

Welsh Hawking Club

Welsh Journal 1978



the
AUSTRINGER

THE AUSTRINGER

The Official Journal Of The Welsh Hawking Club



Clwb Hebogwr Cymru

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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

'The Austringer' is again late in coming to you this year. The main reason for this is the perennial one of the lack of articles being contributed in good time. Almost every article in this years issue resulted from requests for contributions sent by our President, Lorant de Bastyai and myself and although our requests were without exception well received it nevertheless makes my task undoubtably heavier and lengthens the process of compiling the magazine. I would like yet again to urge you all to please if you have anything to say or a story to relate that would be of interest to get it down on to paper and send it to me.

A new innovation as you will see is the inclusion of advertisements in this years issue. These, in a small way, will help to defray the cost - always a consideration.

There are two items included which will be of special interest to W.H.C members. The first of these is the appeal issued for donations to the newly established breeding project. Thanks to the generosity of our Hon. Treasurer, John Buckner it has got off to a good start and I am sure that you will all agree that it deserves all the support that Welsh Hawking Club members (and hopefully others) can give it.

The second is the notice concerning the forthcoming Field Meeting to be held in the Tamworth-Lichfield area of the Midlands. The last International Field Meeting held in Criccieth in November of last year was enjoyed by all that attended, although the lack of quarry was unfortunate. It was very pleasant to again welcome our guests from Germany and Sweden to this event and also to meet Mr. John Buckland from the 'Shooting Times'.

I have been asked to pass on two items that may be of concern to you. The first is that if a stamped self-addressed envelope is sent to the Assistant Secretary with the request for Club news a news sheet will be forwarded. The second is that anyone writing to a committee member for information should please include a stamped self-addressed envelope.

It just remains for me to give my thanks to the following people. The first being Mr.J. Skaer who has very generously taken on the task of reproducing the Austringer. I offer him my sincere thanks. The second, as always, is my dear friend our President, Lorant de Bastyai, who has done a great deal to help me with acquiring articles for this issue, and of course the third is my husband Mick, who has given up a good deal of his free time to help me with the chore of putting this magazine together. --- Sincerely, The Editor.

The Cover Picture

The Austringer portrayed on the front cover is one of several statues that go to make up a composition named "King Matyas Hunting". This was erected on the North Wing of the Royal Palace in Budapest in 1904 and was sculpted by Alajos Stroble.

King Matyas (named "The Just") reigned from 1458 - 1490 and his statue stands at the top of the group. He is shown holding a crossbow and there is a dead stag lying at his feet. On his right his lady friend, Szep Ilonka, is shown feeding a roe-deer, while in front of the king is his huntsman with his bloodhounds. The statue shown on the cover is to the left of the king. This was his chief falconer, named Galeotto, who besides holding this position was also the author of books containing the wise sayings of his master.

The photograph was taken last year by a dear friend of the Welsh Hawking Club and its President, Herr Sepp Knoferl, who kindly gave us his permission for its use.

Welsh Hawking Club Breeding & Conservation Project Appeal

The breeding of birds of prey in captivity has made tremendous strides over the past few years and it is quite feasible (legislation permitting) that falconry in Britain could be self sufficient in the not too distant future. This means that no birds need be taken from the wild either in the U.K or abroad for the purposes of falconry in this country.

Whilst few people would be so naive as to believe that this would mean the automatic removal of all pressures upon the wild raptor population, nevertheless it would be a major step towards conserving our birds of prey and as such would be welcomed by all falconers whose first thoughts must be for these noble birds that have given us so much pleasure over the years.

On Monday March 2nd a special meeting was called by the Club to discuss the question of a Club breeding project. The meeting was unanimous in deciding that a breeding programme be set up and cash be made available from Club funds to help towards this aim and a committee formed to organise the project. A week later the first meeting of this committee decided that their aims would be :- To raise funds to allow a nucleus of birds for breeding to be purchased by the Club and to set down general guidelines on which to base a sound

breeding programme for the future.

Thanks to an extremely generous offer from one of our members and to a large percentage of club funds being made available to us, we are delighted to be able to report that the breeding/conservation project has got off to an excellent start.

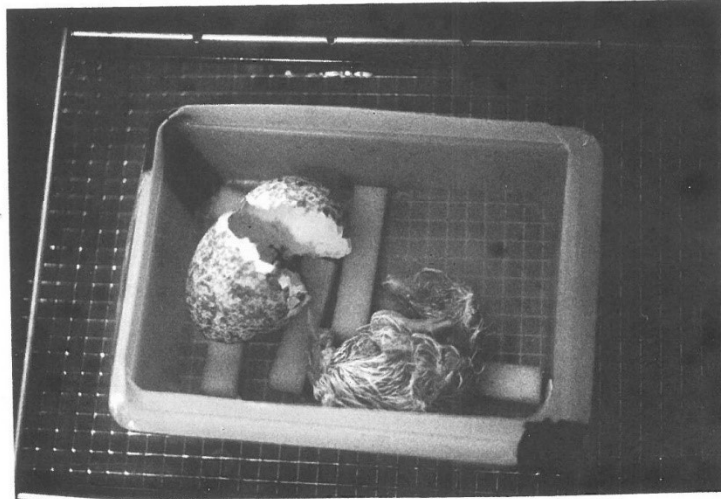
This is only the beginning; we need more birds and more breeding enclosures; we need incubators and brooders and to obtain them we need money. To place one pair of Club birds in a Club breeding aviary will cost in the region of £600.

The fact that you have this magazine in your hand shows your interest in birds of prey. It is within your power and others like you not only to ensure the success of our venture but also to play your part in ensuring that future generations are able to enjoy the same pleasures of flying a trained hawk or watching the stoop of a wild falcon that we have been privileged to enjoy.

We appeal to all our readers, whether members or not, to follow the example of those who have already given and to contribute as much as you can afford, to what we believe is a most worthwhile project.

Donations to be forwarded to Mr. John Buckner.

THANK YOU!



Lanner Chick Bred By Bob Haddon.

Captive Breeding 1978

BY BOB HADDON.

My initial reaction on being approached by the editor to write this article was one of surprise. I am a comparative newcomer to the breeding scene, and it was not until this year (1978) that I have achieved any success in the way of fertile eggs and offspring and therefore it would be rather presumptuous of me to write an article on the subject.

However, it would appear that (like myself) there are many who are prepared to read almost anything on captive breeding whether the content be new or old. There are also some, who fired by the success of others, are just starting on this exciting and rewarding aspect of birds of prey. It is with these people in mind and with grateful acknowledgement to all captive breeders, authors or not, that I give you my experiences to date.

My aviaries are not grand luxury affairs, they were built with economy in mind, both of finance and space. They are what would be described by some (correctly) as back yard aviaries. This has at least two distinct advantages. First of all with the enclosures being within a few yards of my back door security is less of a problem than if they were some way away from the house. Second, no attempt is made to reduce the every day comings and goings or the noise associated with them. This has made all my birds almost bomb proof, and I believe has played a big part in the breeding success this year.

All the aviaries are of the daylight and seclusion type, with feeding chutes and two way mirrors. My first two were constructed from old doors and subsequent ones from larch lap fencing panels. The roof is 1" x 1/2" Twilweld set about 2" above Netlon fruitcage netting. Shelter is in the form of corrugated P.V.C. sheeting set above the corner perches and nest sites. I consider the Twilweld roof is essential because it cannot be eaten through by rats (a constant problem in my case) and gives less cause for concern during heavy snow falls. The fruit-cage netting is so inexpensive that I see no valid reason for dispensing with it. Incidentally I place 3" - 4" wooden spacers between the two layers to eliminate any chance of the two touching if and when the birds fly at the roof covering.

My first two aviaries measure 19' 6" x 6' 6" x 7' high, my third is 12' square and 7' high. It would be nice to have the space and wherewithall to provide the birds with larger quarters, but after all they are in there for only one purpose and that is to breed. This year three pairs of birds laid 17 eggs, fourteen of which were fertile, only one pair was double clutched. The sizes are obviously adequate.

The perches provided are determined by the species in the enclosures, as are the nesting sites, but there is one perch that is common to all and one by which I place great store.

It consists of a length of 4" x 2" timber at least 5' long, fixed at right angles to the aviary wall and about 3' 6" from the ground. The width allows food to be placed on it by the male for the female with little danger of the food falling off on to the ground. The length allows the male, in the early days of the breeding pattern, to land on the same perch as the female, far enough away to be out of harms way if she is not ready for his advances. This is more important with short wings of course due to their aggressive nature. If the perch is placed half way along the aviary and fixed securely at one end to the aviary side and the other fixed to a post concreted into the ground then it helps to make the whole structure more rigid and helps a lot towards peace of mind in periods of gale force winds.

The birds are fed twice a day on day old chicks, with chicken heads from the butchers once a week after first removing the sharp pointed tip of the beak to minimise any crop injury. No vitamin supplement is given.

At the first sign of breeding behaviour, the feeding alters slightly. I try to feed as early as possible because most of the activity is early morning and evening and develops around food, so obviously the earlier the food goes in the more chance of a successful breeding pattern developing. Secondly, I tie the chicks together at each feed. This is why - during the months prior to the breeding the female usually is the dominant partner and is usually first at the food tray. One of the first signs of her coming into condition is when she hangs back and allows the male to feed first. This should then develop step by step, culminating in the transference of food from the males beak to the females, thus completing the food pass which is such an essential part of breeding behaviour. Now if the chicks are put into the aviary singly, the female will have one or two options. She may wait a while then either overcome by hunger or impatience (or both) she will fly to the ledge and take a chick for herself, or she may approach the male to solicit food from him. The male meanwhile is busy devouring his chick, which in the case of the sparrow hawk is sufficient to satisfy his hunger, whereupon he hops off to another perch.

Now if the chicks are tied together there are none left for the female to be tempted by and she either has to wait for the male to finish eating or solicit for food again. The male will have a bundle of two upwards depending on the species, half way through his appetite will be satiated and having quite a bit of food left he will probably drag it towards the female call to her and leave it or fly from perch to perch with the food, calling frequently.

I hope that I have managed to explain this satisfactorily.

Obviously many people have achieved success without this dodge, but I believe it is fairly logical reasoning based on the fact that in the wild there would in all probability only be one kill involved in the feeding pattern and the fact that it speeded things up in my aviaries this year is enough for me.

Another thing that I have done, brought about by my observations, concerns the cooling period of eggs in the incubator. My pair of Lanner falcons were observed a lot during incubation and it soon became obvious that the eggs were only uncovered during the actual changeover period and probably never amounted to more than two minutes a day. I decided to do away with the recommended cooling period in the incubator, which is I believe no detriment to hatchability.

Last year (1977) a pair of three year old sparrow hawks laid three infertile eggs. This year they again laid three eggs all of which were fertile. The first was laid on June 2nd and hatched July 9th, together with the second egg. On the 10th, the third egg, which was in an advanced pipping stage the day before, had gone from the nest. Because of this and also the fact that we had not witnessed any successful transfer of food from the female to the remaining chicks, we decided to remove the chicks from the aviary.

A second pair of two year old spars laid 6 fertile eggs. Three were placed in the incubator and three left to the female to incubate. In both pairs of sparrow hawks the musket was never seen to incubate. The first egg was laid on May 16th, and hatched on June 28th. About two hours after hatching the female was seen to pick up the chick by its wing and fly around the aviary with it. We banged on the aviary wall, shouted, and dashed in as quickly as possible. Luck was with us, she had dropped the chick in the long grass and it was none the worse for its ordeal. It and the remaining eggs were removed to the incubator.

Most of the pictures of birds of prey that I have seen at a few days old show the chicks to be 'not a pretty sight', but sparrow hawks at that age are beautiful, with jet black eyes and beak set in a ball of cotton wool. The first few days of feeding can be very trying as the chicks have a habit of snaking their necks around almost as if they were trying to avoid the food offered. At a week old though, they seem to go completely opposite and actually launch themselves upwards at the food offered in tweezers. It seems sometimes as though they are going to swallow the tweezers as well as the meat. One has to be careful in the first few days not to overfeed the youngsters, and as soon as the crop shows any size of a bulge we stop. We never feed more than four times a day and only then if there were visible evidence of mutes after the last meal.

From two pairs of sparrow hawks we had 9 eggs, all fertile, and we reared 2 muskets and 6 females.

A pair of three year old Lanners laid their first egg at approximately 06.45 on March 21st. This was the very first egg of the season and it gave all of my family a tremendous thrill. The second egg appeared on the 23rd. and I was fortunate to observe the third egg 'plop' into the world at 16.00 on the 25th. The clutch was completed by the fourth egg at 07.15 on March 28th.

The falcon had commenced incubation with the first egg and as I planned to double clutch I removed the eggs to the incubator on Friday 31st. Previously we had not witnessed any attempt at copulation, but on the Sunday following the removal of the first clutch we saw copulation take place on at least four occasions. On the 11th. April the clutch was candled and we observed a heartbeat in one of the eggs. To say we were excited would be the understatement of the year.

The first egg of the second clutch was laid on April 18th. and the fourth egg on the 22nd.

All of the second clutch were fertile, and to cut a long story short, from the five fertile eggs we had one die prior to hatching, the first chick in the aviary had its neck broken by the Lanneret, post mortems on two that died at four days old showed the causes to be yolk sac infection and a blockage in the stomach (may have been due to overfeeding).

There is in the last long sentence a lot of work and heart-break, but we did rear one successfully, a female, which at three weeks old was placed with other young falcons at the Falconry Centre to prevent it becoming a screamer. When collected many weeks later it was a beautiful full grown falcon with yellow feet, blue cere and a bloom on the plumage that I never expected to see on a Lanner. She weighed in at 1lb 4½ oz.

This one Lanner, and the sparrow hawks that came along later helped to ease the pain of losing the other chicks and made it a year to remember, and I hope the forerunner of many more, legislation permitting.

Most of what I have written is taken from my notebook which I started in 1976 and is a record of my observations and those of my family. Close and regular observations have proved enjoyable and materially rewarding for all of us. If you are going to attempt captive breeding, watch carefully and get it down on paper.

Personal experience of the licensing 'system' as it stands at present (8.11.78) and also of the tales of the anomalies that exist in the system lead me to believe that if falconry is to survive then captive breeding is not only desirable but imperative.

If in ten years time all birds held by falconers were genuine aviary bred birds there could be no criticism of the sport on conservation grounds.

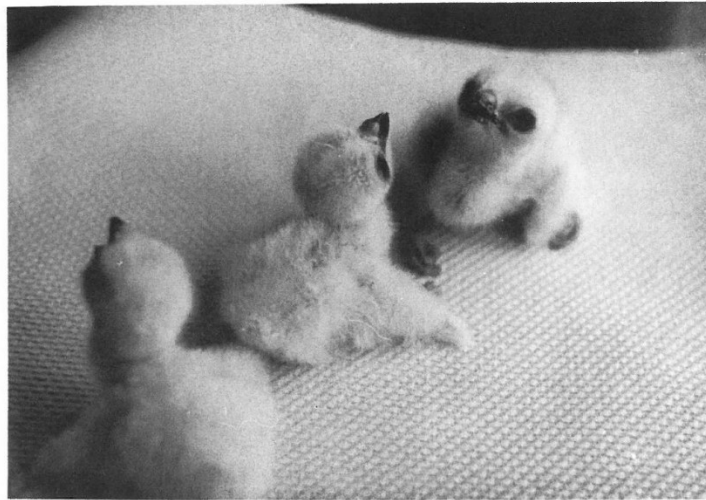
In my opinion the breeding success over the past years is, if handled correctly, the best thing to happen in the history of falconry.

Captive bred birds are still demanding a high price, and why not? Aviaries, incubators and equipment are very expensive items, and I see nothing immoral in trying to recover some, if not all, of the expense.

But more people are trying their hand at breeding and many will have success given time, common sense, and a bit of luck. Prices will come down which will at least make one item of equipment obsolete, the burgular alarm.

Due to limitation of space I have omitted a few things and only touched lightly on others, if I can supply information or assistance to anyone do not hesitate to ask.

Last but certainly not least 'thank you' to friends who loaned birds to me for the project and to my wife who 'volunteered' to feed the chicks and made such an excellent job of it.



3 Days Old Sparrow Hawk Chicks
Bred By Bob Haddon.

Duck Hawking with Red Shaheens

BY DR. GIANPIERO DEL MASTRO CALVETTI - ITALY.



Dr. Gianpiero Del Mastro Calvetti
With His Red Shaheen
In Juvenile Plumage.

When the law on quarantine came into force for birds of prey imported into the United Kingdom I had to give up grouse hawking and find another place to practise falconry.

A zone of the Po Valley - in Northern Italy - which has not yet been contaminated by industrialization proved to be suitable for this purpose. There are streams and small lakes as well as a large population of ducks, among which are mallards, teals, garganeys, wigeons and pintails. The falcons I had were two red shaheens which weighed 680/700 grams (including hood and jesses) when flying.

These shaheens were trained for grouse hawking and I did not know how they would behave towards the ducks and how the ducks would behave in that environment.

The first difficulty was that one of the two falcons, when brought into the presence of the wild birds, attacked the ducks spontaneously, but the other one was afraid of them. I had, therefore, to make several attempts at capturing mallards till it had the courage to face them.

The second difficulty was that at the beginning I did not take into consideration the wind direction and afterwards I realized that if the ducks left with contrary wind, whatever the height was from which the falcon was stooping, it was not able to develop enough speed to reach them. I had, therefore to make the ducks leave always with fair wind and with the falcon slightly above wind in comparison with them.

Another inconvenience was that when the falcon approached, the duck, if there was some water fairly near, made every effort to jump into it and then the falcon refused the prey. I do not think that this behaviour is common to all falcons as in the past I have had some which threw themselves into the water with the prey but these two shaheens are so afraid of it that they will not even alight on the lure if this is in a puddle. I had, therefore, to avoid the ponds which were too large since the ducks, at the sight of the falcon, could jump into them as well as those which were small but numerous and close to one another as the ducks could perform the same movements and I had to look for, instead, small and isolated ponds in the middle of the country or small streams where it is easy to make the water fowl come out of the water and compel them to fly over the fields.

A further inconvenience was that one can never be certain of the presence of the ducks at a particular point and can, therefore, run the risk of making the falcon fly with no possibility of finding the prey as in that place there aren't any.

This compelled me to train the falcons to stand a flight of 20/30 minutes in order to give them the possibility of visiting several places during this lapse of time with consequently many more opportunities of meeting wild birds. This is easier during the ducks mating period as they always stay in pairs far from the others; during the remaining part of the year instead they gather in large groups and stay where there are large sheets of water and it is, therefore, more difficult to hunt them.

As far as the species are concerned the mallard is slower at the beginning of the flight and less capable of performing stunts during it, and is, therefore, more easily attacked by the falcon provided the latter is at a sufficient height. The other smaller ducks are quicker and more agile and it is quite difficult for only one falcon to attack them and usually it is necessary to have two falcons together for their attack. The prey in fact will be able to avoid the attack of the first falcon but sometimes will be attacked by the second one. The size of the prey is not a problem as the falcon soon realizes that the duck, on the ground, has not many defences

and that, moreover, it is not dangerous. My shaheens which weigh 700 grams are now able to grip big male mallards quite easily. It is more difficult to grip a male pheasant than a duck.

In conclusion this sort of hunting is really beautiful. It requires very well trained falcons, able to hold themselves tightly on the falconer and to fly to a very great height (much greater than for grouse) and on the part of the falconer a very accurate study of the environment conditions, of the wind, of the hiding places which permit him to get near the water without causing the flight of the ducks before the due time so that the success depends half on the falcon and half on the way that the falconer approaches the prey. I wish also to emphasize that for the duration of the flight the great height and speed of the prey causes the falcon to make a considerable effort, and in order to keep it efficient it is essential to limit it to one prey only per day. This is therefore a very sporting form of hunting where the strength of the falcon and the strength of its prey are nearly the same and where the least wind or cunning advantage may turn the scale in favour of one bird or of the other.

I think that Federico II rightly included this type of hunting in his book as well as crane and heron hawking.

I hope that the persons who have the opportunity of practising this sort of hunting experience the same emotion that it has given me.



Red Shaheen On Kill.

B.F.S.S. Falconry Conference 28th January 1979

BY C.P. MILSOM.

The Conference was held at the National Agriculture Centre near Coventry. Despite the very bad weather conditions it was attended by over three hundred falconers. The W.H.C. was well represented by members from the Midlands and Bristol. Chairing the meeting was Marcus Kimball M.P. who was an excellent chairman in every way, and kept the meeting moving along with his expertise and wit. On the platform with Marcus Kimball were:-

Mr. C. Griffiths representing the W.H.C.
Mr. T. Jack representing the B.F.C.
Mr. P. Glasier Falconry Centre.
Capt. Grant Rennick Hawk Trust.
General Brockbank B.F.S.S.
Mr. Waymouth Guest speaker from the D.O.E.

The R.S.P.B. sent two observers along and although questions were put to them through the Chair they declined to answer.

On arrival at the Centre an agenda and precis of the Falconry report were handed out to all who attended. The Chairman welcomed all who had come along and opened the meeting. He gave a brief statement on his and the B.F.S.S.'s position on Falconry, pledging both his and their support to the sport. He gave an outline on Parliamentary tactics used to defend field sports in the House of Commons and pointed out that Falconry was already the most restricted field sport still practised under law. The first report on Captive Hawks was proceeded with item by item - ten in all. Mr. Waymouth (D.O.E.) and Mr. Roger Upton answered as many queries as they could, and Mr. J. Cooper and Mr. L. Gibson gave some veterinary advice - re. marking of birds i.e. rings, tattoos, skull x-rays. There was then a break for lunch, during which falconers who were not members of a club should get together and nominate one of their number for a position on the committee.

After lunch Mr. Waymouth (D.O.E.) explained the situation of his Department and gave some ideas to the meeting. He was closely questioned afterwards and to his credit did not evade the issues in front of him. He stated that there was a strong possibility of an amnesty for falconers to bring every-one back within the law so that all could start a new era on a fresh footing. He also stated a desire for falconers having a much greater say in the running of their sport and pledged his Departments help in achieving this end.

There then followed a discussion of the second paper - Proposals for an Advisory Panel on Captive Hawks. This was broken down into eight items. There was a general acceptance of all the items with reservations stated.

Item 3:- "To ensure that stock captive bred from parents taken from the wild under licence for this purpose are made available to keepers of Captive Hawks and not released to the wild".

Concern was stated on the question of Hacking etc. being banned.

Item 4:- Trade for profit. Fixing prices etc. of Birds of Prey.

One can only say that a great variety of views came forward from the floor for the committee to sort out.

Finally the Committee was enlarged and now also contains two people representing the Northern falconers, one representing the Raptor Breeders, and Mr.T. Jenkins representing the individual falconer.

Marcus Kimball then closed the meeting and thanks were expressed to Mr. Waymouth for giving up his free time to attend and the members of the B.F.S.S. for arranging the meeting.

Further Food for Thought

BY DAVID SIMPSON.

Following the article written in the previous issue of the 'Austringer' many members have accepted the challenge and have loaned spare birds to beginners so that they can gain experience and also be under the auspices of experienced falconers to whom they can turn if in doubt. Although only a small start, nevertheless a start in the right direction.

Those falconers who have loaned a bird to a beginner and those who have taken that beginner under their wing have reported in all cases that the beginner is showing promise and that all the birds are in excellent health and good feather. Can I therefore appeal to anyone with a spare bird to get in touch with a Committee member so that we can pass it on to a beginner.

As those of you who attended the Stoneleigh meeting will appreciate, when the proposed legislation becomes law unless we are prepared to assist these aspiring young falconers they will never realize their ambition to obtain their own birds. If therefore we wish to ensure the future of falconry we must now prepare the ground.

As I am sure you will realize there is a lot of extra work involved in endeavouring to find experienced falconers in the same area as these beginners and then getting them to

meet before the birds can be transferred to their new owners.

Whilst at the Stoneleigh meeting I met one of the beginners who had had one of these spare birds in 1978, and according to the falconer guiding him, he will be ready for a more advanced bird by July of this year. So if there is a Buzzard about that is not being flown please try to pass it on so that at least one chap can gain enough practical experience.

Lastly, thanks to the members of the W.H.C something has been started which will help these budding falconers, and hopefully with your help it will continue. I also understand that it is encouraging new members, as the inexperienced now understand and appreciate that this Club at least is endeavouring to assist practically wherever possible.

A visit to Lahore

BY DR. GORDON F. JOLLY.

In 1976 I went to Sumatra for a year. There was no indigenous hawking and coupled with this a shortage of quarry so I decided not to attempt to keep any hawks.

On the way home I planned to try and gratify one of my ambitions to visit the hawk dealers in Lahore and try to see the hawk catching.

I wrote to Fayiz Hussein and Chaudri Mohd Din, but by the time I left Sumatra I had received no replies. I arrived in Lahore in mid-September, having travelled by Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Karachi. Tired and grubby after the night flight, I stepped out at Lahore Airport to a hot dry mid-morning.

Entrusting myself and all my luggage to a battered Morris 1000 taxi I was driven into the city to a commercial hotel near Lahore Station, in a business area.

Lahore, a provincial capital, was at one time headquarters of the proud Mogul Empire before it fell to the Sikhs. I wondered what my father would have thought of my choice of hotel, a commercial type native establishment much-used by trans-continental car and van drivers of all nationalities because of its cheapness and safe parking facilities in its central courtyard.

Despite the previous assurance of my Singaporean travel agency no booking had been made, but I was able to obtain a single room, which was like a concrete box with a part divided off for the shower, basin, and squatting latrine. This portion had a small opening to the outside air.

The living part was quite dark with one feeble electric bulb casting a fitful beam. A bed, chair, table and wardrobe completed the furnishings. It would have been ideal in which to keep a newly trapped passenger, but I found it rather claustrophobic, and after two days, changed to a double room with a view over the street. This room had the disadvantage that it was extremely dusty, noisy, and had quite a lot of flies, but I could look at the kites nesting on the minarets of the mosque opposite.

Fired by more zeal than sense, I decided to seek out the Fayiz Husseins and set off mid-afternoon. I took a motorised tricycle taxi driven by a pleasant young man. If you want an exciting experience akin to the dodgems I recommend darting through the centre of Lahore weaving between cars, trucks, buses, pedestrians and bullock carts. The speed isn't great but it certainly feels more and you have to hang on to avoid being shot out of your seat.

We went through the centre of Lahore and out on the Meerut road to a suburb, stopping from time to time for my driver who couldn't read to show the address to various people, who either seemed certain where to direct us or did not know. We drove around in circles in an area where clusters of local houses were situated next to areas of dry unfenced grass on which grazed water buffalo herded by their attendants.

Asking at a row of shops, one young shopkeeper offered to direct us, and got in beside me. After a few minutes we arrived at a side street where we got out and I followed him along to a gate behind which was the garden of a commodious modern bungalow.

In front of the wall was a large pile of chicken feathers, and I felt certain I had arrived. I paid my obliging taximan and thanked the guide, then walked towards the veranda of the house where four or five men were lying on charpoy beds. One got up and greeted me in perfect English. This was the eldest of the Hussein brothers - the father had died about three years before. He was a veterinary surgeon and had recently returned from Florida U.S.A where he had been a member of the veterinary team on a large cattle establishment. This was my first major surprise. A younger brother was present and there were two other falconers.

We had tea and cakes and I was shown about thirty sakers, all females, tied to two string beds in a large room behind the veranda.

After the inevitable wait the second brother arrived, I think it was his house and he runs the hawk dealing business. He is a shorter thickset fellow, and is a Lecturer in Economics at Lahore University. Soon after his arrival the two elder brothers disappeared into the living apartments. By this time I was so tired I felt I should make moves back to the hotel, and after speaking to the economist he organised my return, one of the retainers drove me to the main road and

put me on a taxi bus in the care of the conductor. The passengers are jammed in like sardines and the conductor, who takes the fares, hangs on to the car more outside than in.

However I was given a preferential seat and they were kindness itself and dropped me off in front of my hotel much to my relief.

I had given the Husseins my address and they gave me their telephone number, promising to contact me, but all my efforts failed and I did not go out there again.

Next day after a long overdue sleep I asked my elderly bearer in the hotel to try and locate Chaudri Mohd Dins establishment. The old man organised one of the hotel boys when he came off duty and after some delays and difficulties by enquiring at a small post office we found that we were next door to the entrance of the street in which they lived. Turning down the side street we came, at one of its dead ends to a typical vertical house of several floors. As is customary I saw only fleeting glimpses of the female members of the household, but I met various male members of the family.

I was conducted up on to the roof where the falcons were kept in an open-fronted penthouse, off which was a small side room. Here again they were tied onto wooden battens without screens and these were propped on boxes, but there was always someone in attendance to keep an eye on them. An electric fan was used if it became very hot. I spent much of my brief stay in Lahore on this roof for it was only ten minutes walk from the hotel through the bazaar.

Like the Fayiz Husseins the Chaudri Mohd's father died fairly recently and the sons carry on the hawk business. They are also carpet dealers and the eldest brother Chaudri Mohd Saleem told me that he visited Germany and Holland after the hawking season was over. He also told me that he had written in answer to my letter stressing that it was too early in the season and I should have made my visit later. This letter later reached me in the U.K.

He is a good looking man, speaks excellent English, but is inclined to run to fat as indeed so many of the better off people are in this part of Pakistan.

There are several brothers, two of whom were out hawk trapping, and innumerable uncles, cousins and retainers.

All the falcons on the roof were female sakers with the exception of three red shahins. Later on there were some shikras to be used for carrying the bundle to noose the sakers. All were seeled or hooded but seemed remarkably tame and were in excellent condition. There was only one haggard saker, and peregrines have become excessively rare.

Whilst I attempted to arrange to go out to the field to see the trapping nothing came of it. I should have allowed myself

more time in which to organise it.

One afternoon I witnessed the arrival of two Abu Dubai Sheikhs and two Saudi Sheikhs on a buying visit.

They carefully inspected the sakers which had been moved out of the penthouse on to the roof. The Abu Dubai Sheikhs arrived first, the Saudi Sheikhs shortly afterwards and I was interested that both pairs seemed to be interested in the same birds. We had tea and the Saudis left first, after which the leading Abu Dubai Sheikh, who was an official of the Emirs household, and who spoke excellent English, courteously asked Saleem if he had finished with the Saudi Sheikhs and might he make an offer. He was interested in purchasing four birds including a large haggard saker, but his offer was apparently less than what Saleem had hoped for. No sale was made then, but the Sheikh stated that he would be available at the Intacontinental Hotel till the following morning and could be contacted. He told me that he had found the birds too expensive in Lahore last year, and had gone elsewhere. However I noticed that next day when I reached the roof that there were four less sakers including the haggard.

One morning I got up excessively early for my watch had stopped and I walked through the relatively quiet bazaar to Chaudri Mohd Saleems. On arrival I found the narrow street blocked by two cars. Several men were unloading birds, they were one of Saleem's brothers and other hawk trappers from Baluchistan with thirty freshly caught sakers.

I met two of the trappers, delightful types, one of whom had a few words of English and he told me that he had a peregrine given to him by a visiting Arab falconer and also a fine shaheen. The party, after transferring the hawks to the roof went to Saleem's room one floor below where they were obviously paid.

Frustrated by my failure to get out to see the trapping before I left Lahore, I bought a few bells and was able to sit on the floor and choose my own from the boxes and bags containing the various sizes. Whilst doing so, I thought of when back in 1937 I was first interested in falconry, and my father who was living in Lahore obtained for me some excellent merlin bells, some of which I still possess.

In the bazaar I saw a hood and glove maker who had originally lived in Amritsar. They now make hoods of Anglo Indian type and the gloves follow the European pattern.

My brief visit was a pale reflection of the great days of the Amritsar hawk-mart described pre the 1940 war, the partition of India, and the toxic pesticides.

Four Seasons with Longwings

BY JOHN R. FAIRCLOUGH.

I have now completed my fourth season with longwings, my first season flying a Lanner falcon at partridge and the last three with Peregrines.

The Peregrines I use belong to the B.F.C. and are aviary bred birds. The responsibility of flying two B.F.C. birds, a tiercel Peregrine (Coco) and falcon (Fog) is considerable, and although I am not quite as nervous as in my first season they are nevertheless birds that cannot be taken lightly. Indeed Fog was so named because she put the Fear Of God in me whenever she left my fist.

I really started from scratch with Peregrines. I have flown Goshawks for eight seasons with reasonable success. Bess, my Gos. would be five years old, and killed over one hundred and twenty rabbits and twenty three pheasants and duck in her penultimate season. In October 1977, in her fourth year, she was flying her twentyth rabbit when it clamped down, she overshot it and hit a Fresian cow and died. My feeling for longwings was therefore seen through Austringers eyes, although I like to think I have adjusted somewhat over four seasons. To illustrate this point four seasons ago I was in sugar-beet looking for a point with Duchess my G.S.P, when I stumbled across and flushed a cock pheasant. As it rose my Austringer's instinct forced my left hand forward, forgetting that I had a Lanner falcon on my glove and not a Gos. Thus encouraged to leave my fist she obligingly flew, hood and all. My luck was in, the hood had already been struck and she collided with a tree dislodging the hood - all was well.

It was this Lanner falcon that started my interest in longwings. It originated four seasons ago from Denis Longworth and was a useful sized bird. After much effort it appeared to sort of wait on, and I was successful in flushing many partridge under it which it chased without much success. A day came in September, a pleasant breeze and blue sky. The Lanner was looking well and I cast her off over a point in some swedes. She was a respectable thirty feet off the ground (you might not think this worth mentioning but at this time I was very impressed). I ran in like a Bull Elephant in Yarak to flush, only to see a hare take off. Undaunted, I carried on for a partridge and was delighted to see her lose interest in me as a potential food provider and start to mount in rather an independent way. On reaching at least five hundred feet I was quite delighted and gazed upwards into the blue sky realising that I had cracked it, and would in all probability be written up in books for ever after. Blain and Fairclough, Fairclough and Franks, Knight and Fairclough - when I was suddenly rather rudely brought back to reality with a suggestion from my companion that she

had cleared off. 'Nonsense', I retorted, pulling out my lure, which only confirmed him right. My 'Ultimate' was a dead pigeon that I carried for emergencies and by now she was just a dot. It really is quite amazing how high you can throw a pigeon in such a situation. Fortunately she responded and dropped to three or four hundred feet before losing interest and circling and climbing once more. I tore through the swedes in full cry, rabbits and hares were being hunted in a most encouraging manner for an Austringer but this was not my quarry. At last a solitary Red-Leg rose, the Lanner accepted the challenge and tore down for her first (and last) really stylish kill. Like a fool I let her take her full pleasure on this well deserved partridge. (I have since realised that if you do this it is impossible to repeat a similar exercise the following day due to excessive weight).

Having over-fed the lady and ruined our sport for the following day I hot-footed it into town for a pair of extra powerful binoculars to keep track of my five hundred foot bird. The next day we had identical weather conditions, and my excitement was really on the boil when I saw a covey of Englishmen run from stubble into roots. Giving them time to settle I ran the dog and had a secure 'real thing'. In no time at all the hood was removed and the bird exposed to the wide open sky. I moved my arm slowly upwards, excitement mounted, a mute, the wings slowly opened and away she flew, for approximately fifty feet alighting on the stubble. Cursing, I repeated the process, and so did she. I ran at her with threatening gestures and stamped my foot around her. Try as I might she was not in the mood either that day or the next, but the day after things got better. Alas this is one of the problems I found with the Lanner, we would go out every day for three months - she would see quarry on nearly every occasion but some days she seemed in the mood and others a complete Joe Loss. We finished with six or seven brace of partridges that season, I regret only two or three in any style, the majority in some sort of Rat Hunt.

I subsequently learnt, to my downfall, that these blue sky, light winds, hot days are what the experts refer to as 'Soaring Days' when birds rise on thermals to cool. I lost this same bird this way the following season.

The following season I had the good fortune to fly a pair of B.F.C. aviary bred birds, and on the strength of this rented a grouse moor in Caithness. My ability was such that the total bag was one wounded grouse. We had a lot of bad luck, a lot of fun, but we couldn't put it together. I rented the moor for two separate fortnights with a four week gap in the middle. This was my first mistake. Another was the fact that we could not rely on the dogs, inexperienced dogs and sparse grouse make for lark pointing, which disappoints and makes a hawk lose confidence in you. Still, we had a good time, Ceri Griffiths joined me the first two weeks and we flew our Gos's for rabbits in the morning from ten o'clock until one o'clock, a quick lunch and then out with the Peregrines from

two thirty onwards. We caught many rabbits and slept exceedingly well.

The tremendous price that guns are prepared to pay for grouse moors prohibits in many cases falconers competing. Shooters are content with weeks or even days shooting and then this cost is split between many. I realised that to try and hawk grouse seriously you had to have a continuous period in which to do it, and also to start when the grouse are young. There is no future in trying to catch experienced grouse with inexperienced hawks. I had a fortunate introduction which enabled me to rent, at a reasonable rate, moors in Wales. The only problem was finding the grouse. (What is the plural?). Points were thin and on average were six per day, so we had to have reliable dogs.

By this time I had employed Malcom Brockllis as my falconer, who not only has an excellent Vizla but has had experience at flying Peregrines for several years and has that 'feeling' for the sport. I had also started to accumulate in the spring a collection of Irish and English Setters, (all of which I'd hoped would improve) as well as my G.S.P Duchess. Sad to say none of these is any longer kennelled at my establishment, although I am learning quite a lot of the pit-falls.



Sept. 1978 Fog On A French Partridge.

So far as 'grouse in the bag' were concerned the season was poor - four weeks for one and a half brace. We had some superb flights but again it wasn't being put together properly. The positive thing was that we were returning to Staffordshire in September with really fit birds that were giving partridge a good run for their money. Coco was proving a real high and consistent flyer with an unmistakable style and character. He had one or two notable flights at partridge at the B.F.C Woodhall Spa Half-Centenary meeting, and between them they finished the season with twenty two and a half brace of partridge and a few pheasants

When we re-appeared on the same Welsh moor the following season (1978) the keeper thought we were mad. After one and a half brace all last season surely we would call it a day. He honestly felt embarrassed and could not think that anyone could get pleasure out of this sport unless he took home a sackful of grouse.

Undaunted, we set up our base and armed with past knowledge prepared once more to pit our wits against this most difficult quarry. New dogs appeared on the scene with Malcom's Vizla 'Ranz'. I had acquired from Geoff Pollard FT Ch. 'Sharnberry Ling', a very stylish English Setter. Twenty miles later I realised why she had been gifted on me. In all fairness to Geoff he did warn me she had a 'wayward' trend. We got on well and she proved a very useful addition when in this same country we took also a young pointer and setter but decided against running them, they get very bored on sparse ground, much better to get them going on rich partridge country.



Fog (Note Coco-nut Type Block)

As was hoped things began to fit together, steady pointing and better knowledge of the moors and grouse location, fitter and more experienced hawks, meant better flights and many more grouse in the bag. Several W.H.C. and B.F.C. members joined us in Wales, and most saw some notable flights. On one occasion I put Coco up over a point and he was joined by two wild Peregrines. Wondering who the trespassers were Coco went over to meet them and they played a little. (I think it was play) Eventually Coco came back over, joined by his two new-found friends. At the earliest opportunity the point was worked out and produced six or seven grouse. Coco put in a smartish stoop followed by the wild birds. The wild birds pulled out approximately twenty feet from the ground, leaving Coco to carry on and take a fine cock grouse. This tiercel is an outstanding bird, flying around one pound nine ounces towards the end of the season, practically the same weight as when he came out of the aviary.

One day he was waiting on at around his usual three to four hundred feet pitch when the grouse flushed when he was not ideally positioned. By then he would normally refuse birds that were flushed in such a manner as he felt that he had no chance and would not waste his energy. We tried in vain for a point and he was up for half an hour or so, when, bored, he took up some ariel antics with a passing kestrel then joined a picnic party some mile or so away. Fortunately Doug Morgans, who was lying down getting his breath back between myself and the picnickers saw the problem and lured Coco in with the aid of his larger red snuff handkerchief. Doug was somewhat relieved when his attention was attracted by my lure.

Partridge hawking took place until early November, until suitable cover was all lost to the plough.

The season ended very satisfactorily, Coco and Fog having accounted for nine and a half brace of grouse, nineteen and a half brace of partridge and several pheasants. We would have done better with the partridges but Fog was lost on a Frenchman in forty acres of good standing wheat and had her freedom for nine days, during which period we ceased game hawking and naturally concentrated on looking for her. She was picked up by Malcom early on the ninth morning after having consumed a pigeon on a friend's lawn the previous evening. Surprisingly she responded to the lure and quickly broke into a freshly killed pigeon then hopped onto the glove when a chick was offered.

Three days later she was back in the field flying partridge, and a much improved style was very apparent. Coco's most stylish flight was a vertical stoop from four hundred feet on a cock pheasant, he adjusted his pitch half way down and hit it vertically, killing it in the air, a two pounds thirteen ounce Ring Neck cock.



Brace Day For Fog Held By The Author
With Lawrence Workman In Background.



Transport 1978 Style-
Coco, Fog, Ling, Ranz.

Photography for this article by J.Skaer

Goshawk Breeding by Artificial Insemination

BY LAJOS DOBNER.

Translated by Klara Bense.
With photographs taken by the author.



Goshawk taken actually laying an egg.

Summary: It is the goshawk that causes presumably the most problems in our nature and game protection. By learning about his biology and ecology we hope to breed successfully other more rare and valuable birds of prey as well. The first Hungarian breeding by artificial insemination of a bird of prey is an important milestone which may ensure our nature protection new ways, methods and possibilities.

I am a member of the Hawking Department of the Hungarian Ornithological Society and for more than ten years I have been hawking with a Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter Gentilis*).

It is getting more and more difficult to obtain hunting birds, because on the one hand catching goshawks is only

allowed near pheasant colonies, and on the other obtaining nestlings is absolutely impossible. Besides my scientific curiosity these above mentioned two reasons give an explanation as to why I decided to carry out the breeding experiments.

Some years ago I was corresponding with Dutch hawkers about artificial insemination. I was particularly interested in the method because mating goshawks is almost impossible due to their aggressive and nervous character. Moreover, the female often considers the often much smaller male as prey. This difficulty can be avoided by artificial insemination, which I had earlier practised with poultry.

I placed the aviary with my six year old female goshawk in a distant peaceful part of our garden. The aviary was 5x3x2 m and only its top was made from wire netting, the sides being made from wood-fibre slabs. In February 1977 I put a pseudonest in the nut tree inside it. The female hawk, (she was in very good health and mood) started building her nest early in April. She was chucking and accepted me as her mate. Her behaviour may have been due to the fact that it was only myself who had brought her up since she was a nestling, so she could only establish her social relations with human beings.

She laid the first egg unexpectedly, but later she laid two more. Every third day the eggs followed each other. After she had laid the first one I took the semen from a male goshawk who was about five years old. This operation needed a great deal of practice. I first pressed his belly, then when I applied massage on his back he let out the semen. It was merely a few mm (3) and I collected it with a simple pipette. The female accepted the semen with loud shrieks, lifting her tail. She was sitting on the eggs for 36 days and hatched two healthy nestlings. During this time she completely trusted herself to me. She hardly ever left her nest, so sometimes I had to feed her by hand even while she was hatching.

A year later, in 1978, the whole process was much easier. There were three fertile eggs out of five. I was able to give the members of the Hawking Department of the Hungarian Ornithological Society five nestlings in two years. I had the opportunity to observe many aspects of the bird's behaviour which I could not have done under natural circumstances. I could follow the steps of nest building, hatching and nestling rearing. They all formed a smooth chain of reflexes.

The feeding of the few days old nestlings was an especially remarkable phenomenon. The female tore bits from the meat and the nestlings easily took the food from her beak. Until then I had not known that nestlings got gastric juice as well. Sometimes it was directly in the form of drops, sometimes soaked into the meat. I established the chemical reaction of the juice and it proved slightly acid (PH5/5).



THE GOSHAWK WITH HER DAY-OLD CHICKS AND EGG SHELLS.

For years I had been meditating upon the puzzle why hawks regularly lined their nests with fresh leaves. According to the literature it serves as a disguise. In 1977 I already thought that there must be some other reason for it. A year later my hypothesis that it served for something else, namely humidifying, was proved; my goshawk started tearing the leaves in the aviary only on the 21st. May, the first really hot summers day.

(The editor would like to thank the author for this article and the photographs which he very kindly sent from Hungary, and also our President, Lorant de Bastyai, whose correspondence with the author enabled them to be included in the 'Austringer'.)

International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey

REPORT ON THE XVII WORLD CONFERENCE OF ICBP.
YUGOSLAVIA, JUNE. 1978.

I attended the Meeting as a representative of IAFCBP.

1. As far as falconry is concerned there was little on the agenda which affects us directly, except that the various resolutions concerning falconry, which were taken at the Vienna Conference were formally adopted as a resolution of the World Conference. I set all these out in my report about Vienna. (See 1976 edition of 'The Austringer' - Editor.) The resolutions were adopted by the World Conference at the request of the Hungarian Delegate, so that he could present them with the maximum authority to his Government. He was concerned at the number of birds of prey being taken from the wild in Hungary for zoological establishments.
2. A feature of the Conference was the EEC Directive, which was considered by many conservationists to be a notable and most encouraging instance of international co-operation over bird protection. It was, by chance, due to be approved just at the time of the ICBP Conference. Cables were sent to various appropriate Government authorities urging them to approve the Directive, but a few weeks later it failed all the same, ostensibly because of French insistence upon permitting the shooting of ortolans and skylarks. This may lead to the very unfortunate legend that "sportsmen wrecked the EEC Directive".
3. Miss Phyllis Barclay-Smith retired as secretary after nearly 40 years service. It is proposed now that the constitution should be revised, that the activities should

be enlarged, and that a new professional secretary should be employed, probably residing in Switzerland. ICBP has hitherto been traditionally friendly towards sportsmen, but there is no reason to suppose that this goodwill will continue under the new order.

It is therefore all the more unfortunate that the following resolution was put on the agenda and failed to make any progress:-

"Co-ordination of the activities of Bird Preservation organisations and national and international hunting organisations, in particular the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation". (= CIC)

In my report on the International Meeting at Canberra I pointed out that a similar resolution was on the Agenda, that I was the sole representative of sport present, and that the absence of the Conseil International de la Chasse was regrettable. It was even more regrettable that CIC were still not present in Yugoslavia. I am assured that an invitation and full particulars were sent to them. ICBP is not going to wait much longer for sportsmen to grasp the hand of friendship. It may well be that a great opportunity has already been lost irretrievably by the absence of CIC at these conferences. The new draft constitution of ICBP does not contain any endorsement of field sports, as the old one did.

There are various other minor matters to report.

4. a) I learnt in conversation that there are now "too many goshawks" in Holland. They are taking black cock at the beck to the annoyance of ornithological observers. The Netherland Royal Family have a shoot on which "vermin" are strictly protected, and it teems with goshawks and other birds of prey. The quality of the shooting is apparently not affected.
- b) Professor Gardasson of Iceland told me that it was going to be much more difficult for "you falconers" to take gerfalcons in future. The laws were being tightened, and just recently they had deported a German, who had been hanging around gerfalcons' eyries. I was able to talk to him and explain that proper falconers were not so much interested in gers, and explained about the flying circuses, and left him, I hope, in a less hostile frame of mind. The bad effect upon falconry of such incidents cannot be over estimated.
- c) The Australian representative made some remarks about the trade in parrots, which are worth thinking about in the context of falconers' demands. He said that parrots have the highest number of threatened species in the red data book, that there is an enormous increase in the last four years in the parrot trade from the wild, which means that the birds are not surviving in captivity and must be replaced in spite of what the parrot

fanciers say about successful breeding in captivity. Only certain species can be exported, but the cost and time needed to control this exporting is so great, that the Government are seriously considering stopping the whole thing. Subsequent discussion was in favour of a conception of limited "harvesting" from the wild and further limiting birds to be kept in captivity only those which can be bred in captivity. I think that in this there are lessons for falconers to ponder upon.

- d) The Birds of Prey Group held a meeting at which a draft declaration of principles was discussed. This would appear to allow for falconry in accordance with the Vienna resolutions. I suggested that the draft made too little reference to captive breeding. The next meeting of the Birds of Prey Group will probably be in 1980 or 1981.
- e) The next World Conference of ICBP will probably be held in Moscow in 1982. The next meeting of the European Section will probably be held in Cyprus in 1979.

In general I feel that falconry is not under great stress in ICBP, provided it is properly controlled and conducted and provided we watch our interests very carefully. Again and again the opinion was stated that the main threat to birds is not through hunting persecution, etc., but by habitat destruction, intensified agriculture, pesticides and so on. I emphasised on every possible occasion that sportsmen and conservationists have much more in common than they have an issue.

T.A.M. Jack

August, 1978.

(In the letter that Mr. Jack sent in which he gave his kind permission for this report to be reproduced he pointed out that the EEC Directive was passed by the Foreign Ministers in December 1978. He also said that the ICBP and the Department of the Environment had told him that falconers had nothing to fear, and he expresses the hope that they are right. - Editor)

A Head for a Hawk

BY BRIAN LEWIS.

My 1978 hawking proved to be a dismal season when reflecting upon the amount of quarry taken with my eyas Goshawk Scramble. Not to worry, we have all heard it said "its not the size of the bag that counts".

However, looking back at the more memorable occasions, two immediately spring to mind. Firstly, my introduction to the Welsh Hawking Club during their field meeting last November, and secondly the reclaiming of my Lanner falcon Solitaire. She was lost for three days in August. It is on the latter sequence of events I have chosen to scribe a few words to add a page or two to this edition of the Austringer.

Solitaire was taken from my aviary (much against my better judgement) to participate in a flying display at a local Fete. The kind of proposition most of us encounter at some-time, and one for me which will definitely be a non-starter in the future.

As an eyas Solitaire had flown well to the lure, had had a few good chances at quarry, but had never killed. So after three weeks of re-training with daily flying to the lure I considered us both fit for the show, unaware however, how much fitter I was to become in the following few days. The Saturday dawned a warm and sunny day but unseasonable strong wind for that time of year did bring shades of apprehension to the preparation procedures.

At 4.30 p.m. prompt, out we marched to the centre of the small field. The bowling for the pig stopped abruptly and a hush descended over the local crowd of about one hundred and fifty people, made up of sheep shearers, mangle pullers and the odd consultant. There they were, poised to witness an insight into the sport of kings. We were soon to see that Solitaire had other ideas and was to prove that she had been appropriately named.

After quietly surveying the set-up for about three minutes from her perch (a post thirty yards away from her spectators) it was chocks away. Off she went down wind for about half a mile, not even bothering to check her rear mirror. Then much to my delight she turned and came right overhead at about one hundred feet, (perfect, I thought) but it was not to be, a couple of wide circles then she raked off over a nearby wood. Hence, lost hawk. I searched until dark and all day Sunday with not a single sighting.

On the Monday morning I went round to the local newspaper office with the necessary details and fortunately they were printed in the evening edition. Before setting out on the Monday evening search I told my wife Valerie that an hour before dark I would ring her and check if she had received any authentic sighting reports, so there would be time to

check them out before nightfall.

After two hours of frustrated lure swinging I decided to ring Valerie. Yes, she had received six telephone calls and there was no doubt that one was authentic.

I sped round to the instructed location, a solitary house on a small holding about three miles 'as the crow flies' from the point of the intended display the previous Saturday.

(Knocked on the door)

"Good evening Sir, you rang my wife, I believe you have seen a hawk", said I. "Seen a hawk, we saw a hawk alright, we had her in the house Sunday night, sat here on the chair didn't we Bill". "OK OK, where is she now?" said I. "Oh, we let her go didn't we Bill, and haven't seen him since". There then followed a deadly silence. "Where did you find her?", I then asked. He replied "The terrier found him in the orchard, he has killed a crow".

We then proceeded to the orchard to find the crow, and as stated, about a yard from the hedge, found the half eaten remains of a rook. I picked up the rook and hid it under the hedge and whilst doing so its head dropped off. An insignificant morsel I thought and left it there in the grass.

I then drove home bewildered, end of my rook hawk, I thought. There was a glimmer of optimism, the hawk had killed on the Sunday, so there was a chance she might still be in the area.

I rang a hawking friend, David James, and arranged to meet him the following morning at dawn where the falcon had been on the Sunday. We met up at about 7.30 a.m. by which time, after two hours of searching I decided we had had it. It was time to return home and get ready for work.

Making our way back to the cars I decided to show David the rook, consoled that she had at least killed. Then as we approached the hedge, to my amazement, there was Solitaire trying to feed off the discarded rook's head. I couldn't believe my eyes, I had been swinging the lure in the area for the past two hours.

A shake of the fist and she was on the glove, and we were both off home to a memorable breakfast.

A Falconers approach to Hawk Diseases

BY J.E. COOPER, B.V.Sc., D.T.V.M., M.R.C.V.S.

"Diseases are easier prevented than cured; every one therefore that intends to keep Hawks should be well advised in the first place how to preserve them from Sickness and Maladies, which is of greater concern than to cure them when distempered".

Richard Blome "Hawking or Faulconry" 1686.

Research on hawk diseases has increased enormously in the past ten years. At the same time, the approach of the falconer to veterinary care has improved. Few falconers now doubt the safety, in experienced hands, of treatment by injection; general anaesthetics are now regularly administered with safe and successful outcome. New diseases of hawks have been recognised and improved diagnostic techniques developed.

This article is intended as a working guide to a falconer, not a medical or veterinary treatise. Although most falconers still treat minor ailments in their birds, many now routinely seek veterinary advice and it is really the veterinary surgeon who needs guidance in the diagnosis and treatment of such complaints. Stricter legislation in Britain is likely to restrict the accessibility of modern drugs and it will therefore become increasingly difficult for the falconer to attempt his own treatment. In this article therefore, I do not intend to teach the falconer to diagnose and treat hawk diseases. Instead I shall discuss the principles of disease prevention and first aid treatment and explain how professional advice can best be sought. The emphasis of the article will be on hawks kept for falconry but much of the information is also applicable to birds maintained for captive breeding or exhibition.

The importance of preventative medicine is emphasised in the quote from Richard Blome earlier in the article. Despite the modern advances in hawk medicine it is still preferable to prevent disease than to cure it and such prevention hinges upon:-

- 1) Improving the bird's environment in order to reduce the danger of disease build-up or transmission.
- 2) Increasing the bird's resistance to disease.

Improvement of the environment revolves around many factors but chief amongst these is hygiene. Poor hygiene will permit an increase in pathogenic (disease causing) organisms in the environment, amongst them bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites. The dangers of such a pathogen build-up are increased when birds are crowded or when they occupy the same quarters for long periods of time - as for example in captive breeding projects. Regular hygiene is vital and should

consist of weekly cleaning of equipment and furniture. Hot water is effective at killing organisms and can be poured from a kettle on to hard surfaces. It will have little effect on soil, and nor will disinfectants, since such organic material is highly resistant to heat and chemical disinfection. Contamination of a weathering ground can be circumvented by regularly moving the bird to a new locality but in an aviary this is not possible. At least once every two months the mews and equipment should be scrubbed with a disinfectant. A suitable disinfectant, which is both cheap and effective, is a solution of washing soda in warm water but for more delicate equipment, such as leather, cetrimide is less damaging but equally effective. It is important to remember that a surface must be cleaned before it is disinfected; as was explained above, organic material can render disinfection useless.

Another aspect of hygiene is adequate ventilation. Far too many mews are poorly ventilated so that there is little or no circulation of air. As a result potentially dangerous organisms can accumulate and if a hawk is in low condition it may succumb to infection. Ideally there should be at least ten total air changes per hour in the mews and these can best be provided by installing large ventilation openings such as windows, which can be opened all day while the bird is out in the weathering ground.

Build-up of organisms will also be reduced if uneaten food and castings are removed promptly. Failure to do this may encourage vermin, such as rats, which can introduce diseases. The food itself may also introduce infection and the choice of food is therefore important. Wild mammals and birds such as road kills, pose risks of disease including tuberculosis, trichomoniasis and salmonellosis and may also contain poison. Laboratory bred rodents or day-old chicks are safer.

Another important environmental aspect of disease prevention is to ensure that mews and equipment are so designed as to reduce the risk of traumatic injury to the hawk. It is surprising how many otherwise first class mews contain awkwardly designed shelves or projecting nails on which a hawk can easily damage itself while bating. Wire netting injuries are common in birds kept in aviaries for captive breeding and may result in bumblefoot or other problems.

Increasing the bird's resistance to disease includes feeding it on food of sufficient quantity and quality. A hawk that is too low is not only unsuitable for falconry; it is also prone to hypoglycaemic "fits" because its blood sugar is at a critical level. In addition, low condition will predispose a bird to infections such as aspergillosis. In cold weather a hawk's energy requirements are increased and if food intake is not adequate the bird may inadvertently become low in condition. An important point here is that a newly acquired hawk should not be cut down immediately on arrival. It should be fed well for two - three weeks while it acclim-

-atizes to its new surroundings. After this period the hawk's food intake can usually be safely reduced but if there is any sign of ill-health it should be restored to its original diet

The quality of the food is equally important. Earlier in the article laboratory mice or chicks were recommended as items of diet and both of these appear satisfactory in the great majority of cases. We still know very little of the nutritional requirements of captive hawks, however, and it is possible that diseases associated with these diets have yet to be recognised. Day-old chicks have already been incriminated as a possible cause of fits, due to their effect in reducing vitamin B1 (thiamine) levels in the hawk, while my own studies on their composition suggests they may only just be adequate in terms of protein and calcium/phosphorus. It is probably wise to offer a varied diet; for example, a basic diet of day-old chicks is best supplemented with (for example) three-four mice or sparrows per week.

A bird will probably also succumb to disease more readily if it has a high parasite burden. Small numbers of, say, Capillaria worms probably do little harm per se but if the hawk carrying them is exposed to another infection, or to the stress of physical injury or surgery, it may succumb more readily. It is important, therefore, that a hawk is checked regularly for parasites. Mutes should be examined at three monthly intervals by a laboratory and appropriate action taken if the parasite burden is rising. The falconer should also keep a careful watch for such external parasites as lice, mites or hippoboscid flies and take appropriate action if they appear.

Protection of hawks with drugs is not of great practical value at present. The precautionary administration of a course of antibiotics to a healthy hawk is to be deplored since it may encourage drug resistance; only if a bird is sick should antibiotics be given and even then, only if a tentative diagnosis has been made. Vaccination is acceptable, however, and could prove of immense value for both falconer's birds and those kept for captive breeding or exhibition. Unfortunately, however, there has been little work on this subject. In a paper to the Raptor Research Association in the U.S.A. in November 1974 I discussed the subject of vaccination and described some rather disappointing results with a killed Newcastle disease vaccine in birds of prey. The indication was that birds of prey reacted less well to such a vaccine than domestic poultry. Live vaccines may be more effective but controlled clinical trials need to be performed. Vaccination against avian pox is another possibility but again there has been too little research to date. It would also be advantageous to be able to vaccinate hawks against such diseases as aspergillosis, tuberculosis and inclusion body hepatitis, but to date no such vaccines are available and in some cases it seems doubtful as to whether they will ever be developed.

Despite preventative measures as described above, hawks will

fall ill and require treatment. What is the falconer to do in such circumstances? Richard Blome perhaps gives us another clue:-

"In the next place, if any Hawk hath any Sickness or Malady, provide timely Remedies, not permitting them to run on too far; and in the last place you must be furnisht with Medicines proper for the Distemper".

In this article I am interpreting "Remedies" as "first aid or emergency measures" and it is these only that I shall discuss in any detail. "Medicines" are the domain of the veterinary surgeon to whom all serious problems should be presented.

There are many first aid "Remedies" that can be carried out by the falconer and, if properly applied, these may well help save his hawk. All, however, depend upon a scientific appraisal of the bird's clinical signs (symptoms) and prompt initiation of treatment. The falconer will need certain medicines and equipment and the most important of these are listed below:-

Bandages, elastoplast, gauze and cotton wool.
Scissors and forceps.
Syringes (1 ml, 5 ml and 10ml).
Needles (23 and 26 gauge).
Alcohol 70%.
Disinfectant (cetrimide).
Gentian violet.
Potassium permanganate crystals.
Glucose-saline (5% dextrose, 0.85% saline) solution.
Liquid paraffin.
Kaolin suspension.
Glucose powder.

All the items above are available without prescription from any chemist but should, nevertheless, be kept in a locked cupboard away from light and excess heat. The falconer's veterinary surgeon may decide to supplement the list with certain other drugs, for example small quantities of antibiotics, and these can be added to the collection.

There are many circumstances when immediate first aid may be needed and some of the most important are as follows:-

Injuries The extent of the damage should be ascertained without unduly distressing the bird. Minor bleeding can be stopped by the application to the wound of potassium permanganate crystals on a piece of cotton wool. More severe haemorrhage can be controlled by direct pressure to the wound or by use of a tourniquet, such as a piece of bandage which is applied between the wound and the heart. The tourniquet must be released every thirty minutes.

An injured bird is prone to shock (circulatory failure) but this can be reduced by keeping the bird warm and by adminis-

-tering fluids. Hawks have a high body temperature (over 106 deg. F.) and if cold will expend energy trying to keep warm. Any sick hawk must therefore be kept at a temperature of 80 deg. F.

Fluid replacement is important when haemorrhage has been severe or when excess water and electrolytes have been lost (see later). Glucose-saline is the product of choice; pure water may do more harm than good. If the bird is conscious the glucose-saline should be given by mouth. Some may be drunk voluntarily or food can be soaked in it. It is preferable, however, to use a piece of rubber tubing attached to a 5 ml syringe and to insert this over the tongue and down the oesophagus. The glucose-saline can be squirted down the tube. A suitable daily dosage is 4% of the body weight in divided doses. For example, a male sparrow hawk will require approximately 8 ml a day and a female peregrine 40 ml. The maxim is "little and often" and the quantities should be administered in not less than three sessions. The falconer who is experienced in giving injections may feel able to administer the glucose-saline by sub-cutaneous injection and indeed this method is essential if the hawk is unconscious. The best site of injection is the skin over the legs, but it must first be cleaned with alcohol. Only sterile glucose-saline must be given by injection and it should be warmed to body temperature before administration.

Infection of wounds can be discouraged by cleaning them with luke warm water and cetrimide but if there is a scab, or if it is feared that washing will either cause severe discomfort or elicit further bleeding, the wound should be treated with local gentian violet and left alone.

Diarrhoea Many hawk diseases cause enteritis and diarrhoea, amongst them conditions caused by bacteria and internal parasites. The cause of death in such cases is usually dehydration and electrolyte (mineral) imbalance and if this can be prevented the hawk's chances of survival are much increased. Certainly it may survive long enough for a definitive diagnosis and treatment. Glucose-saline is again used for treatment, given as described above. If the bird is vomiting tiny amounts should be given orally at hourly intervals or by injection. Administration of a kaolin suspension will also help to reduce diarrhoea and can be given in such cases.

Nervous diseases Birds with "fits" or other nervous signs are extremely disturbing to the falconer who will wish to initiate treatment promptly. For adequate therapy veterinary attention is essential. Prior to this, however, the falconer can ensure that the hawk is not unnecessarily stimulated by placing it in a padded box, if necessary wrapped firmly in a towel or stocking, in the dark. The bird should be kept at 80 deg. F. and not disturbed unnecessarily; hooding may help to quieten it. First aid treatment consists of the administration of glucose - preferably a 20% glucose solution by mouth or, failing that, 5 - 10ml of glucose-saline orally or by sub-cutaneous injection.

Suspect poisoning Where nervous signs predominate the treatment above should be followed. If, however, it is believed that a poison has been swallowed an emetic and/or purgative is indicated. In the case of the former, a strong salt solution must be given orally - up to 10 ml for a sparrow hawk and 20 ml for a peregrine. Liquid paraffin by mouth is an effective purgative at a dose of 5 - 15 ml and preferably repeated on two or three occasions.

The instructions given above are intended to aid the falconer when no professional advice is immediately available. It is important that definitive treatment is carried out by a veterinary surgeon. He may not be knowledgeable on birds of prey but he has access to the appropriate drugs and he has knowledge of physiology, pathology, anaesthesia and surgery. It has become increasingly important that each falconer should cultivate his own veterinary surgeon so that if a health problem does arise, immediate assistance is available. There are less than a dozen veterinary surgeons in Britain who deal regularly with sick hawks and it is obviously impracticable for them to offer advice to every falconer in the country, especially if communication can only be made by telephone. It is far better for the falconer to have his own veterinary surgeon who is on the spot and who knows the falconer's circumstances. If he (the veterinary surgeon) is in doubt or requires advice he can contact one of the 'experts' for guidance. The local veterinary surgeon will benefit from the falconer's encouragement and in most cases will not be offended if he is presented with a sick hawk plus a copy of this or another article.

Examination of mutes can sometimes be undertaken by a local veterinary surgeon, but it is usually preferable to submit them to a laboratory experienced in such work. There are many commercial laboratories available or the falconer may use the Ministry of Agriculture Veterinary Investigation Centres, whose addresses are available through his veterinary surgeon.

A similar situation applies to post mortem examinations. Whenever mutes or a dead hawk is sent in the post the samples must be adequately wrapped, marked "Pathological Specimen" and despatched by first class mail. A letter and full clinical data should accompany the material but must be wrapped separately from it; I have unpleasant experiences of letters accompanying specimens which are rendered almost illegible through being soaked in liquid mutes or in blood !

To conclude, our knowledge of hawk diseases has expanded enormously in recent years. Much still remains to be learned, however, and it is important that there should be closer liaison between the falconer and the veterinary surgeon. Falconers can make an important contribution by keeping meticulous notes on the health of their birds, by consulting their veterinary surgeon when problems arise and by ensuring that birds that die are submitted for post mortem examination (An expanded and modified version of this article will appear as a chapter in a book written by Lorant de Bastyai, due to

be published in 1979).



Harry Robinson and Lucy.
(Photograph by Doug Crawford.)

Sport with the Lanner Falcon

BY J. H. ROBINSON.

A few years ago I had a very good high flying Lanner named Rebecca, soon after training she caught a Kestrel and a Farm pigeon but having no dog at this time she wasn't anchored to anything below and would just more or less self hunt, inevitably she was lost after waiting on very high three times over ponds that we were unable to flush anything from. This bird would have suited Partridge and good open spaces.

My next falcon, called Lucy, I vowed would fly more to suit our local countryside which is fairly open, some small fields, quite a lot of trees, but most important plenty of small ponds with lots of cover, the haunt of Moorhens, and so the Moorhen became my quarry. A falcon against Moorhen sounds like a massacre, but it doesn't turn out like that

unless one is very greedy. My bag for the winter of 1977 was six moorhen and one little owl. We had bought an English springer pup in November of that year and this accompanied us, but being still very young it took no active part.

At the start of the moult the Lanner got an infection in her foot and was very ill for most of the summer. It caused numerous complications, she had X-rays, pills and injections and I thought that she would never recover, but she did Thank God. Tess the springer is now over a year old and bird and dog get on very well together.

The flying now consists of a combination of waiting on (not too high) and some landing in the tops of trees. It works very well, if the Lanner is circling the moorhens always fly when the falcon is farthest away and of course in the opposite direction. The fields being fairly small, the Lanner has to make a determined effort to close the gap before the sanctuary of the hedge is reached.

With this way of flying we are pretty sure of serving Lucy with quarry, so she isn't continually disappointed. She now watches the dog and so has something to concentrate on so she doesn't range too far. We are not likely to greatly reduce the moorhen population but we just catch enough to keep it interesting.

This year owing to snow and bad weather we lost a lot of flying time and ended up again with six moorhen and unsuccessful chases of teal, snipe and of course blackbirds and thrushes that dash in and out of the hedgerows.

A Goshawk flown from the fist would no doubt catch all moorhens flushed, but I am quite happy with the lesser bag just to see a falcon on the wing. She can be free for an hour and follow for perhaps a mile. The tameness and being able to hood her make the car journey or the walk home very relaxing. No bating on a full crop.

To finish off. Almeri jesses are worn. Flying jesses are easily put on while she feeds on the lure or on the moorhen. If on a kill it is nice to attach swivel and leash then tie her to the hawking bag and let her get on with it. They enjoy plucking their own prey and of course it is more natural.

So although perhaps this is not everyones idea of falconry we certainly have no complaints.



Lucy on a kill.
(Photograph by Doug Crawford.)

Snails in Asses Milk

BY C. P. MILSOM.

The following remedies can be found in many older falconry books. Although many, if not all of these cures have been superceded by modern drugs and much advanced veterinary care it still makes interesting reading. Another point to bear in mind is that in the 'times' of these cures the hawks seem, on the surface anyway, to be healthier, and the falconers of then knew more about their charges than perhaps modern falconers do.

EYES Bathe with the juice of daisy leaves or a decoction of powdered egg shell, yolk of a hard boiled egg and a quarter as much rock alum.

INFLAMMATION OF THE LUNGS Take quarter of a pound of best sweet butter, put it into dammaske rose water and there preserve it. When you need to use it take some and add powder

of rue, powder of saffron and a little brown sugar candy and make into a pellet. Give every morning for a week and keep the hawk warm.

CATARRH Cured with a pill made from:- Agaric, 2 scruples, cinnamon 1, liquorice 1, powdered and mixed with honey of roses. The sufferer should also be made to sneeze by giving it pepper cloves and mustard seed, powdered and blown into the nares (nostrils) through a quill.

KECK OR CROAKS Gets its name from the peculiar sound a hawk makes after exertion. It seems to be a disease of the air passage. Cure:- rest, warmth, good diet and occasionally six to eight bruised peppercorns.

FROUNCE A disease of the mucous membrane of the mouth, gullet and intestines. Similar to thrush and aphtha in children. Cure:- Cut a quill into the shape of a pen without the split and with this scrape off the thickened skin from the tongue and the roof of the mouth until the parts bleed. Then dress the raw surface with burnt alum mixed with either vinegar, lemon juice or citric acid. This dressing repeated two or three times a week. A solution of nitrate of silver is also recommended given as above. Another lotion:- leaves of woodbine with sage, honey, alum, boil then use the strained liquid.

PARASITES Lice found in the feathers etc. can be removed by tobacco smoke blown through the feathers, or a strong mixture of tobacco, water and brandy applied with a brush.

CONSTIPATION Known as Craye to falconers can be cured with
1. Washed meat:- ordinary beef soaked for 24 hours so no goodness is left and fed to the hawk.
2. Powdered sugar-candy make into little pellets with butter given two or three times a week.

PANTAS An old name given to a malady of the liver can be cured by such things as olive-oil, oil of sweet almonds etc. One old remedy consists of snails steeped in asses' milk and used as a washing for sheeps heart, which after being soaked in it is fed to the hawk.

WORMS Mustard-seed, aloes and agaric with cayenne pepper are prescribed. Filanders are a more difficult worm to get rid of and one remedy is garlic long steeped in oil, or iron filings with oil of bitter almonds.

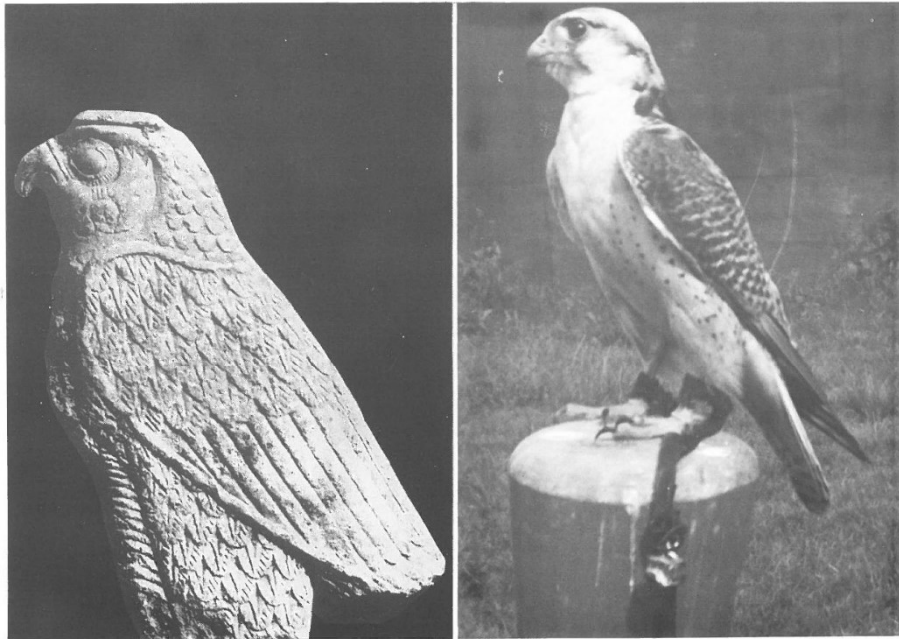
BROKEN TALONS The falconer is advised to apply to the talon a plaster made of the gall-bladder of a fowl.

COLD The root of a wild primrose dried in an oven and powdered. The powder to be blown down the nares (nostrils) or the leaves of the primrose distilled and the nares bathed with the juice.

BRUISE Clarified honey boiled with half as much stone

pitch.

CLEANING THE CROP AND PANAL This is done by scattering around the hawks perch small pebbles (the size of beans) and letting the hawk swallow them, then on throwing them up they will be found covered in slime. These pebbles are called rangle by falconers and were also forced down a birds throat should it not take them voluntarily. A recipe to purge a hawk of fat was brought from India by a falconer serving with the army there. He writes "take a piece of Salamoniac the size of half a crown, put it in the fire covered with butter and fry it well, when it turns black remove it from the hot butter with a pair of pincers and pour over it the juice of a fresh lemon or lime - store when cool in a stoppered bottle and it will keep for years. For use, take a piece as big as the top of your little finger, wrap in cotton wool and tie with thread. With the bird held by an assistant open the birds mouth and drop in half a tea-spoon of warm water. Then give the ball and with your finger push it well past the crop into the gullet. Let the bird disgorge, after eight or ten minutes. The fat will come up with the medicine or soon after.



Pictured left, the ancient statue of the Horus Falcon, and on the right, "Whitie". Note the similarity, the large head and eyes, also the stance.

Birds of Prey as State Symbols and the Holy Falcon of Ancient Egypt

BY LORANT DE BASTYAI.

Since very ancient times animals and birds have been chosen as the symbols of different nations, but it is sometimes very hard to identify the species of bird chosen, which frequently causes differences of opinion between historians and ornithologists.

There were reasons for choosing animals and birds for emblems and on coats of arms. The most popular were animals and birds of prey. Why? I presume because such predatory animals and birds were associated with courage and bravery and therefore were considered suitable emblems for a country

However, birds of prey were not always chosen. Take for example the Goose of Emden. The town of Emden chose for its emblem the farmyard goose. (There is a sub-species of farmyard geese which have the name Emden Geese) Not because these birds showed warrior-like courage but simply for the reason that when the people of Emden (situated in Italy) at the time of the Roman Empire were at war with their neighbours, they were attacked at night under cover of darkness, and the geese that were kept on the outskirts of the town made such a loud noise that they raised the alarm, thus enabling the townsfolk to be wide awake with their defences prepared before the attack could begin.

Another bird that was almost chosen to be a country's emblem, although not a bird of prey, was the Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). It is common knowledge that the United States very nearly chose this bird to be on its coat of arms. Even when the Eagle was chosen instead they were not sure which one should be the 'American Eagle'. Several times the Golden Eagle (*Aquila Chrysaetus*) was used, but later the American people settled for the Bald Eagle or White Headed Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus Leuccephalus*).

The German people, both in the past and at the present time have chosen the Golden Eagle. The Austrians, the Poles, and the Russians before the first world war, in the time of the Czars, used the double-headed Golden Eagle. (I am afraid that I do not know the scientific or latin name for this particular sub-species.)

There are two emblems depicting birds of prey that have not been identified for certain as to what species they are meant to be, but I believe that if we think for long enough about them we can make an educated guess.

The first one of interest to me was the bird emblazoned on the shield of the great leader of the Huns, Attila. For many years this was studied and argued over by historians and ornithologists in attempts to identify its species. It was

a large bird of prey shown sometimes with opened wings and at others with closed, which sometimes looked like an eagle crossed vulture with longish tail feathers, but then again it could have been a Lammergeier (*Gypaetus barbatus*). However it could not have been a lammergeier or any other eagle, or a vulture with a thickened head with feathers coming out from the top. After many years of study it was decided (naturally this was also an informed guess, but one with evidence to support it) that it was very unlikely that a warrior leader would have had a scavenger such as a vulture on his shield, and also as the Huns and the ancient Magyars (Hungarians) were hawking peoples the emblem was almost certainly a hunting bird.

The result of many years of correspondence on the subject between the late Director of the Hungarian Ornithological Institute, Dr. Jakab Vonoczky Shenk and the famous Director of the Moscow Zoological Museum Ornithological Section, Professor Dr. C.P. Dementiev was that the legendary bird painted on Attila's shield was the beloved hunting bird the Altai Gerfalcon (*Falco gerfalco Altaicus Menzbier*). This bird was known in those times as the Turul falcon, and in Asia there still exists the name, Toughrul, of a large hunting bird which was used, according to legend, by Gengis Khan and his sons, which was capable of catching swans. The legend says that when the people of Samarkand (a town that still exists in Mongolia) were suffering from famine because of a poor harvest they were saved from starvation by two sons of Gengis Khan who arrived with four or five camels laden with water fowl, geese, ducks and swans that they had caught in two weeks hawking with the legendary Turul falcons.

A very good picture was painted of the real life Turul falcon or Altai Gerfalcon standing on a dead swan by Dr. Albert Vertse the recently deceased Director of the Hungarian Ornithological Institute. (I received the sad news of his death from his family in Budapest before I began this article.)

From one legendary but also real life falcon let us turn to another ancient and legendary but also holy falcon, the Horus falcon from the religion of ancient Egypt. Egyptian legend says that the God had sent his most treasured creature the falcon, his incarnated son, "with golden feet and talons and sky flying wings" down to the earth to deliver Man and save him from demons and all the other evils in the world.

In the towns of ancient Egypt one can very often still see wall paintings of the Sun falcon, and sculptures and mosaics of the holy Horus, it seems to be on everything.

Egyptian religion said that Horus was the son of Osiris and Isis, and he is sometimes represented as a God with a human body and a falcon's head, at other times as a falcon-headed crocodile but on most occasions as a whole falcon. He is shown standing with closed wings or over the head of a Pharaoh guarding it with open wings. I do not wish to become

involved in the religion and legends of ancient Egypt, firstly because this is not my subject, and secondly because this subject has been written about so many times by different authors in books and magazines that I do not wish to tax my readers patience with it. However I would like to pose the question what type of falcon was the holy Horus? Or on what falcon did the artists and sculptors of ancient Egypt base their paintings and sculpures?

I admit that during my life I have spent a great deal of time in practical falconry, and I have trained almost everything from Merlins to Golden Eagles, including Gerfalcons. However, besides the practical side of our sport I have also been interested in the different sub-species of eagles and hawks. This interest led to my studies and descriptions of the occurances in Hungary of the Tundra Peregrines (*Falco peregrinus leucogenys*) and the Eastern Peregrines (*Falco peregrinus calidus*). These observations have been published for the first time in the year book of the Hungarian Ornithological Institute, 'Aquila'. Also I have described the five sub-species of Lanner falcons (*Falco biarmicus*), and these studies have been included in a previous edition of the 'Austringer'.

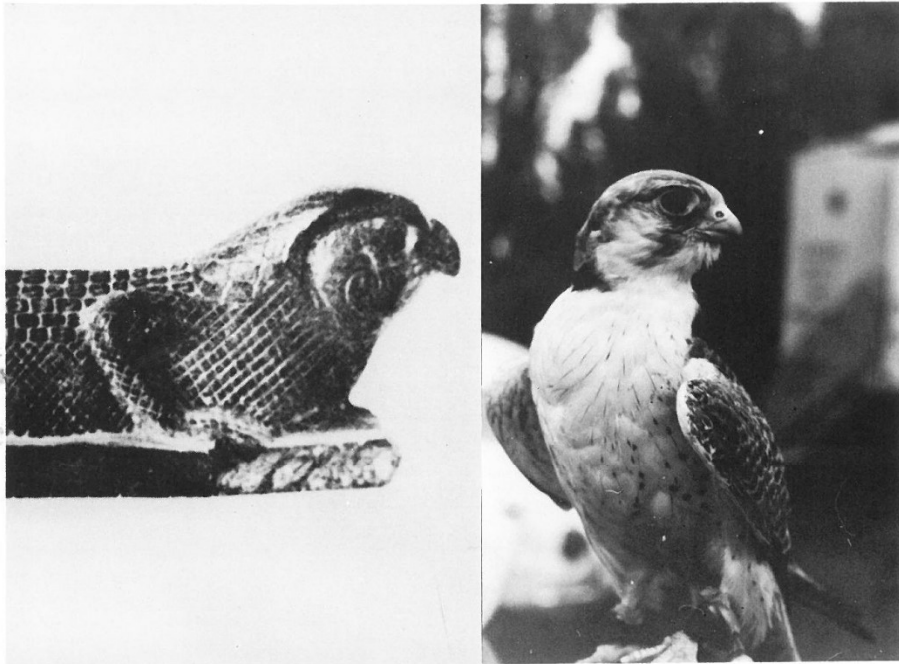
Now I am speculating about Horus, the holy Sun falcon of ancient Egypt. We know from the reports of excavations made of the tombs of the Pharoahs that besides the mummified bodies of the kings and other persons of high rank the archaeologists have found mummified cats, snakes, and of most interest to we falconers, the mummified bodies of falcons. Studies of the latter have shown them to be mainly Lanner falcons. I have seen them in books, and also in some European museums, and they really do resemble the Lanner, but the heads of these mummified falcons are much larger than those we know that come from Nigeria or Southern Europe. I went around the collections in the British Museum but I was still uncertain, but one day last summer when 'Whitie' my alphanet male Lanner falcon was sunning himself on his block perch he spread wide his wings, and I was at once reminded of something. Where had I seen such a bird with large head and spread wings? I suddenly realised that on one of the pictures of the Horus falcon on which it is shown standing behind a Pharoahs head in a protective attitude it was strikingly similar to the position and appearance of 'Whitie' standing on his block perch. Not only was the stance similar but also the large head with its remarkably large round eyes which appear on every statue. In short, the big head, large round eyes and stocky body matched exactly.

As I have mentioned previously when describing the Alphanet Lanner falcon (*Falco biarmicus Erlangery*), the North African type of Lanner, the German ornithologist Dr. Fritz Engelman named this sub-species the Sahara Lanner, and all the photographs of live birds, the mummified falcons, the wall paintings and the statues of the holy Horus falcon show a remarkable likeness.

We do not know if the ancient Egyptians used falcons for hunting. But the pictures showing hunting scenes with chariots and hunting leopards (Cheetahs), with spears being carried by the hunters and also the human-bodied falcon-headed Horus, lead us to believe that they used falcons in sport. In historical writings we can read that Lanners were kept in holy towns and in temples where they were tended with great care. After death they were embalmed and buried with persons of high rank so that in the 'other world' the dead person would have with him the beloved Horus falcon.

These facts taken together do indeed lead us to believe that the holy Horus, the Alphanet Lanner, the Sahara Lanner and the Falco biarmicus Erlangery are one and the same bird.

In the photographs accompanying this article we can see the similarity between 'Whitie' the Alphanet Sahara Lanner and the Horus falcon of ancient Egypt.



The Crocodile-bodied Horus and 'Whitie'.
Note the similarity in the shape of the
head, eye and beak.



Bassano & Vandyk

CAPTAIN ROBERT NAIRAC.

By Kind Permission Of The Bassano Studios.

Everyone has undoubtedly heard of the tragic death of Captain Robert Nairac who was killed in the execution of his duty in Northern Ireland. He was honoured post-humously with the George Cross, the highest decoration in peace time.

Captain Nairac, a man of outstanding character, was a brave and courageous soldier who always placed his duty and the safety of his fellow soldiers first. He was educated at Sandhurst Military Academy.

Foremost amongst his hobbies was Falconry. He was for many years a member of the British Falconers Club and had several hunting birds his favourite being the Goshawk.

All falconers salute the memory of this brave man and fellow sportsman and we send our deepest sympathy to his family.



Dr. Ridley Macphail

We were all most distressed to hear the sad news that our dear friend Dr. Ridley Macphail had passed away.

He had worked very hard for British falconry organising excellent field meetings in Lincolnshire especially the field meeting held to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the British Falconers Club in Woodhall Spa which was a great success.

Dr. Macphail was for many years the Editor of the British Falconers Clubs' annual magazine 'The Falconer'. This magazine mirrored to the whole world the good work of British falconry. His dear lady Sheila, to the benefit of our sport, gave her husband a helping hand in every way.

We all sincerely hope that 'The Falconer' will continue in his spirit for then we will feel that he is still with us.

LORANT DE BASTYAI.

Observations on Heron Hawking

BY GEORGE LELOVICH DE GALANTHA
Translated from the Hungarian
and with occasional notes
by Lorant de Bastyai.
With drawings by the author.

'Evitata rotis Palmaque Nobilis
Terrarum Dominos evhit ad Deos'
(Horatius)

In 1938 I always read with great interest the articles on hawking by Lorant de Bastyai in the 'Nimrod'. (Hungarian shooting magazine - de Bastyai).

I was a young man at that time, but I was already an experienced shooting sportsman and naturalist. At the age of twelve I had my first shotgun by signed guarantee of my parents, and since that time I had been very keen on the sport, but later I became very interested in the sport of falconry, and wanted to know more about this ancient art of hunting.

One can imagine my great happiness when in the spring of 1938 I received from Lorant de Bastyai my very first hunting birds - the downie chicks of two goshawks (tiercels) came by parcel post.

I wondered to myself how birds could be trained for hunting big quarry, such as herons and wild geese. I had the feeling that the going would be very rough and rugged until I achieved success in this direction, but I had read so much in books and shooting magazines, and had seen so many beautiful pictures and illustrations from mediaeval times, that I concentrated all my thoughts on falconry.

I was quite successful with my first young goshawks which had come from Lorant. They had grown nicely - mainly on the ground squirrels which were plentiful in the fields. With them I took my first pheasants and partridges, aided by my Hungarian sheep dog named 'Tucsi' (means grass-hopper in the Hungarian language - de Bastyai). This little black dog worked like the best spaniel.

My first hawking was on foot, in the same manner as I had gone out shooting, but instead of a shotgun I carried my goshawk, and when the quarry was flushed by the dog I threw the bird in its direction.

My first experiments in heron hawking from horseback were completely unsuccessful. My horse was terrified of the flapping hawk on my fist, the hawks felt the same about the horse, and the herons were scared away from the site (even the stuffed ones!). I was also afraid that the horse would fall and bury me and the bird on my fist underneath him.



My Saker Grabbed
the Grey Herons Neck.



'Diana' Caught Her
First Purple Heron.

So all concerned were afraid of each other.

At the time I succeeded in getting a famous ancient falconry book written by Taymur Mirza, a Persian prince, the Baz-Nama-Yi-Nasiri. (Translated from the Persian into English by Lt.Col. D.C. Phillott, and from English into Hungarian by Ceza Kiss de Nemesker, the Hungarian chief hunting inspector of Crown hunting grounds - de Bastyai). I will not mention here the methods of training hawks and falcons, because Lorant de Bastyai has described these already in his book.

Unfortunately our Hungarian ancestors had not written many books on hawking, because I think, in Mediaeval times hawking and falconry were taught by practical methods, and it was the duty of every lady and gentleman to be expert in it.

After reading this book I began to understand more about training birds and horses for heron hawking, and the end-product of this training was that the Hungarian nature film producer, Dr. Istvan Homoki Nagy asked me to help in making a film on the subject. This film was the first of its kind, and won first prize at the French Film Festival in Cannes in 1951. (This film was also shown on B.B.C. T.V. with the commentary by the late James Robertson Justice - de Bastyai)

Three native Hungarian sakers were used in the film, and I

played the part of a lonely man who became a falconer by trapping a Saker.

After the film I made a contract with a State-run fish-breeding farm. They had tried everything to chase the herons away from the fish ponds, which were also at that time rice-fields, and as the water-level in them was very low the herons were playing havoc with the fish. Using a shotgun would not help because by shooting the herons in the water damage would be caused both to the fish and the rice. So I made the proposition to the Ministry Of Agriculture and Fisheries that trained falcons and hawks should be used. Imagine my pleasure when I received the reply 'Let's give the falcons a try'.

Unfortunately I had a fiasco with my three beautiful Sakers. They flew after the herons, but when the herons fought back with their tremendously sharp and long beaks they left the attack and flew back to me, or went far in the opposite direction. I had to think very hard what I could do to keep my contract. Still, it was true that my Sakers had chased the herons away, but I could not prove that they had killed any.

I decided to try and get a more courageous bird, so I set off for the middle mountains of Hungary, the Bukk mountains, to search for a peregrine nest. It was late in June when the local gamekeepers and I found one, and the young birds had grown and were flying around the cliff with their parents. I was more than lucky, for when a keeper climbed up to the nest there was a fully grown young bird inside, occupied with a pigeon that had been brought by the parents a short time before. She was so occupied that the keeper caught her quite easily, even so she tried to attack his hands, presumably defending the pigeon. He brought her down, and with great pride, and taking great care I took her back to my headquarters.

The falcon was quite a brave bird, and with no hesitation she was soon flying to a lure made of heron wings. In a very short time she was fit for flying at the live birds, and at the same time she was getting used to my horses too, even flying to my fist when the horse was galloping. The time had come to show the world what 'Diana' could do.

One morning I took her out. The sun was just coming up over the horizon, colouring the whole scene pink. The ponds, the reeds, the rice fields, even the slow-moving clouds were pinky-red in colour. I was trotting along slowly, a hooded Diana on my fist, when suddenly, from a patch of reeds in a ditch a purple heron (*Ardea Purpurea*) got up, and with slow wing beats flew over the reeds at the edge of the pond. I immediately took off Diana's hood and held her up so that she could get a better view of the heron. She bobbed her head towards it and opened her wings, but she wasn't sure what she should do. The heron was about thirty metres away now, and did not seem in any hurry. Diana was still in a dilemma, but I was very excited, and threw her in its

direction. With this quick decision of mine 'the penny seemed to drop' to Diana and she started to fly, although still seeming unsure what to do, so I jumped my horse into a gallop and started to call to her in the voice I used when calling her to the heron lure.

Hearing my encouraging shouts, and seeing me galloping towards the heron, Diana, perhaps remembering the heron wings and connecting them with the big flapping wings of the bird, started to attack it as she used to attack the lure, with very fast wing beats. She overtook the heron and without any fuss or bother caught it from behind on the back between the wings, and came down on the reeds at the edge of the water. There the free neck and head of the heron nearly got her into trouble, but I was quick and grabbed the heron's head with one hand and with the other gloved hand I offered Diana a piece of meat as a reward. I then stepped with one foot onto the heron's wings, hooded Diana, and put her down on a mound of earth. Next I tied up the heron nice and gently and put him into a basket which was hanging on one side of the saddle. I picked up Diana from the ground and rode with great pride back to our headquarters.

The heron was not damaged, so we put him into a room free, and gave him fish and a drink.

The second heron was a great grey heron (*Ardea Cinerea*). It was standing looking straight down into shallow water, watching for fish that it could spear up with its sharp pointed beak - in the water were young carp. I was riding at a slow trot, and showed Diana the heron at the very last moment as I wanted her to have a good chance, this heron being much more dangerous than the previous one. The heron, craftily looking as if she were watching us from the corner of her eye took off, but luckily Diana knew this time what it was all about, and the heron did not get very far. The falcon flew goshawk-like very low, near to the ground, only lifting herself when she got near the rushes and reeds, then she grabbed the flying heron. I had to kill this one as it was damaged by Diana's talons, so I tied a large pigeon breast to its neck and let the falcon feed on it. I would not allow her to feed on heron meat as it might taste fishy, and afterwards she might not fly at heron due to the bad-tasting meat.

The hardest for Diana to catch were the Night Herons (*Ncticorax ncticorax*). They do not fly straight when chased, but skillfully zig-zag, twisting and turning in the air. This type of flight very often tires out the falcon, and they can quite soon give up the chase. Very often the night heron can drop himself at the last minute into the thickest reeds, or onto the leafiest willow tree branch, and many falcons give up when this happens, but Diana frequently grabbed them straight off the branch of a tree when the poor herons thought themselves quite safe. Still, I could not allow myself to be sympathetic towards the herons, for I was employed to guard the rice field fisheries, and as a



'Diana Pinched The
Night Heron From The Tree'



'The Marsh Harrier Threw
Itself On It's Back
In The Air'

professional falconer I could not afford to be sentimental. There was, however, one thing I could do for them. When the falcons caught them without causing them any damage, which was very often, I would take the herons alive from the falcon and put them into a shed which had been built for this purpose. There they would be fed and cared for until I had collected five or six together, when I would pack them into a crate and send them to the Ornithological Section of Budapest Zoo, where my friend Lorant, the Curator of the Bird Section, would take them over.

Often Diana would become involved with the Marsh Harriers which were breeding in this district among the reeds and rushes at the edge of the fish ponds. Naturally these birds were very jealous of their hunting grounds, and guarded them strictly against all birds of prey. The Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), the Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), or the Common Kestrel did not seem to annoy them very much, but they often attacked Diana and my Sakers. From the first one or two attacks Diana would slide gently away, as if seeming to say 'I take note of your wishes', and for some of the Marsh Harriers this would appear to be enough as they would turn and fly back into the reeds. Some of the 'brave' ones however, attacked the falcon with serious intent, often grabbing her tail feathers from behind. This was more than she could bear, and naturally she counter-attacked. When

this happened the Marsh Harrier turned in the air on to her back and defended herself with her talons, then the falcon and the Harrier, like a ball of feathers, would turn and roll round and round until they reached the ground. Now the falconer needed to get in at a fast gallop to the fighting birds so that they would not damage each other. Diana gladly gave up the Harrier in exchange for some nice tasty pigeon or ground squirrel. Then she was hooded, and her opponent went into the basket hanging beside the saddle. Eventually it too would end up in Budapest Zoo.

That first season I only had Diana, so I was really glad when the autumn came and the fish were fished off from the rice field ponds and the rice was harvested.

The next season I was able to get two young peregrines, these I trained for hunting in a cast. One I named Victoria, and the other Fidelio, however all the falconry and fishery 'world' called them simply the Victoria Fidelio couple.

Hunting with these two birds was much more exciting than with Diana alone. The distance that Diana needed to catch a heron often went on for kilometres, Victoria and Fidelio shortened this. The heron could not fly at full speed because the falcons attacked it alternatively. These attacks were not without danger, as every stoop was met by the sharp strong beak of the heron which came out like lightening when the falcons came near.



'The Victoria Fidelio Couple'

After Victoria and Fidelio had killed a number of herons it seemed that the message got around amongst them, and it was enough that one heron should sight us galloping along with our falcons on our wrists to make them all take to the wing, even those we had not seen for the high reeds and rushes. Very often on such occasions we would see in the air ten or twelve herons 'rowing' away to more peaceful waters. This was the main idea. It was not important or necessary to kill all the herons in the district, but simply to keep them off the fish.

At the beginning of the season we often killed three herons in a morning before lunch, and perhaps one or two during the afternoon. But later, in the middle of the summer, and especially towards its end the herons were so 'educated' that they left peacefully at the mere sight of a falconer on horseback even when he was far away.

So the second heron hawking season slowly turned to autumn, and the herons disappeared from the district, leaving behind only the autumn mist which came down like a milky veil to the great plains.

One morning, while it was still dark, the first real messengers of autumn arrived from the Tundra area - the White Fronted Geese. We heard their voices with great excitement, they were a sign of new challenges and adventures - we thought how about wild geese hawking after the heron hawking ??? But about this experience I will write in the next 'Austringer'.



'Our President Flying A Sakret After Heron On A State Fish-Breeding Farm in 1952'

Tale of the Hawkers Wife

It really is a wonderful life
Being an everyday hawker's wife.
The perks of the job are countless indeed
All the free whitewash we could possibly need.

Next came the freezer- we can't do without it
Fill it right up with pheasant and rabbit.
But not for us you understand
We can't eat the fat of the land.

The birds must have the very best
And after they're fed- well- we get the rest.
Rabbit neck stew's quite nice, I suppose
Or a tasty mouthful of parsons nose.

No expense is spared on building the mews
In a nice sunny spot with "all round views"
A branch to simulate a tree
Newspapered floor - the Sun - page three.

Evenings are spent making hoods of leather
Or maybe mending a broken feather.
There are rows and rows of hawking books
With tales of hunting hares and rooks.

The neighbours think we're round the twist
Walking about with a bird on our fist.
They don't understand the joy we all get
When trudging through mud - soaking wet.

A beautiful bird by the name of Sioux
Often sits in a tree for an hour or two,
While her lord and master on the ground
Shouts and swears and kicks the hound.

We walk for miles through kale and beet
With blue numb hands and frozen feet
A few hours later and it's time for grub
So we all retire to the nearest pub.

Many and varied are the hard luck tales
Told by the hearty "Hawkers of Wales".
The dog or the day is always to blame,
"Have to stay in the pub? diw - what a shame!"

Kestrels, spars or crazy gosses
You soon discover they're the bosses.
They'll never know how close they've been
To being dispatched from the hawking scene.

Homeward bound when day is done
I must admit it's all great fun
So all in all it's not a bad life
Being an everyday hawker's wife.

VAL SPERNAGEL.

Terrible Tiny Tim

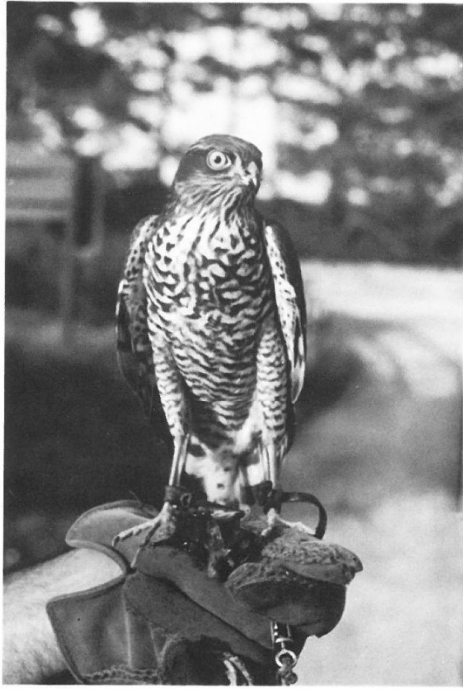
BY MIKE SPERNAGEL.

Tiny Tim was an imprint musket which I'd taken with my licence in 1977. I was interested to see how he would compare with the female sparrow hawk imprints flown by me in earlier seasons. The adjective terrible was added to his name later as he proved quite troublesome in several respects.

The afternoon of the 24th of June saw me shinning up a larch tree to the selected nest. There were two eyasses of which I took the smaller and the one with the thinner legs. However later inspection showed that the other was also a musket. He was then about ten days old and took a couple of cropfuls later that day without any coaxing. As usual he was kept warm during the night with a well wrapped hot water bottle under his artificial nest. I was up at 2.30am the next morning to feed him and refill the bottle. After a few more days of early feeds he got his breakfast at 7am which was rather better from my point of view!

During his rearing he ate voraciously and grew at the usual tremendous rate of a young sparrow hawk. While I was at work my wife Val fed him and he got his dose of manning by taking him with us in his nest to various places. Soon he was eating his chopped food off the lure, and as his balance improved also off the fist. By the 12th of July he could fly quite well and jowked up on a perch instead of the nest on the floor of the shed.

Towards the end of his growing period he was occasionally left loose around the house and I had little trouble getting him to come to the lure at mealtimes. When we jessed him he got rather upset when held by them during a bate, and took a while to settle down to being tied to the bow perch. The only time he was put out on the perch was when the shed was being cleaned. His reactions were very fast and once in the kitchen he bated, the jesses slipped through my fingers, and he flew into the window and down into the washing up bowl by Val. This naturally upset him and from then on he couldn't stand the sight of Val. This meant later on she was unable to come out hawking with us without a big scene



Tiny Tim - 1977.

(Photograph by Andy Mellor.)

on his part. Also his behaviour in the car got worse as time went on. He used to travel loose to save him from breaking his feathers, but unlike the female spars he often wouldn't settle down at all.

He started chasing birds at around forty two days old and made his first kill at approximately forty eight days of age on the 1st of August. I flew him at meadow pipits, young birds at first and then moulting adults. On one of his earlier outings he made a "stalking" flight at goldfinches feeding on thistle heads, so possibly this form of hunting is instinctive. Quite a lot of his flights were near bracken and often the quarry put into it. I discovered that the easiest way to find him was to crawl through the bracken stems, as from ground level it was possible to see quite a long way. Even with the tail bell on it was often difficult to pinpoint exactly where he was in deep bracken. Usually when he'd killed I would take him up straight away and let him pluck and feed on the way back to the car. If I had let him feed up on the ground on even such a small bird as a pipit he would have been sated and have no interest in more food while walking back to the car. This would have meant a lot of bates which of course I tried to avoid. However this resulted in him not being as steady on the quarry as he

might have been and often he carried quite a long way after an aerial strike. Luckily I was always able to find him on these occasions. However he went off with a kestrel once and I lost touch with him and had to leave him out for the night, but found him next morning.

One day at the end of August he cast up some of his morning meal and a roundworm about three inches long. So later I dosed him with 20-25mg of Piperazine citrate tablet crushed up and sprinkled on his meat whereupon he cast up six to eight more worms. I had noticed that his feathers had not shown the usual healthy bloom.

Also by the end of August he had made his twenty fifth kill and we decided to release him as sooner or later he would have been lost out flying. So I let him fly out of the shed on the morning of Friday the 2nd of September after giving him a good crop. He flew off to some pine trees by the nearby farm and there was no sign of him for the rest of that day or the next. However he was back on the Sunday, a day of rain and gales, soaking wet, so I fed him up and put him back in the shed. Next morning I let him loose after a good feed and he flew off to the nearby plantations. He did not return until the following Monday when he set on ground near me while I was putting out Sioux the redtail. I was frightened that she might grab him but he followed me to the back of the house where I got some food for him. He was down to $4\frac{1}{2}$ oz (his flying weight was $5\frac{1}{4}$ - $5\frac{1}{2}$ oz). So he spent another night in the shed. Next day he had plenty of food and started carrying off some of the chicks which were put on the ground for him. From then on we left food for him on the lawn and it was interesting to see him lift a chick and dash off with it up the river course. He also buzzed Sioux once when I was flying her near the house. Three weeks after the original dose of worming drug I put the same amount on one of the chicks which he took and presumably ate. Also I made a hack table to put the chicks on to stop the dogs pinching them. He continued to come for chicks until mid- October often only taking one or missing days altogether. We saw him at other times and once, after being alerted by the chaff-inches raising the alarm, caught a glimpse of him hunting.

The long hacking back period came as rather a surprise to us especially as he had shown reasonable hunting ability. However there was a lot of bad weather at this time and his feathers were not as waterproof at first as they should have been because of him sleeping under cover in the shed. This probably meant he burnt up a lot of energy because the wet feathers were not insulating him properly and naturally his hunting time was cut down by rain and also the shortening days. Despite being terrible in a lot of ways he gave us a lot of pleasure and was a beautifully marked and proportioned little hawk. However, naturally a musket is more difficult to keep than a female, requiring at least two feeds a day and I think being rather more nervous and highly strung than the larger spar although, like his sisters, individuals vary considerably. So if I get my licence this year it's

back again to the female of the species.

Birds of Prey in Sweden

BY GEORGE PINTER (STOCKHOLM).

To better understand the situation of birds of prey in Sweden it should be noted that although the country is twice the size of Great Britain the inhabitants are not more than eight million in number.

There are two species of Eagles breeding here. The first of these is the White Tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus Albicilla*) which has been protected since 1924. At the present time there are about forty - fifty pairs which regularly breed on the eastern part of the coast and the islands there. In the year 1975 they hatched only fifteen young birds. The main causes of this poor breeding are D.D.T. and P.C.B. which contain mercury. In addition to these poisonous seed dressings another contributing factor are the holiday makers and weekenders who disturb the birds in the breeding season. Since 1960 regular feeding has been carried out on the frozen sea-shores. For example in 1975 thirty five tons of food was distributed. Since 1971 a strong movement has been in progress to conserve the remaining pairs of this great bird.

The other great Eagle is the Golden Eagle (*Aquila Chrysaetus*) These birds number about one hundred to one hundred and fifty pairs. They breed mostly on the northern side of Sweden, mainly in Lapland where there still exist very extensive pine woods and there are also high mountains. The older Eagles spend the whole year on or around their nesting area, but the young birds wander for much longer distances, such as the southern parts of Sweden or even as far as Germany and Poland in the winter. During these wanderings many birds die in accidents, some caused by electric cables or they may be feeding on small animals which have been killed by traffic and in turn themselves become road casualties. The year 1970 was a very poor one as far as their breeding was concerned.

The Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*).

These are Sweden's rarest birds of prey. At the beginning of the 1900's there were about one thousand pairs, but a count taken in 1975 found only nine pairs. These nine pairs only successfully reared six young birds. Here again the cause of this unfortunate decline was the use of the mercury containing poisonous seed dressings D.D.T. and D.D.E.C.B. In the years 1920 - 1930 there were two-five young birds in a nest, but in 1940 there were only two or three, and in 1970 the number went down to two. A strong movement was started in 1972 to save these remaining Peregrines.

Artificial home breeding was started with some success.

The Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*).

These birds occur in the northern part of Lapland on the mountains. Studies made say that there are twenty - thirty breeding pairs there every year. The main diet of these birds are the Willow Grouse and the Ptarmigan. The older birds, as with the Golden Eagle, remain all the year round in their nesting area, but the younger ones migrate, or rather wander, also to southern Sweden.

The Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*).

The Hobby is a very rare breeding bird in Sweden. They arrive at their nesting area at the end of May, and breed mostly in the woods or forests which surround the lakes. However they migrate south again in August.

The Merlin (*Falco columbarius*).

This is Sweden's smallest falcon and it breeds mainly in the middle or northern parts of the country. Since 1970 the numbers of merlins have also showed a decline.

The Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*).

This species almost died out in 1960, but since laws were passed preventing the use of mercury poisoned seed dressings the numbers have increased. It is, however, still a very rare bird.

The Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*).

These are the only birds of prey which it is legal to shoot almost all the year round. In southern Sweden they can be shot from the 1st. December until the 28th. February, and in northern Sweden from the 1st. September to the 30th. December. All the year round gamekeepers and sportsmen shoot and trap about three thousand goshawks here. They do this mainly on or around the pheasant breeding farms. These include those goshawks which are migrating during the winter from Finland. These migrating birds naturally find quarry easier to come by on these farms. Of their number thirty per cent are Finnish goshawks. There are about six thousand goshawk nests in Sweden which are occupied. Recently the numbers of goshawks seems to be constant, showing neither a decline or an increase, but hopefully with the new law which came into force on the first of January this year they can only be trapped or shot around the pheasant breeding farms within a radius of about two hundred metres.

The Sparrow Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*).

They can be seen especially during the winter, but in recent

years their numbers are still declining. These are migratory birds here in Sweden, but a number of them remain in the winter time especially in or around the towns where quarry is easier to find.

The Common Buzzard (Buteo Buteo).

These are the most common birds of prey that can be seen. The number of breeding pairs is about fifteen thousand. They also migrate south in the winter.

The Rough Legged Buzzard (Buteo lagopus).

These birds nest in northern Sweden, and they also migrate south during the winter. (We also used to have Rough Legged Buzzards in Hungary in the winter, but they came mostly from the tundra areas of Russia. Here in Britain these birds migrate during the winter from northern Scotland, but they could also come from Sweden - De Bastyai.)

The Osprey (Pandion Haliaetus).

They still occur here quite frequently. Breeding pairs number about two thousand. Naturally they breed around the lakes.

The following also breed, but in limited numbers:-

The Honey Buzzard (Pernis apivorus)
The Red Kite (Milvus milvus)
The Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus)
The Montague Harrier (Circus pygargus)
The Marsh Harrier (Circus aeruginosus)

(I was very pleased to receive this article from Mr. Pinter, and I sincerely thank our President for translating it from the original Hungarian. - Editor.)

Members!

Are you an active member, the kind who would be missed?
Or are you just contented to have your name upon the list?
Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the throng?
Do you take an active part, to help the work along?
Or are you satisfied, to only just belong?
Do you assist at meetings, to help to make them 'tick'?
Or leave the work to just a few, and talk about the clique?
We would invite you member, to help when'er you can,
John Buckner awaits your subs, prompt payment will help
the man.

DAVID SIMPSON.

Art in Hunting~Falconry

BY KINCSD VEREBELYI.

(Translated from the Hungarian shooting magazine
'Nimrod' by Lorant de Bastyai.)

The Hungarians have practiced this ancient method of hunting since before they occupied their present homeland, and like the Asiatic peoples, research into the old historical records shows that at the time of this search for a homeland (the present Hungary) it was popular on a very large scale.

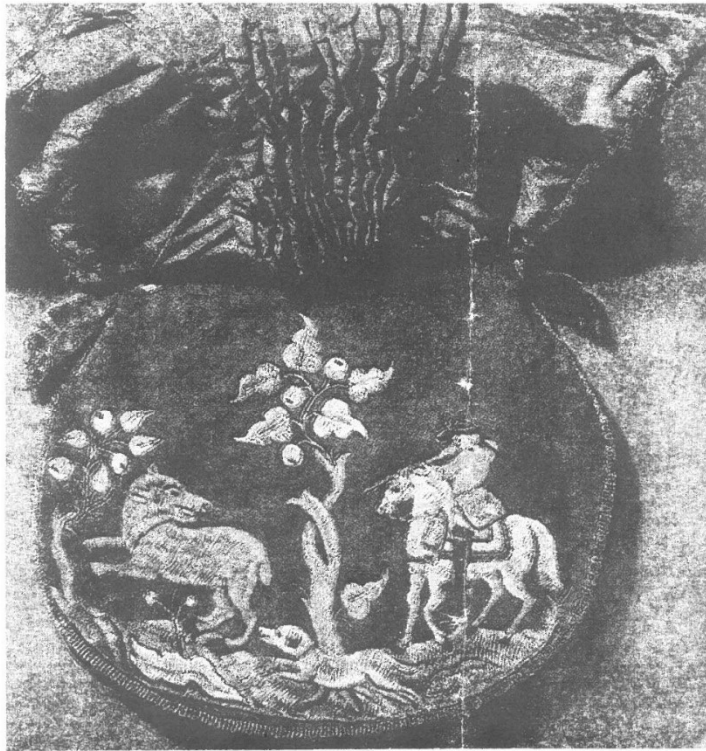
The very first written word for falcon (solyom) was solum, and it originated at the beginning of the X111 century. The very old names of Hungarian towns and villages show that in mediaeval times the falconers of the Hungarian kings were settled in different places, like Solymos and Solymar. (Both of these places are still to be found north west of Budapest-de Bastyai).

The chief of the falconers, the Steward, held a very high-ranking position. He was charged to look up all the nests of the different hawks and falcons in the country, and if an estate changed hands the nest sites of the falcons and the nestlings were mentioned in the documents as belonging to the estate.

Falconry was in bloom and at its most popular during the reigns of King Nach Lajos (Lui The Great), and Matyas Kiraly (King Mathias in the fifteenth century). During the reign of King Mathias clever falconers who had trained their hunting birds well were treasured, and were sometimes knighted by the King for their services.

In the XV11 and XV111 centuries the noble sport of falconry was still a favourite one with kings, regents, aristocrats and also the common people. The hunting birds used were Falcons, Goshawks and Sparrow Hawks. Even a vassal could hunt with the Goshawk and the Sparrow Hawk.

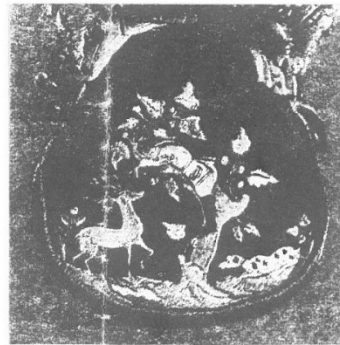
We (The shooting magazine 'Nimrod' - de Bastyai.) show the once most popular part of the falconer's uniform - his bag, from the year 1781. The medium sized bag had been sewn in green leather, with several pockets alongside each other. On both sides it was ornamented with green silk and silver thread. Below the silk cover, on both sides, were embroidered hunting scenes. It is interesting to note that the hunting scenes depicted were not hawking ones, but were of wolf shooting, deer hunting, wild boar shooting and fox hunting, rarely showing hawking. The embroidered pictures were not simply ornamental, but were worthwhile compositions in their own right. If we open the brass lock and look inside we can see that the leather lining too was embroidered. The animals embroidered there would only be seen when the bag was in use.



Detail of Embroidery - Boar Hunting.



Falconer's Bag of 1781.



Detail of Embroidery
- Stag Hunting.

Reminiscenses

BY JOHN M. BUCKNER.

When Laurie Workman and I started hawking back in the early 1960's although we were not too well versed in the art of falconry we had both been keen followers of field sports from our very early years and had always complimented one another in field craft.

The almost absence of the rabbit in those days made our quarry situation very difficult, and it was natural for us to turn to moorhens. The foreshore between Cardiff and Newport was in those days a prolific breeding ground for the moorhen, and we often went by car along the quiet country lanes in this area until we spotted a moorhen in one of the tiny fields. At that time I had a very small tiercel goshawk and he would invariably spot the quarry before we had time to stop the car. Lawrie, who used to hold him while I drove, would then cast him out of the open window. The moorhen was usually about one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards away and always managed to gain cover before the hawk got there.

The small fields in this area are nearly all seperated by rheens used for drainage about two or three feet deep, and are covered by hedges of bramble and hawthorn so quarry had no lack of cover.

After the hawk had marked down the moorhen we would park the car and let out our two Springer spaniels. Usually we would then have a first class hunt, with dogs and hawk working in unison. The rheens were a real headache, and many are the soakings we both suffered. We did sometimes make a kill, but after being flown a few times the moorhens became very cunning and in this area I never remember what one would call an easy kill.

Alas now the mink has arrived in this area and as a result there is a noticeable lack of moorhens. It appears that when mink colonize an area the first species to vanish is the moorhen. Some people despise flights at these birds, but in my experience if they are given a chance to get going before the hawk is released they are quite a sporting quarry, and with the wind behind them and a little start they will sometimes out-fly the hawk.

In those days we had special personal seasons for different quarry, and as soon as we had a cold spell with a good frost the moorhen hawking would be finished and we would take to the wood with aluminium poles and search out dreys that held squirrels. I have found that all gosses will have a go at squirrels but only a few are really dedicated and can manage to hold them without being bitten. I once had a tiercel gos that had its middle toe bitten clean off by an old buck squirrel.

We used to make an annual pilgrimage to Prestugne in Radnorshire with a full weekend devoted to squirrel hawking, this used to be the high-light of our hawking year and many spectacular flights were appreciated by the good farming sportsmen in this area. We usually managed to account for six or seven head during the morning, and the rest of the day was spent in a rather lavish celebration with our local friends there. I might add that a few sore heads and sorry looks resulted on the following morning.

Then unfortunately the squirrels in these parts just vanished and we were again confined to our own area. It was about this time that the rabbits started to come back again and more conventional hawking followed. Laurie then had a super female goshawk called the Jabbawock, which was a first class rabbit hawk and somewhat of an expert with hares. We used to go to Austria every year, and on one of these trips Laurie took nine hares in three days hawking and caused such excitement that the Austrian Club struck a special plaque for him to commemorate the feat. He still has it proudly displayed in his home. The hospitality in Austria left nothing to the imagination and we were always welcomed as very special friends by all the Austrian falconers and hunters. We miss this annual trip very much, but with the present day legislation regarding the importation and quarantining of hawks find that it is impossible to go to these meetings with a hawk, and of course without one the fun has gone.

Happily the Welsh Hawking Club and the British Falconers Club have since this legislation managed on most years to put on a Field Meeting which in some ways help to compensate but it is sad to think that we shall never again be able to take up our hawks and go abroad to hawk with our European counterparts, some of whom have become very dear friends over the years.



John Buckner, Hon. Treasurer Of The W.H.C.
With His Harris' Hawk.

Criccieth 1978

BY MICK SHUTTLEWORTH.

Although there are a number of photographs of the 1978 Welsh Hawking Clubs International Field Meeting in Criccieth included in this years edition no-one has volunteered an article on this event in our Clubs' calendar, so in spite of the fact that my wife and I were only able to be there for two of the days I am making so bold as to include my personal memories of it.

The weather during our stay was very good and we were able to cover a fair bit of ground. However, unfortunately, the amount of quarry put up was disappointingly low.

We spent both days with John Buckner's party in which both John and Lawrence Workman were flying Harris' hawks. These birds have greatly impressed me on the occasions that I have seen them in action, and the sight of both John's and Lawrence's hawks disappearing into thick cover within moments of each other and then emerging with a fine pheasant apiece is my chief recollection of the meeting. Shortly before this John had already taken another good pheasant.

Another fine flight took place when John Evan's goshawk 'Weiner' narrowly missed a rabbit by a matter of inches and took stand on a gate waiting for it to re-appear, without luck unfortunately.

On the second day of our stay quarry was even more scarce but a number of near misses again happened. Both John's and Lawrence's birds were keen and it was a great shame that they were not able to be better served. At one point after we had climbed a steep bracken covered hill beating it for quarry a pheasant got up below. Lawrence released his hawk which missed the pheasant and in giving chase cleared a small spinney, flew across a field and landed in another wood. I could see all this clearly and shouted to Lawrence pointing out where the hawk had landed as I had the better view. In a remarkably short time the hawk was back on Lawrence's fist, it had apparently worked its way back towards him on its own initiative.

Although we had to leave at the end of this second days hawking I understand that on the following days there were some fine flights, including those of John Fairclough's peregrines. Our hosts, Messrs. Bob Bond and Gary Morris were as before most accommodating.

The meeting was attended by our President Lorant de Bastyai and also by one of our Vice-Presidents Dr. G. Jolly. It was also very pleasant to renew our acquaintance with George and Gudrun Pinter from Sweden and with Herr and Frau Brehm and Herr Ruppert from Germany. Mr. John Buckland of the Shooting Times was also present.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the film that was shown on the Wednesday evening. This had been brought over by Herr and Frau Brehm and in it Herr Brehm's eagle was shown taking ten fine hares.

The hospitality shown to us at the Bron Eifion Hotel was as before excellent and we were able to enjoy a convivial evening meeting old friends.

Our Hon. Treasurer, John Buckner, once again deserves the grateful thanks of the Welsh Hawking Club for his efforts at the meeting for as always he put a good deal into it.

I understand that the dinner on the final evening for the land-owners was as usual most enjoyable and we regretted that we were not able to be present. However we enjoyed our two days sport, the good weather and the good company and look forward to the next such event.



Herr Manfred Ruppert, Lorant De Bastyai, President Of The W.H.C., Frau Erna Brehm And Herr Hans Brehm Enjoy The Sun Before Starting Out.

(Photographs on pages 71, 72, 73, taken by John Buckland of the 'Shooting Times').



Lawrence Workman, Vice Chairman, Lorant De Bastyai,
President and Dr. Gordon Jolly, Vice President,
Discuss Strategy Before Setting Off.



Captain Bob Bond M.B.E With A Harris' Hawk.



Brian Lewis, George Pinter From Sweden And Our President.



'WEINER'

A Fine Photograph Of John Evan's 12 Years Old Goshawk.



President W.H.C, John Buckland Of 'The Shooting Times', The Editor And John Buckner, Hon. Treasurer.

W.H.C. International Field Meeting

OCTOBER 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th.

Venue: Tamworth - Lichfield Area.

For Longwing and Shortwing.

There will be news accommodation and dog kennels available.

A field will be available for caravans.

Accommodation can be reserved at The Little Barrow Hotel, Lichfield or The Castle Hotel, Tamworth.

Those who are interested please contact D. Simpson, Assistant Secretary, Lingfield, Drayton Bassett, with a £5 deposit with the following particulars:

Species of Hawks you will probably be flying,

Dogs and/or Ferrets.

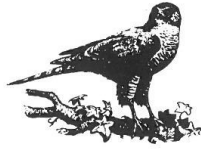
Number of guests you expect to bring along, as there will be a limited number.

Please post early, closing date 1st. August.

An official entry form will be posted to those who have sent in a deposit.

Please make cheques payable to J. Fairclough.

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Hawking bags. Made in green canvas and each pocket is edged in leather, they come complete with a swivel attachment @ £8.00.

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Leather hawking bags. Made in all leather and stitched by hand, each bag is made to a traditional pattern and comes complete with a swivel attachment @ £20.00.

Hawking gloves. Tooled in 2mm cowhide to a traditional German pattern, I can make and supply any size from kestrel to gos @ £12.00.

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Leashes. Cut in oiled rawhide, I can supply any size from kestrel to gos @ 80p each.

Traditional jesses. Merlin, spar etc. 50p per pair. All other hawks up to hawk eagle @ 60p per pair.

Creances. Complete with a hand turned stick and approx. 40 yards of nylon line @ £2.00.

Lure lines. Complete with a hand turned stick and approx. 2 yards of nylon line plus a swivel attachment @ £2.00.

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Swivels. Hand made. I can supply any size from kestrel to gos @ £1.50.

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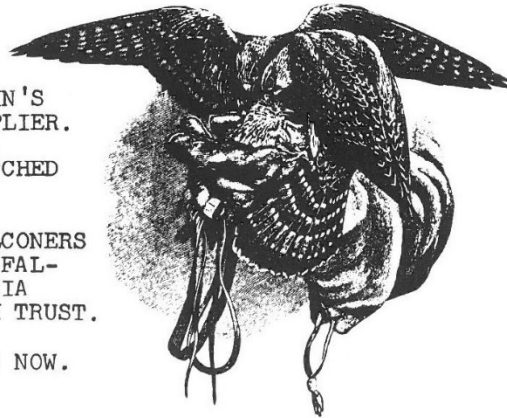
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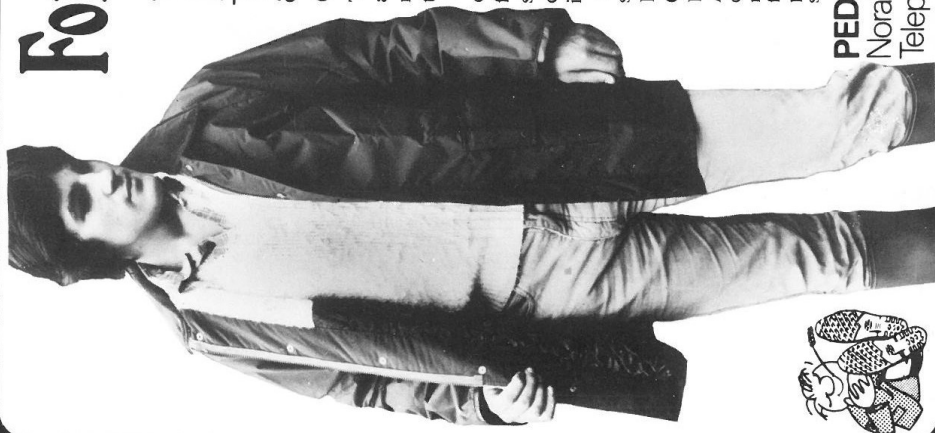
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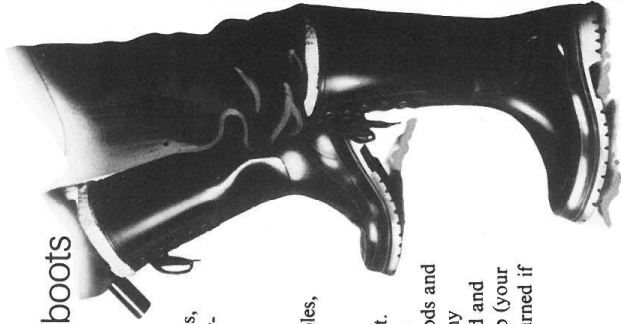
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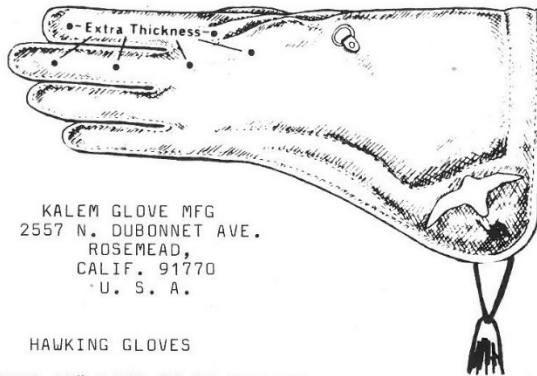
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Breeding Project Raffle

Enclosed with every copy of 'The Austringer' sent out to members of the Welsh Hawking Club there are four books of raffle tickets.

The prizes to be won are well worth the 20p that is the price of a single ticket or the £1.00 that a whole book costs.

It is hoped that a good many tickets will be sold at the C.L.A Game Fair that will take place at Bowood in Wiltshire at the end of July, but it would naturally be a great help to the organisers if members could sell the tickets that have been sent to them. More of course could be sent on request to Mr.M. Shuttleworth, 21, North Close, Blackfordby, Nr. Burton-On-Trent, Staffs.

The proceeds of this raffle will go to help finance the W.H.C Breeding/Conservation Project which is just getting off the ground and needs as much support as possible, so please try to sell as many as you can.

Unsold tickets, cash and counterfoils should be returned by the 10th August.

THANK YOU!

Sunday Afternoon

She fled his leathern fist,
And brassily rung her way to
The tower-bell-top of a solitary ash.

We began.
Thratting, drashing bramble and beyond.
Eager. Disregarding snaggles and such.
Probing. Forks on sticks were eyes on stalks,
Searching.

She stiffly stilted her way
Down. No, Not to be nearer,
But nearer, in case.
Inititive female!
A pause; lull or what you will;
I recognised the resigned
Look in his eyes and knew.
But we did not know.

She did.
Lightfooting her brazen way
Along and side shanking
New and naked ash,
A mantle from within
Rose and framed those
Rivetting eyes.
I followed her steely gaze
Imagining, but not imagining
That she knew.

It clattered from that thicket
Fluttering my heart and
Slow motioning me to
My roots
Too far, to fast
Too much cover, too far
She can't do it.
Steel around my feet;
And hers.

And her heart
And those rivetting eyes.
Oh, she knew all right,
Professional female!
Lazy, flicking lady.

Hungry?
No, but yards and sticks
Were swallowed
And rung from every
Tree Top
Joyous flight!
My heart soared
With her.

And then her talons scored
My new-born eyes for eternity.
The lazy bitch turned her
Back and reached, as though
For a grape, and skinned
It above the earth.

And my heart beat
And I went forward.
And I sang.

We despatched the
Bundle quickly
And my eyes will
Never leave her.

T. Nicholls. January 1978.