be either in his parents' grave or beside it in an unmarked grave, and was pleasantly surprised to discover that he had his own headstone. Beside George's grave was another, containing one of his brothers, Walter Macnamara Lodge and on the opposite side next to George's parents was one of one of his sister's grave – namely, Mary Beatrice Lodge. I took a number of photographs including some of George's grave with my copy of the new book in situ. Gill placed some flowers on the grave as a mark of respect before we left.

Another interesting fact is that George Lodge's grave is situated right next door to the Revesby estate, where I have flown my eagles at hares on a number of occasions and had not the slightest idea that his final resting place was but a stone's throw away.

We tried to find the rectory which had been George's early home and almost found it, but Judith Magill later told us where it was, so that will be the subject of a return trip. We came home on a high, especially myself, for I never expected to find the last resting place of George Edward Lodge, artist, naturalist and falconer.



Lodge at work in his studio

The International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) Life as its President

“I write this from the desk of the IAF President” – Doesn’t that sound grand? Perhaps some Presidents have had grand desks. Mine is probably more parochial and is dominated by the essential modern day tool – my computer. In this, I am surrounded by books, falconry bric-a-brac and a morass of paper, not to mention the obligatory dog and, not infrequently, a hawk. It is that computer that makes this whole thing possible, which allows me to serve as President from a desk at the southern tip of Africa and which allows the IAF to represent hunting falconers from 86 organizations and 60 nations around the world. It is not just *my* computer; I have a tremendous team of volunteers, equally scattered around the world, who, through communication and engagement, are making the dreams of the IAF become reality.

Early life

How on earth did I come to this? I started Falconry as a schoolboy in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, over 45 years ago. I discovered that the father of a good friend was involved in the sport and he became my mentor. This was John Condy, who was a research veterinarian involved with wildlife and one of the first people to use M99 for game-capture. He was also notable in that he travelled to Britain with three passage Lanner Falcons which he flew successfully on the grouse moors in Scotland. In doing this, the only laws that he broke were the British sanctions against Rhodesia! This is a measure of how the legislative climate in which we practice our falconry has changed in 40 years.

As I was about to leave school, new legislation governing the control of wildlife in Rhodesia was proposed. Through involvement in this, I had



Adrian Lombard speaking at conference

my first exposure to the process of negotiating regulations to permit legitimate falconry and this has now become part of everyday life as the IAF President.

In 2004, I had become the Secretary of the South African Falconry Association (SAFA) and, having met Christian de Coune, decided to regularize the membership of SAFA with the IAF. I contacted the Public Relations Officer, Gary Timbrell, and was asked if I would like to represent SAFA at the IAF AGM which was shortly to be held in Abu Dhabi. Well, what a question! My trip to Abu Dhabi was an eye-opener. I was suddenly exposed to falconers from across the globe. I remember chatting to a Turkmanian who hunted desert hares with a Saker Falcon and an American who had flown falcons in Panama. In the meetings we got down to business and I learned about falconry issues from around the globe, becoming involved in preparing

a statement on the conservation of the Saker Falcon. I returned home with new friends and new dreams. I became the Executive Secretary of the IAF in early 2007 and the IAF AGM was hosted in South Africa in 2008.

Hunting alone and with friends

In the meantime, I have continued to be an active falconer. I discovered that the Black Sparrowhawk suits my temperament, the cover in which I hunt and my quarry base. I love the teamwork involved with a gamehawk, a falconer and a good working dog. The best times in life are the early mornings in the veldt or the Cape “fynbos” when I am out, usually alone, with dog and hawk. I have been extraordinarily fortunate in that I have been able to join falconers in many different countries and share their hawking. There have been some remarkable highlights which include

visits to the Scottish grouse moors with my good friend, Dave Jones, hunting 'chicken (Prairie chicken) with Shawn Hayes, hunting Houbara and sandgrouse in Morocco with HE Mohammed al Bowardi and joining the Eagle Hunters in Slovakia. There are definitely still some venues in the bucket list and I am looking forward to the IAF AGM in Argentina in 2014 as we expect some interesting hunting there. With all this said, we have some champagne falconry on a variety of natural quarry in South Africa and my biggest regret is that I do not get out often enough.

Promoting falconry around the world

The issues that keep me out of the field are fascinating in themselves, as the IAF aims to defend and promote falconry and must strive to be relevant to all falconers wherever they may be. Thus, while I work at my desk, I am dealing with a wide range of issues from around the globe.

The bulk of the issues arise in Europe for a variety of reasons but these issues have relevance to the rest of the world. To some, the IAF may appear to be "Eurocentric" but a very real effort is being made to address this and the composition of our leadership reflects the true international flavor of our organization. Members of the Executive and the Advisory Committee originate from a range of nations extending from Mexico to Japan and from South Africa to Poland.

The IAF Constitution defines

Falconry as the traditional sport of taking quarry in its natural state and habitat by means of trained birds of prey. Thus we represent a hunting art.

We are tasked to represent Falconry throughout the world and, with our membership list including 60 nations and growing, we are certainly doing this. We are working to increase our reach into Asia and South America. Very few international NGOs can claim this breadth of representation.



Adrian with HE Mohammed al Bowardi

We are also tasked to preserve and encourage falconry within the context of sustainable use of wildlife and to encourage conservation of birds of prey so we see ourselves as a truly global conservation NGO. We are international members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and we have representation at all of the main international and regional conservation related conventions. We are active specifically in the Sustainable Use and Lifestyle (SULi) Group of the IUCN and in the Raptors MoU of the Convention on Migratory Species, with a particular interest in the Saker Falcon. We also act to represent and promote the conservation actions and interests of falconers around the world.

Our Constitution also calls on us

to encourage veterinary research on birds of prey and to promote, under scientific guidance, domestic propagation for falconry. We believe that, as representatives of falconers, we are the experts on the welfare and good husbandry of raptors. Thus, working with our membership, we seek to establish the norms and standards in this area. We believe that no one, other than a falconer, is qualified to instruct us on the management of our birds. We shall be holding an international veterinary conference in raptor medicine in association with the Alganaas Falconers' Association during our next AGM in Qatar. This conference will have some of the top raptor veterinarians from around the world in attendance.

We are also called on to develop,



Delegates from around the world with their Hawks and Eagles



Members and delegates of the IAF

maintain and amend national and international laws, treaties and conventions to permit the pursuit and perpetuation of falconry. This comprises a significant part of our work as we address international and regional conventions and regulations as well as national regulations and laws, on behalf of our members. We also communicate with law-enforcement agencies and other Hunting NGOs to promote the interests of falconry.

Public image and UNESCO

Finally, we are called upon to promote and uphold a positive public image of falconry with specialist organisations which regulate or otherwise affect falconry. In this we realize the importance of promoting the cultural aspects of falconry. Essential to falconry is the recognition and appreciation of our art as an intangible cultural heritage, something which is now recognized as a world heritage by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

We are associated with UNESCO as an advisory NGO and we encourage falconry nations to join the growing list who have become part of this submission. To commemorate the initial recognition of Falconry by UNESCO

on 16 November 2010, we now hold a World Falconry Day on this date and call on falconers from all over the world to join us in our celebration. We also recognize the importance of falconry culture as represented by our literature, art and history and we promote the preservation and study of this aspect.

We have realized that, for the IAF to perform its task and to be relevant to all falconers we must communicate. Falconers around the world need to know who we are and what we do and why they should value us. We have produced the IAF Journal of Falconry for number of years and this is our flagship publication. This year we publish the first IAF Newsletter which will be in full color and which showcases the work of the IAF and the activities of a range of member organizations. We now also produce a short eNewsletter which goes out sporadically but approximately twice a month bringing news of relevance to falconers and people interested in falconry.

Our website has been recently revamped and provides a fascinating window into falconry and the IAF. Details of our publications and downloadable versions are available

there and I recommend a visit to www.iaf.org.

The future

The final question must be where is the IAF going? How can we succeed in ensuring that it is representative of all falconers? There are some big changes planned that will address this. We plan to open a permanent office with professional staff in Brussels. This will allow better interaction with the important conservation and hunting related organizations and conventions as well as the real possibility of lobbying within the EU government. We have never included individual membership, as only organizations may be members, but we are planning to include individual subscribers who will receive the publications and other services from the IAF. Finally we are making significant changes to the voting system to ensure that all member organizations are able to have their say. These changes will have a considerable effect on the functioning of the IAF. My hope is that, ultimately all falconers will know who we are, will know about what we are doing and will be able to say of the IAF – “*that is my organization which is looking out for me and ensuring that I and my children can continue to practice falconry!*”

A Bird for all Seasons



Not many feathers to go now

Looking through binoculars, I see something grey in the distance and it makes me smile. My bird for all seasons is skimming over the maize crops and heading straight to the place where I am standing. The month is August, the day is hot and my knees are brown. We endured the cold of winter and now we enjoy the lazy days of summer. In a flurry of wings a morsel of food is taken from the glove and I am left to continue my walk in peace.

Feeling a little mischievous, I walk into a small wood and position myself in a clearing that can be viewed only from above, then, after a few minutes of waiting, I give a drawn-out blast on the 'Thunderer.' "Alright smarty pants, see if you can figure this one out," I say under my breath. Eventually, a familiar shape appears over the clearing looking to see

what all the fuss is about. He couldn't believe his eyes at first and overflies the opening in the canopy several times, just checking that it's really me.

I take the top half of a chick out of the food pouch and after waving it around with the blood part uppermost, it is slammed forcefully into the glove. Somewhat begrudgingly, he parachutes in through the canopy and claims his reward. The food is eaten slowly and he stops several times to take-in the aura of this natural arboretum. It's not to his liking though and when the last of the food is swallowed, he corkscrews back out through the gap and disappears. The result pleases me because he met the challenge head-on and we have added something new to his expanding CV of flying experiences.

Walking out of the wood, I see he has found a new playmate. A corvid is on his

case and they twist and turn in the sky as each tries to assert ownership of the territory. I don't know which of them started this squabble but there's only going to be one winner. The crow soon thinks better of it and bails out towards a bunch of conifers, hoping that none of his mates witnessed the beating. The winner celebrates with a triumphant mid-air rouse, then swoops down to the glove for a quick gloat. "Did you see that boss?" I nod my head in affirmation, then, after swallowing yet another morsel, the braggart is gone again.

Having fun

I continue walking in the warm afternoon sun and haven't felt this good for ages. The mighty atom meanwhile, is exploring the forces of gravity by climbing vertically until he stalls, then zooming earthwards with a rush of speed and as he repeats this set piece several times, I know he is having fun. He did this manoeuvre quite a lot in our lure swinging days, so is he missing it I wonder? Anyway, leaving him to it, I cross over the lane and head along an avenue of mature trees that leads back to the marine desert we locals call the 'saltmarsh.' I am out of view now but as he's keeping tabs on me, I expect to see him at any second.

After five separate visits to his mobile snack bar, he and I are back at the car and our 40 minute flying session is nearly over. I lift the tailgate and open the door of his plastic travel box in readiness for the final act. He sees this and sensing that time is running out, has found another building that is stirring up the wind. I'm in no hurry to bring the curtain down, so I just lean with my back against the car and watch the show.

When he finally decides to surrender, he eats the last of the food on the glove and steps bare-headed into the box without a whimper. We head for home where it is tea and buns for me, and a bath and a 25g mouse for him. And because the two of us are worthless layabouts, we can do it again tomorrow. "Life doesn't get much better than this," I am thinking.

A clear winner

Obviously, all year round flying of the kind I have just described, requires a longwing and a special one at that. It cannot be entered on game and there must not be any strong instincts of migration. A dislike of perching in trees is also a desirable quality. Also, due to their sweeter and more biddable nature, males are a better bet than females so one way or another, the list of genuine candidates is very small. In terms of suitability and availability however, there is one clear winner and I could see nothing better than a Lanneret (*F. biarmicus*) who I call Eddie. It goes without saying also, that access to daylight hours throughout the year is essential.

I love falcon aerobatics and this 'free-style' way of flying is perhaps the best way to see it. My aim always, is to get the falcon looking for me in different places so it is a form of following on, although nothing like the style of a Harris Hawk. It cannot be described as falconry and it is not as exciting as real falconry but it does have its own special charm.

We began by exercising and stooping to the lure until I felt he was rock steady, or, as rock steady as it ever gets. Right from the start, we were always on the move and trying not to break a leg whilst concentrating on those tricky pass manoeuvres. The Lanneret was flown until his beak opened which in the early days gave about 20 to 25 passes. My target was 60 passes in three sessions of 20 with feeds and short rests in between.

We got through our first summer and autumn quite well but winter and spring of 2012/3 produced the worst weather for many-a-year. It rarely stopped us flying though and to his credit, the Lanneret never buckled or shrank away from the foul weather. By the end of February he could hit the target number of passes on most days and the swing lure had made its final contribution. It had been enjoyable while it lasted and did wonders for my rusty technique but the time had come to take a different direction.

A new direction

On the first day of the new order, I lifted up my arm and cast him into a fresh westerly blowing in from the sea. Then just like normal, I set off walking along the saltmarsh. He went out wide to stretch his wings for a few minutes but when he returned expecting to see the lure being

swung, I ignored him. He circled around me wondering what the heck was going on and after a few laps more, I garnished the glove with half a chick and whistled him in.

Somewhat confused, he was slow to react and made a very clumsy landing on the glove but at least we had made a start. Lanners are bright birds and it didn't take him long to get the hang of the new rules. With the rigid processes of the lure no longer applying, he was free to go anywhere he wanted, including vertical and for as long as he wanted. This was undoubtedly the time when he came alive. Having fun was the order the day now and he couldn't get enough of it.

Our sessions evolved to be five separate periods with feeds on the glove in between. He would go looking for the best updrafts and I soon learned his

wasn't all bad news though because at least I knew how high he could be safely taken.

Talking of weight, this was quite the most difficult aspect. Too low and he stayed too close, leading to very short sessions: too high and he ranged further than I cared for, leaving me staring into an empty sky. It was a case of matching his weight for the type of flying I wanted to see. Anyway, getting back to the plot, our second summer arrived in all its glory and I could reap the dividend of my labours. In the 62 days of July/August 2013, we flew 58 of them and I was in shorts and T-shirts the whole time.

This was the second time I'd flown a non-hunting falcon right through the moult and was surprised how well the Lanneret coped with the missing feathers. The biggest surprise of all though, was



Eddie racing a storm cloud

favourite sites. As things progressed, we spent less time on the saltmarsh and more in mixed countryside. This meant that he was out of sight for brief periods but as he had proved reliable and loyal, I didn't worry unduly. Of course our monster game of 'hide and seek' didn't work out perfectly every time.

I reckon Lanners have an attention span of about 15 minutes, so if it dawns on me that I haven't seen him in a while and not exactly sure of his whereabouts, it's time to get a second opinion from Mr Marshall. It's not wilful disobedience – they just forget what they're supposed to be doing and in any case, it does no harm to keep your hand in with the telemetry set every now and then. However, there had been a few track-downs that were of my own making. Every day flying does tend to encourage 'weight creep' and this inevitably resulted in him going walkabout. It

the fact that he was fully summed by the end of September. With the old feathers sitting snugly in a shoe box, he was more handsome than ever and noticeably stronger in flight as well, proving that grey is a faster colour than brown.

Summer flying does have its hiccups though. Wild attack is probably the most notable and it can easily spoil the party. On the plus side, the Lanneret was fully fit by this stage and supremely confident of his abilities in the air. He regularly got into disputes with Peregrines and although no actual contact was ever made, these attacks gave me great concern. By flying him every day and on the same 2000 acres, wild predators gradually accepted that he was here to stay and the attacks became much less frequent. As far as crows are concerned, it's usually nothing more than a game of tag and the Lanneret seems to enjoy this aerial jousting.



Last feed on the glove

Close to the edge

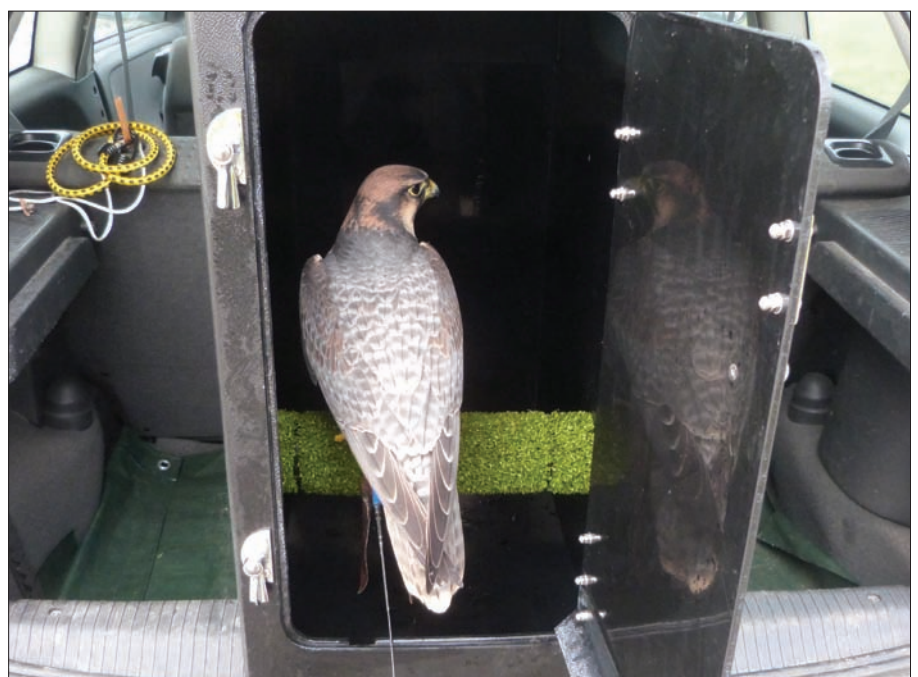
In flying the Lanneret all year round, I have to be sensitive to how other people view my actions, particularly bird watchers and wildfowlers. The privately owned saltmarsh is tidal and therefore cannot accommodate any nests but even so, I do occasionally have to justify what I am doing and stress the fact that it is not hunting. Fortunately, he flies over the ponds, release pens and cover crops without showing any interest in the game itself and so far, I have not had any harsh words from the gamekeeper. From 2 February to the start of duck shooting in September, I can fly pretty much where I like but even so, I still keep a low and unobtrusive profile.

The degree to which I have enjoyed flying this non-hunting falcon has really surprised me. I assumed it would be nothing more than an interesting departure from the norm but, having had the experience, it seems more normal to me than anything else. It requires more skill than I realised because weight-wise, we operate so close to the edge and of course, I didn't always get it right. A question I need to ask myself now at the age of 72, is am I still a falconer or have I

morphed into a grumpy old raptor flier? Well we shall see!

Looking towards the immediate future, I certainly want more of the same. I hope my Lanneret never loses the urge to play and act silly but my gut feeling is that one day, he will. Regardless of my

best efforts, he may also enter himself on quarry someday and living in the place where I do, that would be a game changer. I'll cross those bridges if and when I get to them, but for now, I will enjoy my 'bird for all seasons' and count myself lucky. Very lucky indeed!



End of the days' flying

Owls

A brief look, species by species

The interest in owls has become hugely popular with the general public these days, in particular since the launch of the Harry Potter series. The films have done probably more harm than good for the owls as I have spoken to and been approached by people with questions ranging from, “I have been and bought a barn owl for my son and it is eight weeks old and we have had it two weeks, what should we be feeding it and

how much?”, to “I have been to a number of falconry centres and was fascinated by the owls, so I bought one and when I first released it, it just disappeared and I have not seen it since. Do you know why and could you help me get it back?”.

The fact that these people have been able to buy an owl in the first instance is bad enough, but to buy one without any prior knowledge is bordering on insane. The only one really suffering here is the owl and sadly it happens with all other

raptors including the very large and potentially dangerous.

Knowing most falconers are keen and experienced with the diurnal raptors, I thought it may be nice to introduce some small snippets of information on the different species of owls and providing the magazine allows I would love to introduce you to a few different species over the next few issues. So I thought we would start with a few well known species here in the UK.

The Barn Owl *Tyto Alba*

It would seem simple to assume that the Barn Owl got its name from the fact it lives in barns, which some do, but actually it is suggested that the Barn Owl gets its name from Viking times. Vikings would capture these owls and then release them into their barn like structures, which they used as outside toilets to keep rats and mice at bay. Once the Barn Owl reached a certain age they were said to kill the bird and then pin it to the door of the barn to ward away evil spirits, which also aids to one of the Barn Owls other names – THE GHOST OWL. The Barn Owl can be seen more frequently than any other owl in the UK, however the most populated owl in the UK is said to be the Tawny Owl, but because Barn Owls mostly hunt open ground and the Tawny hunts mostly wooded areas you're more likely to see a Barn Owl.

The Barn Owl is now revered as the farmer's



friend as it is recorded as hunting and capturing anything from 1000 to 1500 mice and voles per year per bird. If that wasn't amazing enough, the Barn Owl is said to have adapted its hearing

to around 6 to 9kHz which is the exact range of the squeak and rustle produced by the mice and voles. Sadly however the Barn Owl's average age in the wild is only around 18 months due

to traffic, weather etc. and especially cattle troughs as they stand on the edge, dip in the facial disc to clean it and fall in, due to the sloping sides they are unable to climb out and drown.



The Tawny Owl *Strix Aluco*

The Tawny Owl is said to be the UK's most populated owl. The call of this bird is the one you may most associate with an owl with the twit, twoo. However, even though both males and females are capable of producing a twit or a twoo it is most often two birds calling to each other with the female producing the twit or actually keewick and the male producing the twoo or hoo! The Tawny has a grey and brown morph depending on the area the bird is found and has the perfect camouflage, blending into the bark of the trees and often standing close to the trunk to look like part of the tree trunk.

The Tawny can be a very ferocious hunter, dashing and catching small birds along hedge rows and often small birds that have sat to roost for the night as well as small rodents. In fact both the Tawny and Barn Owls have been witnessed flying along hedge rows trailing the wing tips along the tops of the hedge to startle and force small birds to leave the safety of the hedge, where upon the Tawny and Barn Owls will with great agility grab the small birds as they attempt escape. This small to mid sized owl has been known to take prey as big as the Mallard Duck. The Tawny Owl has also on occasion been witnessed preying on other owl species.

The Snowy Owl *Bubo Scandiacus*

Some people seem to associate the Snowy Owl as being a usual sight here in the UK but through my own experience people have mistaken a Barn Owl as a Snowy Owl because they have seen a white owl fly across their path and until shown a Snowy Owl up close realised the size difference is great. However, almost only ever seen in the Scottish regions of the UK and probably only as often as every 10 years or so, it's more of a visitor than a resident. The Snowy Owl is one of the most spectacular looking owls with its superb white feathering from tip to very feathery toes, males showing more white plumage than the more heavily barred females.

This Owl is part of the Eagle Owl family but doesn't sport the usual large ear tufts that you would associate with Eagle Owls. Large and very powerful this owl is crepuscular (hunts day and night) and will hunt mainly lemmings and other rodents. However, in times of low Lemming numbers are more than capable of taking prey as large as hares without any problems at all. Most owls will lay around three to five eggs per clutch, where as the Snowy Owl will lay between three and 14 eggs per clutch dependant upon prey supply. The Snowy Owl feathers get their white colour due to the fact that the feathers have no colour pigment in them. Instead, the follicles or tubes of the feathers are filled with air which provides the best insulation and creates the white feather. These feathers provide the insulation needed to survive in the arctic where the temperatures can go as low as -155 degrees Fahrenheit.



Pictures courtesy of York Bird Of Prey Centre

Club Directory

The South East Falconry Group

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

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

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

For members in our Southern region informal meetings take place near Winchester, Hants. (Please contact Dean White on 01489 896504).

For further information or an application form please contact -

Peter Long (secretary) on 07889 438531

E-mail us at enquiry@sefg.org or visit our web site www.sefg.org

British Falconers' Club

Founded in 1927

The oldest and largest Hawking Club in the country.

Thirteen Regional Groups -
Scotland, Yorkshire, Midlands, Cotswolds, Eastern, North Western, Mid-West, North Eastern, Southern, Wales, South Western, West Midlands & Borders & Wessex.

Email Sue on
membershipsecretary@britishfalconersclub.co.uk

Or visit our website for details
www.britishfalconersclub.co.uk

THE BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB (F.M.)
Tel: 01253 859062 (evenings).

THE SCOTTISH HAWKING CLUB

FOR THE DEDICATED FALCONER

The largest club in Scotland protecting the needs of falconers.

AFFILIATED TO:- Countryside Alliance - Hawk Board - Scottish Hawk Board - Zimbabwe Falconers Club - North American Falconers Association - International Association for Falconry

Further details from:

Alan Rothery

E-mail: info@scottishhawkingclub.co.uk

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

Join and support your local club today!



The Welsh Hawking Club

www.thewelshhawkingclub.com

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

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

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

For all general enquiries please contact:

David Barber on 07785 762373

or

e-mail: secretary@thewelshhawkingclub.com

THE BRITISH HAWKING ASSOCIATION

Regional field meetings held regularly. A family association that welcomes both the experienced falconer and the novice.

*The British Hawking Association . . .
showing the way forward.*

CHANGING ATTITUDES TO IMPROVE STANDARDS.

Contact the BHA via its website:-

www.thebha.co.uk

or e-mail to **secretary@thebha.co.uk**

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



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

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

**Our meetings are held at 10.30am on the second Sunday of each month throughout the year at
The 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**

or telephone Alan for information on: **07973 733110**



To advertise here call 0845 803 1979

Independent Bird Register

Telephone 0161 790 5613

IBR registered Lost & Stolen birds plus Found and Reunited birds of prey From 1st October 2013 to 31st December 2103.

The IBR would like to thank all of those people that have 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 has a rolling list of lost IBR registered birds (those who have paid to register) and a list of found birds.

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

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

REUNITED x 106

SPECIES	
AFRICAN SPOTTED EAGLE OWL	1
BARBARY	1
BARN OWL	13
BENGAL/INDIAN EAGLE OWL	2
EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	4
GOSHAWK	10
GREAT HORNED OWL	1
GYR FALCON	1
GYR/PEREGRINE	2
GYR/SAKER	14
HARRIS HAWK	34
JACKDAW	1
KESTREL	4
LANNER	2
PEREGRINE	4
PERE/GYR/SAKER	2
PERE/LANNER	1
PERE/SAKER	1
RAVEN	1
REDTAIL	4
SAKER	1
SPARROWHAWK	1
TAWNY OWL	1

Out of the 106 birds reunited, 73 were NOT registered.

LOST x 21

BREF	RING	SPECIES	AREA LOST
89886	?685?	BARN OWL	CASTLE BROMWICH
89065	?2RE?	GYR/SAKER	SWINFORD, LE17
97581	?324?	HARRIS HAWK	HAYES, UB3
73737	?212?	HARRIS HAWK	BROMHAM, SN15
89916	?686?	BARN OWL	MAYFIELD DALKEITH
76901	?220?	GOSHAWK	AMPLEFORD, YO62
85277	?610?	HARRIS HAWK	ELSECAR, S74
92257	?867?	BARN OWL	DOVER, CT16
87890	?275?	PERE/LANNER	ELLESMERE PORT
61716	?975?	GYR/SAKER	READING
91027	?565?	REDTAIL	CHOP GATE, NTH YORKS
97666	?339?	BARN OWL	OSSETT, WF5
98120	?RV1?	GOSHAWK	BALDINNIE, KY15
88330	?383?	EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	WOODBASTWICK
94335	?067?	HARRIS HAWK	CORBY
93677	?022?	BARN OWL	MAIDSTONE. ME17
87934	?533?	HARRIS HAWK	SKELMERSDALE
98176	?DFW?	MERLIN	POWYS
80999	?867?	GYR/SAKER	ROTHWELL
97293	?24M?	BARBARY	POWYS, SY18
68387	?525?	PEREGRINE	PRONTRILAS, HR2

FOUND x 14

BREF	RING	SPECIES	AREA FOUND
97895	?1LO?	EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL	STRATFORD, CO7
85124	?208?	HARRIS HAWK	BATHGATE
98031	?1OA?	BARN OWL	LEDBURY
98030	?3TE?	HARRIS HAWK	BUCKLEY, WALES
59686	?889?	HARRIS HAWK	HIGH WYCOMBE
95021	?120?	BARN OWL	NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
70363	?944?	HARRIS HAWK	NEWTON AYCLIFFE
98085	?01A?	HARRIS HAWK	WALESBY, NOTTS
98141	????	AMERICAN KESTREL	LEWES, BN7
98179	?H12?	HARRIS HAWK	THAMESMEADE
38527	?338?	KESTREL	CROOK, CO.DURHAM
96733	?271?	BARN OWL	LEYLAND
98210	?887?	HARRIS HAWK	DONCASTER
98218	?86N?	LANNER	NAIRN

FOUND DEAD X 26

BARN OWL X 9
BUZZARD X 1
EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL X 3
GOSHAWK X 2
GYR/PEREGRINE X 1
HARRIS HAWK X 5
PEREGRINE X 2
REDTAIL X 2
SPARROWHAWK X 1

LOST UNREGISTERED BIRDS X 53

AMERICAN KESTREL X 1
BUZZARD X 1
BARN OWL X 5
GOLDEN EAGLE X 1
GOSHAWK X 8
GREAT HORNED OWL X 1
GYR/PEREGRINE X 4
GYR/SAKER X 3
HARRIS HAWK X 11
KESTREL X 3
PEREGRINE X 6
PERE/GYR/SAKER X 1
PERE/LANNER X 1
PERE/SAKER X 3
SAKER FALCON X 2
SPARROWHAWK X 1
TAWNY OWL X 1

IBR web-site
www.ibr.org.uk

ANTON VETS



JOHN CHITTY

BVetMed CertZooMed CBiol MSB MRCVS

Anton Vets
Unit 11, Anton Mill Road
Andover
Hants SP10 2NJ

Telephone
01264 729165

Fax: 01264 324546

E-mail: exotics@antonvets.co.uk
www.antonvets.co.uk



A s t r o T u r f

The real thing, use the best for your birds or dogs. Cut lengths or rolls
Phone:-
07711 952173



Honeybrook
 animal foods

A successful family owned business supplying quality frozen raptor food for over 20 years.

Run by Falconers supporting Falconry worldwide.

Distribution to major breeders, zoos and collections throughout the UK, Ireland & Europe.

Top quality Chicks, Quail & Rodents, carefully selected, packed and blast frozen by Honeybrook Animal Foods at our own premises.

Major sponsors of the International Festival of Falconry and the Campaign For Falconry.

For further information phone:
 **44(0)1386 830089 or FREEPHONE 0800 1971 777

Visit our web site: www.honeybrookfoods.co.uk



Honeybrook Animal Foods for all your raptor's needs

The Independent Bird Register

The proactive approach to lost and found birds

Over 6,000 birds reunited since 1994

Over 95,000 rings in circulation

Over 18,000 members

Lost, found & stolen register

Daily updated Birdmart on the website

THE IBR Falconry Directory

THE Online Falconry Directory

Bird registration

Breeders rings

Split telephone rings

Equipment, vitamins & Aloe Vera

Open 09:00 to 13:00 & 16:00 to 20:00

Mon - Fri

10:00 to 14:00 Sat & Sun

www.ibr.org.uk

enquiries@ibr.org.uk

0870 608 8500



MARTIN JONES FALCONRY FURNITURE

The name for quality

Breeder of quality falcons and hawks from proven blood lines.

Full range of falconry equipment, books, DVDs and **FULL COLOUR CATALOGUE**. Please ring **01600 750300** or write to:

The Parsonage, Llanrothal, Monmouth NP25 5QJ

E-mail: sales@falconryonline.com

Secure website www.falconryonline.com

Free advisory service and also sponsor of Campaign For Falconry

HAND CRAFTED FALCONRY FURNITURE FROM falconryequipment.com

30 years of manufacturing & supplying quality equipment at an affordable price.

SAE for catalogue please to:

**80 Ramsey Drive, Arnold,
Nottingham NG5 6QQ**

Tel: (0115) 9203682.

E-mail: sales@falconryequipment.com

Web site: www.falconryequipment.com

VETARK PROFESSIONAL

Veterinary formulated health products for falconers



simply the best multivitamin and minerals for adult flying and breeding birds



essential first aid and support

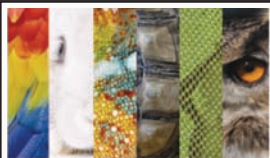


for good bone on young birds especially



From vets, good retailers, by mail order or the Vetark shop at www.vetark.co.uk

VETARK PROFESSIONAL
Tel: 44-(0)-1962-844316
e: info@vetark.co.uk
Trade enquiries always welcome



GREAT WESTERN EXOTIC VETS

BECAUSE EXOTIC PETS NEED EXOTIC VETS

Do not compromise on the treatment of quality birds

A Specialist Bird Veterinary Service
The only specialist staffed, exotic specific facility in the UK.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU & YOUR BIRDS 24/7

Neil A Forbes DipECZM(avian) FRCVS

RCVS and European College
Recognised Specialist in
Avian Medicine and Surgery

And colleagues

Full specialized diagnostic,
surgical and hospitalization facilities
On site laboratory with results in 30 minutes.

<http://www.gwreferrals.com>

Tel. 01793 603800

exotics@gwreferrals.co.uk

KIEZEBRINK Kiezebrink Uk Ltd.



www.kiezebrink.co.uk

01284 810779

info@kiezebrink.co.uk



- Premium quality frozen raptor and reptile foods.
- Day old chicks, quail, rats, mice and much more.
- Extensive range of exotic animal foods.
- Delivery available.
- See our website for more details.

Rings of Distinction



AVIAN ID

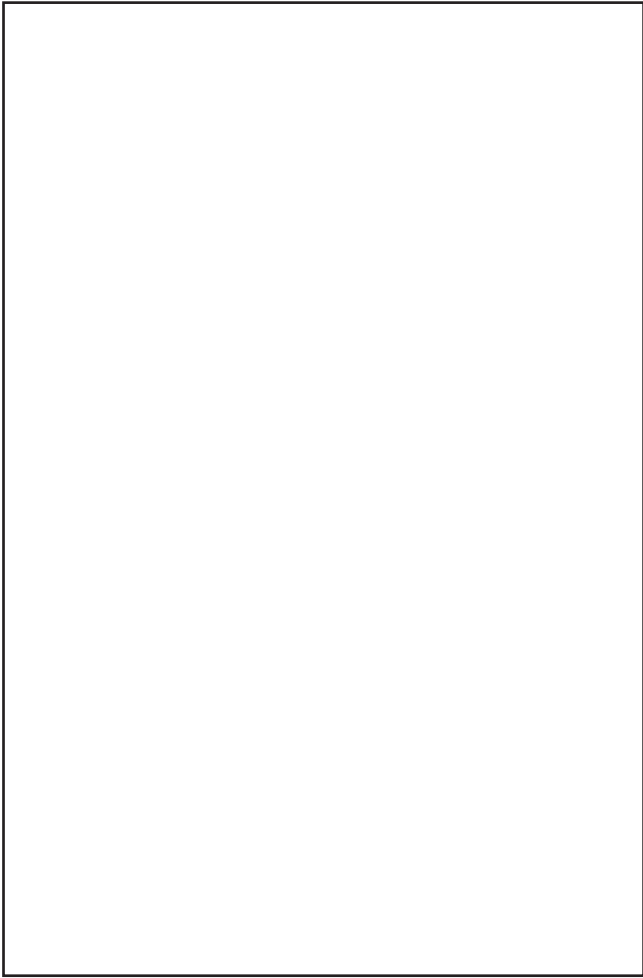
PO Box 107 Truro,
Cornwall. TR1 2YR. England.

Fast friendly service

Call or Fax (+44) 01872-262777

e-mail info@avianid.co.uk

credit/debit cards accepted



Kiezebrink UK Ltd

Now covers most of the UK, with Premier Quality Frozen Raptor & Reptile Foods from Europe's largest supplier.

Top quality blast frozen day old chicks, quail, rats, mice, gerbils and hamsters.

We now sell Chicken and Turkey necks and a range of vitamin and mineral supplements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sarah
01284 810779

or mobile: **0777 5812602**

Covering: East Anglia, London, Home Counties,
Eastern England, East and North Midlands
and Yorkshire.

Andrew Knowles-Brown on
01864 505245 or

mobile: **07711 952173**

Covering: Northern England & Scotland

New 1/8p coming. If repeat 1/4
move Avian to page 7.

The **Falconers**
& Raptor Conservation Magazine

Binders

Keep your treasured magazines neat, tidy and safe in a *Falconers Magazine Binder*.



Only:
£8.00
P&P FREE



Falconers Diaries

Sorry, these are now out of print and no longer available.

For credit card orders telephone
0845 803 1979

Most credit cards accepted

Between the hours of 9.00am - 4.00pm. Monday - Thursday (closed Fridays).
Outside these hours your order will be recorded on an answerphone.

or write to:

PW Publishing Ltd., The Falconers Magazine,
Tayfield House, 38 Poole Road, Westbourne,
Bournemouth, Dorset BH4 9DW.

Cheques/Postal Orders made payable to PW Publishing Ltd.

COCH-Y-BONDDU BOOKS

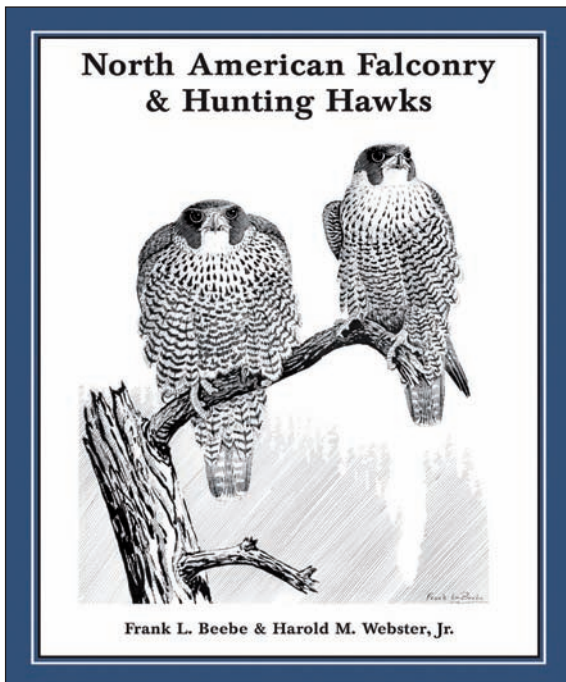


Machynlleth, Mid-Wales SY20 8DG

Tel: 01654 702837

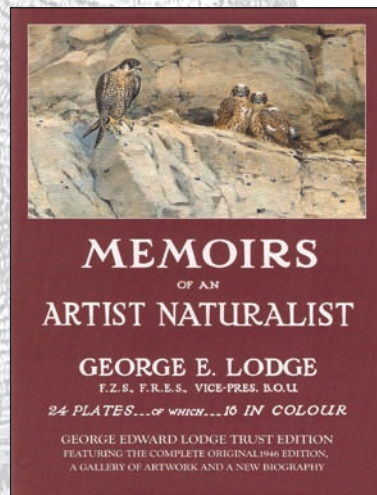
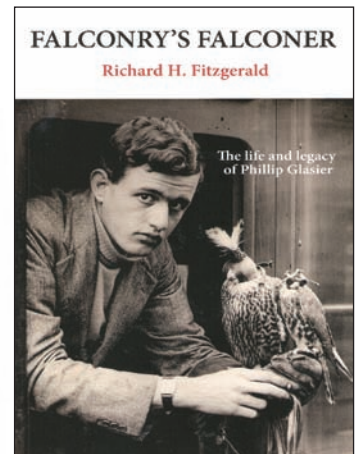
www.anglebooks.com

orders@anglebooks.com

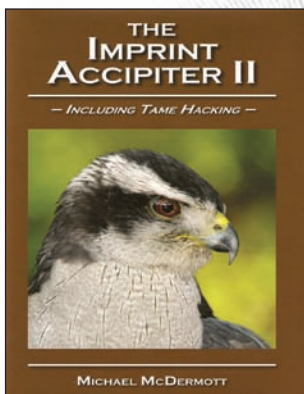


NORTH AMERICAN FALCONRY & HUNTING HAWKS. Frank Beebe & Hal Webster.
New two-volume edition in slip-case. **£95.00**

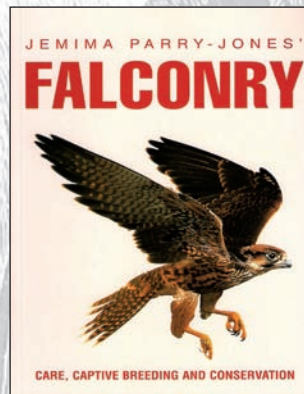
FALCONRY'S FALCONER: THE LIFE & LEGACY OF PHILLIP GLASIER
Richard H. Fitzgerald.
Paperback with flaps **£12.95**



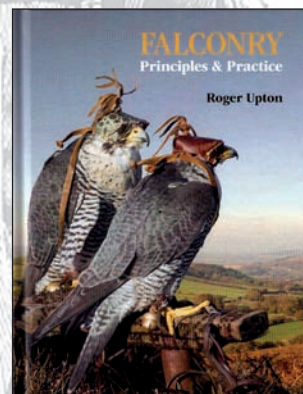
MEMOIRS OF AN ARTIST NATURALIST
George E. Lodge.
New and improved hardback edition. **£38.00**



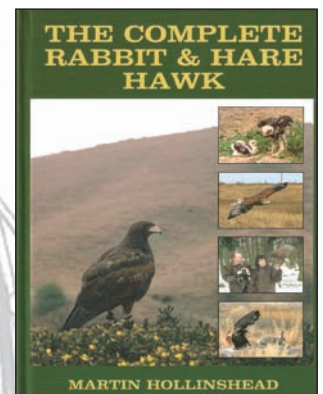
£50.00



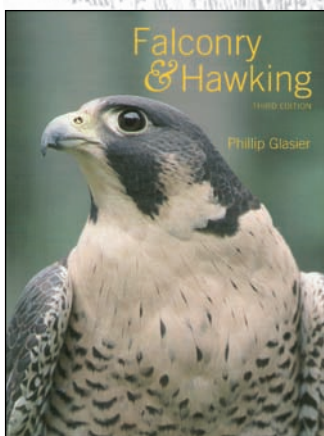
£12.99



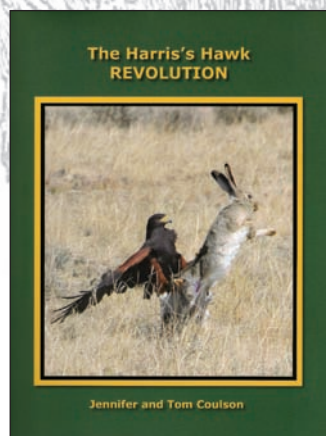
£19.95



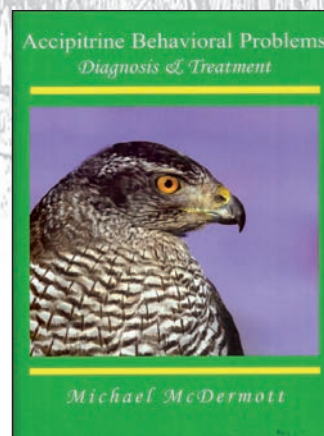
£25.00



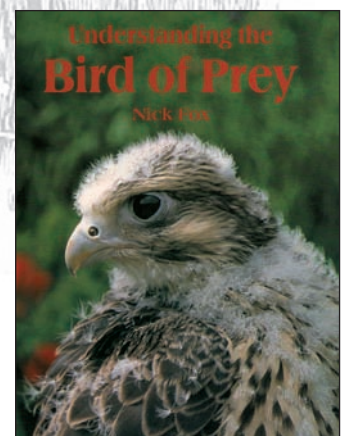
£25.00



£65.00



£50.00



£60.00

Over 800 books on falconry and raptors, old & new, are listed on our website - www.anglebooks.com
Mastercard / Visa / Maestro / Paypal POSTAGE EXTRA UP TO A MAXIMUM OF £5 Overseas postage at cost