



The Austringer

The Journal of the Welsh Hawking Club No 42 | 2010



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Artemis
Squirrel Hawking
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President's Preamble

Well, here we go again. Another eventful year has passed and we have a new breeding & hunting season to look forward to. The past year has seen some highs and lows for the club and I will speak about the highs first.

The Festival of Falconry 2009 has to be the biggest and best display of falconry from around the world and needless to say the Welsh Hawking Club put on a fantastic stand which was well received by falconers and public alike. With a constant supply of Welsh tales and free samples of Welsh liquor, plus knowledgeable members on the stand to answer the public's questions, the stand was always busy. The evenings were even more so. Unfortunately the weather was not good but at least we had a large marquee (thanks to Terry Large) for the members to host the BBQ. Again thanks to all who participated on the stand and also those in the background who supported us in other ways. A special thank you goes to the members of the club who again supported us during the day and proved to be very popular. Then we had the Field Meet, on this occasion a new venue for the first time. This proved to be one of the best venues we have had for a very long time and thanks must go to Neil for sourcing it for



us. It was a pity we were not well supported for the Field Meet but given the financial times we are in it has to be expected. Hopefully our members are not being too hard and will find it possible to attend next year.

Now to the lows. The first happening immediately after the Field Meet was the sudden and unexpected loss of Tony. I was a staunch supporter of all the Club's events and I consider a sad personal loss as well as a Club loss. He was a true gentleman in every way.

The second is the loss of Nancy de Waage, thus ending the Club's last connection with our

standing member, Ronald. Even though we had later contact with her, we missed it. Her funeral she still held the Club in high regard and has left a considerable amount of Lorant's possessions to the Club. More will happen to these items as I enter discussion by the Committee and her family.

I think I will close now and allow you to continue reading what I am sure is once again a great magazine. It is only a shame for me to wish you a better year than the last, and I look forward to seeing in many members as possible throughout the year.

David Dimond

Chairmans Chatter



It seems only the blink of an eye since I sat here writing my first Chairmans Chatter for the Austringer and here we are again another season over for most of us as far as hunting goes but just the start for others as they get their breeding season under way.

As I write these few lines it is mid February and I look out of the window and see that the snowdrops are beginning to lengthen. The snowdrops are in flower and the daffodils a good couple of inches down the ground.

So what of the last year? There were both highs

and lows for the WHC. The obvious high was the Festival of Falconry and if I do say so myself I think the club did a damn good job of it. How does it probably write about it but really must say a huge THANK YOU to those who put in the effort for the club, you know who you are.

Another high was probably the annual field meet where although the number of birds flying may have been down on previous years the members that attended had a cracking few days. Thanks to Neil again for all his sterling work.

Unfortunately one of the lowest points of the year for the club came soon after the field meet when

we were informed of the sudden death of Ray Tubbs. Hooper Agart, others who know him better than I will write warmly about him. I know he was a true gent and an excellent club member who will be very sadly missed. Also this year we lost Nancy de Waage the widow of our original president and founder of the club, Ronald.

The WHC is now down to four regions with the demise of the Yorkshire region late last summer. However, these four regions are very well attended and indeed some of them are increasing in member numbers. Considering we are only just coming out of a deep recession it is pleasing to see that our sport is still very healthy. When you go out with your hawk/dove and you have a successful flight or hunt and you come home with a warm glow inside (and I don't mean from the hip flask) it helps you forget about the state of the country for a while and really appreciate what we Austringers have.

There seems to be an endless array of shows this year around the country, both large and small which we hope to attend and represent the WHC. If there happens to be one near you please come along have a nice day on the stand for an hour or so and talk to me. Everyone to tell them what we have to offer.

I look forward to seeing you. Enjoy the coming year.

Mick Corfield

From The Editor

The club has had a busy summer this year with an attendance at both Falconers Fair and the second Festival of Falconry.

A big thanks to all who worked hard in making both events a success for the club especially the South Wales region who put in sterling work at the Festival showing and educating the school children and general public over three days.

I never attended the fieldmeeting this year but from all accounts the field was fantastic with a large fowling area so weather the birds, good jacking and excellent food. The attendees proved to be great venues where there was plenty of Game to fly and catch from the size of the bag at the end of the meeting.

After the fieldmeeting was the lowest part of my year with the sudden death of my friend Tubbs, the winds, funerals, more generous person I have known and a man who had such a positive effect on my life.

The Summer was very dry with only 5mm of rain in Suffolk in three months so ideal conditions for wild Game with good broods of Pheasant, Mallard and both Redlegs and Grey Partridge bred on the farm. I released 50 Redleg Partridges which held well until the grass margins were cut and sugar beet was lifted in late September then I only had half dozen flights at them throughout the rest of the season.

I started the season on the stubble flying the intermarried Jack Merlin but he never got in the flights like he did as an Eris especially if the larks stood on it tall and started to ring he would chuck them and go and sit down on the nearest perch.

I reclaimed the Male Goshawk and Female Peregrine after the Jack had been 'killed' by a very little with the Gos. Can't work comments but The Falcon Few superb after missing last season which you can read about in this edition.



Many thanks to all of you who have spent the time and put pen to paper not just here in the UK but North America and Canada.

I hope you all have a pleasant rest over the Summer and incorporate in preparation for next hunting season.

Have a good rest

Andy Hulme





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**Welsh Hawking Club
Field Meet 2010**
Bryn Howel Hotel
Llangollen
26th-29th October

Front cover pic
Courtesy of Mark Williams
www.candianwildlifephotography.com

Back cover pic
Courtesy of Dan Bray



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First Season as a Falconer

by Dan Bray

Since I was a boy of about thirteen I always had a keen interest in falconry. I don't know what sparked the interest as no-one in my family or no-one I knew practiced it. Maybe it was the film *Kes* or a display at a show, but I always had a massive interest in the sport, birds of prey in general and in particular the goshawk.

I remember going to the library and getting our every *Magnum* book they had and reading them cover to cover. I decided I was getting a kestrel and set about making a place out of some 2 x 2 cork for the top and a piece of bamboo for the spike. I thought it was great at the time, but in fact it was totally unsuitable for any bird. I think my Dad admired my interest and I remember him being impressed by the book of which I was so proud. On further reading I discovered just how much time the pursuit involved, and as I was still at school I put the idea of getting a bird and becoming a falconer to one side.

Fast forward to 2002, fourteen years later. I attended a country and game fair and watched a display for the first time years. I immediately rekindled the interest that had lain dormant for

so long. I was running my own poultry business and was doing quite well and suddenly realised that the dream of becoming a falconer was now feasible, especially as I was my own boss.

I became slightly obsessed with it all and thought of nothing else but fulfilling my lifelong dream. I looked a little on a course in Andy Hulme at Sturton Barn and took that first step. The course lasted for five days and was an excellent experience. I was able to get questions to a real falconer and I got real, proper, hands-on experience with the birds. Andy even took me out hunting with his murret, Goshawk and Peregrine - this was into looking for me having never seen a hoop make a kill. He even let me slip his Goshawk a hen pheasant which I took. That was it. There was nothing getting in the way of me being my dream now.

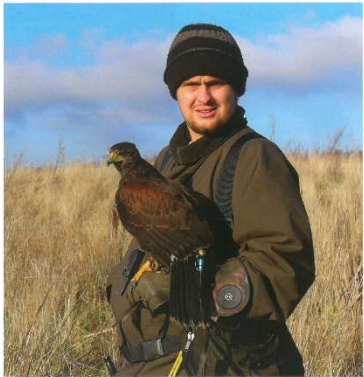
I was particularly interested in flying a goshawk, this soon moved that starting out with one would be a mistake so I decided to get a female Harris hawk to begin with, put down a deposit for a bird for the following season with new good friend Andy Wilson, which gave me time to get everything in order. I decided that I was going to work a cove alongside my bird, so I bought a Springer Spaniel pup and I started training

her while waiting for the Harris. I scoured many websites looking for ground, most of which were huge signs of further work with rabbits, not five minutes from home. Andy was the only falconer I knew back then and he suggested going along to the Welsh Hawking Club meet once a month. Everyone was very friendly and made me feel welcome and this is where I met Steve Huggan, who became my mentor and good friend, Steve Lletice, Steve, Aid and Andy. All the new goshawks.

The ten months of waiting for my first hawk was one of the hardest things I have ever done and not a day went past when I didn't get excited at the prospect of owning one of those awesome, predators of the sky and becoming a falconer. I had a firm training plan in my mind, letter myself out with it, the gear and finally the day came when I picked up my sixteen week old female Harris Hawk.

Once home, I took her out of the box in the morning and let her settle on a box for a few hours before starting to train her. She was quite plucky from the off and sat on the glove well. I continued 'teaching' her little bits of me throughout the day and then on the fourth day she was a 'falconer' from the first takeoff at 21 ft. Was a great feeling that was - all was going to plan so far and I saw the 'real' fun stuff was about to start!

After almost three weeks of exercise work and flying her best responding, waiting with the guidance of Steve, she finally went free and I worked on recall from trees and following on. She was 11.5 ft at this stage but showing no interest in bunnies - she was however nailing the bunny lure. I decided to get a good rabbit and plunk it in a hedge with a wooden stick to it. Dad came along and on command she started running as fast as she could while towing it. She bit the stick instantly and pulled it towards her head for her and gave her a good one - knew she wasn't far off entering at this stage, so the next day I took the whole day off and my only concern was getting her interested. Well, the rabbit carcass certainly did the trick. She was like a different bird and was finally showing her hunting mode and waiting for the stick as if the rabbit from the previous day was going to show itself at any time. I remember it clearly, first step was a pigeon that flew through some hawthorn fencing. I studied on the ground a bit before so I slipped Madi from about thirty feet. She hit on the ground but lost her grip. My heart was racing by this stage and I realised her and continued. A couple of minutes later a cock pheasant got up in front of us, he had a good start on her and I knew the wasn't going to be stopped anyway. She chased it well but it soon burnt her off. I was really watching my paws with excitement at this stage and continued on



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She came close a few more times and then I came across a nice rabbit - too good an opportunity to miss. I thought I had her on the fat and started walking towards it. It didn't move and Madi didn't register it at all. Then all of a sudden it twitched slightly and I flipped her. She took it straight by the head and hid it secured well. I ran over, disassembled it and opened the head up for her to feed on. Looking back now I can't believe I slipped a rabbit, but at the time it was the best feeling in the world - my hawk had just been interested and I could now call myself a falconer for the first time.

She started to rack up a good head count very quickly, making a kill almost every day and we were soon into multiples. I was amazed at how quickly she became an efficient hunter and started to show good hunting skills. Her footing was excellent - very rarely losing a rabbit. I wasn't using my Springer at the beginning of the season as she was too young and still needed further training. It was about half way through the season when I started using 'loss along' with Madi and when a cove became a cog makes not only a hunting companion but also for finding stuff that we were just walking straight past. It took a while for Madi to accept loss but after she started producing spoils for her she soon noticed. I went to all of our regional field meets and she did well along side the other Harris.



The best flights we were getting were straight off the fat in the orchards. They would go one of two ways if the rabbit flushed, one she would take chase almost to a Gate above 500 feet off the ground, landing and turned through the apple trees. I remember being amazed at just how fast and agile she was and I was very content with it without the tall AT target sticks, she would gain height will follow the rabbit then wing over and stoop in, enjoyed these flights as well, but not as much as the direct low pursuit. Another flight I remember well from the first season was one at a rabbit a good hundred yards off. She cut the fat and seemed to know exactly where it was heading - a hedge that



bordered the field. Instead of flying at the running rabbit she flew to where it was heading and cut the corner to speak. Dad was along with me that day and we both muttered how clever for the instant in both the rabbit just made the cover with her almost attached to it's rear. No kill but the flight was great.

Most of the pheasants that she took were taken from following on, but there were a few instances where she did chase and flew very far. I called it after the put in, she was very fit at this stage due to the only flying regime and I think we only missed about seven slips flying during the whole season. I enjoyed hunting her from following on and all do - the flights are not as spectacular but watching hawk and dog work together while in control of both is a joy to behold.

One such flight I remember was on a field meet where Madi was about twenty feet up in a tree directly above the Fox. Fox had some good scent and flushed a rabbit from a bar. The rabbit was running full tilt and Madi came straight down and nailed the bunny in full view of everyone attending. A mugging job, but still I enjoyed the fight and seeing the partnership between dog and hawk.

We ended the season at the beginning of March with 143 rabbits, 11 pheasants, 2 partridge, 1 mallard, 5 moorhen, 1 magpie, 1 pigeon, 1 rook, 1 weasel, 1 woodcock and 1 vole. A total of 167 birds. Never did I consider having such a good first season and to say I was happy was an understatement. She finished the season at 20lb 12 with plenty of muscle on the bone.

This season she has not disappointed and has started to show some very tactical hunting ability just into the season she spotted a pigeon feeding in the middle of a field, an aquatic bird, but not as much as the direct low pursuit. Another flight I remember well from the first season was one at a rabbit a good hundred yards off. She cut the fat and seemed to know exactly where it was heading - a hedge that

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Abreaction

by Roy Bebbington

Abreaction: the free expression and consequent release of a previously repressed emotion.

Decout pheasant hawkers assert your gaze this article is the caution or rabbit hawkers' typical experience of a good pheasant.

Thursday 15th October 2009.
It was somewhat of a damp after weather with a constant light but soaking mist. Clipped to this, the ground was sodden after heavy overnight rain. The sky the winds had abated.

We were hawking within a hidden glen, nestled amongst the hills of the beautiful Scottish borders. On one side of a very steep hill, absolutely ridged with rabbit burrows. From the number of tracks we could see they were absolutely very well used. The problem was that was just about as far as any of the rabbits seemed from them. The hill was gently covered, top like undergrowth to offer safe refuge for a rabbit to hide within. The cover did gradually increase, but far too much for too soon. Within just a few hundred yards it went from almost non-existent to a choking carpet of standing bracken.

The hill gradually dropped down to the red-tiled and the ground here looked for more promising signs a mixture of green pasture and heather with patches of rushes not untypical of what we usually experience at home, all of which I have to confess normally find most attractive. I however failed to remember that we were not actually on home ground, and these were Scottish rabbits with their own laws and rules!

Despite the fact, neither of our dogs nor a single rabbit was found. With the dog did find points and flush on command was a pheasant! This pheasant sat off pursued by the hawk directly towards and over the red-tiled, now a rising tower after the heavy overnight rain. They continued for a considerable distance before turning into what looked like a small copse.

I began to make my way across to where I saw them disappear, only to suddenly realise that I was now half to right, half to left. In fact, I was walking almost at right angles in both directions, there was no other way to reverse it than to take the bull by the nose and walk across.



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I unleashed the dog, stepped into the icy waters and within two steps I was up to my neck in a very delicate part of the male anatomy. Somehow I managed to get to the opposite bank, despite the river's best efforts to carry me off downstream. I then I judged, soaked and cold towards the hawk.

On reaching the copse into which both hawk and pheasant had disappeared I was faced with a small crowd of trees completely surrounded by a high wall. I again looked for a reasonable way across.

There wasn't one! I had no option than to go off deep into the bush smelling water.

I quickly located the hawk. She was sitting in a tree peering intently into cover which the pheasant must have put in. I have never been so careful and cautious about where I stepped. I simply did not want to inadvertently flush the pheasant. Thankfully that never happened and I located the hawk once she was satisfied that the pheasant was not going to reappear.

The only way back was the very way we had come. With the hawk from above, step my outstretched arm, we reorganised both the dog and me, I might add, to the hawk's displeasure. She was not at all happy with my aquatic gymnastics. On reaching the proper side of the hill, I decided to reorganise myself. OK, so I was wet, muddy and cold. But they were still in one piece. I had the hawk back and the dog was obviously keen to continue. What on earth could go wrong now?

We moved on and within a short period of time, the sky's main language began to indicate game. Hoping for a rabbit, I was absolutely dejected when our flushed a large, malignant, cackling cock pheasant. My turned left! For the time being the pheasant decided to head off into the nearby county following the hawk, who was not getting any more ground upon it. Off they went, leaving a huge ruckus on the opposite side of the glen to a distant wood. I stood there, still jawed, going deeply at the prospect of having to follow them on yet another huge jump.

It was my young dog that woke me from my complete stupor. Her yowling was the only thing that woke me and made a half jump directly in front of me, as if to say, "OK, look what's next!" I switched both dogs out off.



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On reaching the abreaction forest, my actual size suddenly appeared upon me. It must have been 200-300m down and more approximately 200-300m up its opposite side. That climb was an absolute lung buster. I had a brief rest employed my anatomy, drained a signal and then followed its direction.

I eventually arrived at a tightly planted conifer plantation. You know the type, dark, damp, acidic, and almost impossible to walk through. I decided to leave both of my dogs at one corner of the plantation. That way I would know exactly where to return to collect them once I had retrieved the hawk. I only saw the hawk under the canopy, chasing pheasants. I duly entered and endured an absolute nightmare, knocking my hat off, getting my hair entangled in the lower branches and if all of that was not enough, my muscoteaux took an absolute beating!

After a long period of silence, I tried to deploy my remaining. I hoped I simply could not locate it, so I drove over the wood. I should have listened for her bell. Success! I followed its sound and spotted the hawk towards the far corner of the plantation. I came to my senses and dashed out of the plantation and walked back some distance and called to her.

On hearing me calling to the hawk my dogs came naturally though I heard them. So they ran to find me. This proved no problem for my older dog, but for my poor youngster well, she must have been with her since she was a pup before finally finding me.

With both dogs secured, I was so relieved to find that the hawk had stayed put throughout. Thank you Lord! The hawk returned when called. With her safely back on my side, I released the dog, and we headed for home. I will spare you the details of the journey home back.

"Pheasant!" You can see them! Give me a rabbit any day. There's that free expression and consequent release of a previously repressed emotion.

Ben Long

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A Hare-Less Season

by Neil McCann

This season started as any another season should, a couple of goshawks moulting out in their aviaries and an eyas bird on order. I would be training two goshawks this season and selling one as I do not agree with leaving a good hunting hawk in an aviary doing nothing all season.

I took one of the birds and collected the eyas hawk, a nice large hawk I want to put out on order, no neck feathers, she was aggressive and vocal, the brooder agreed to take her back. This was the only one of goshawks, not too late of an issue.

The one came for the annual trip to the Scottish Highlands, two weeks of rabbiting and the same group as every year of hares to hawk.

There's always an accident up north and this year was no different. Gordon's dog had to have stitches on a delicate skin tear on a belly wire and my hawk had a strain of wire had tear a both legs a few feathers out, she was shaken but carried on. The next day she did not seem herself. Some weight loss, she was walking rabbiting but I decided to feed her up and put back in her box. Later on the old did not look happy, you know your own hawk, I brought the hawk home, she had a little weight loss, I brought her home, she had a little weight loss, I brought her home, she had a little weight loss.

Colin Austin offered to let me fly the cub female goshawk for the rest of the season, after a few thoughts I took her up on the offer but had decided not to fly her on the field, meets after pheasants as there are quite a few hares.

I stayed on in Scotland looking for the hawking partying, or 2 rabbits a day, most of a couple of weeks later in he was having to move to Scotland within the next 12 months and he had to start hawking again, so I was looking for a hawk to fly for him, he would be struggling for time to fly her I have only flown 10 flights in the past and that could be quite vocal.

He said he had a few hares, he was flying her for a rabbit, 5 days later, although the cub call a little in the field, her movements were spot on and not aggressive at all, was looking forward to catching a brown hare. I catch a 2nd season and enjoy watching a goshawk fly at ground game.

She was a bit confused for my first flight and it took a few days for her to have over the dog. We only had 1 or 2 hawkable hares for the first few trips out, I was convinced when she called they were moving into deeper cover or to another field.

We got a nice hare up from a point but the dog just followed the hare to cover and did not make any attempt to take it.

Strange! She does this again twenty minutes later! Over a week I think I take her rabbit, having no problem, I take her off she takes 7 out of 12 hares, rabbits on Friday, she is fed up on her last call. She still calls a little on a hill but nothing too bad.

Saturday we go hare hawking at the crack of dawn, she will call and we're struggling to find one hare, she will call and we're struggling to find one hare, she will call and we're struggling to find one hare.

The following week same thing a nice hare present, in flight and a few rabbits. Monday morning out only struggle to find a hare and then dog down down point. It is like playing pool, three or four hares sitting right in it, seat, go behind it, walk in, it's off straight away hawk off the field, and suddenly you've got it in one follows the hare to deeper cover again.

She comes straight back to the field, I then noticed other hares moving off the large fields we were on. I think with her call they were not staying around hence the difficulty finding one in its seat.

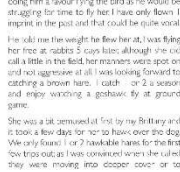
I kept Colin updated on her outings, he said crop her weight a little more for hares, so I did back her out after two weeks later and she did the same thing, covered every one making very little effort to keep hold of one.

This was the first year I have not broken a hare for over 12 years, although I took over 50 hares for her in twelve weeks and Colin took more with her and she was a joy to fly. These hawks to Colin as I would, of struggle to hawk this season.

Webb Hawking Club, Female goshawk imprint flew 21/2 out.



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Snowy Days Hunting

by Tony Allen

Today is Saturday the 20th December and I have arranged to go hawking at a farm in Grassington North Yorkshire. The farmer has told me that the roads are passable but the fields are covered in snow.



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The weather here in Doncaster is very wintry and has been now for three weeks we are definitely in for a white Christmas, looking out of the windows I could see that it had snowed overnight as a light covering of snow had settled in the garden. I collected Glamo my male Goshawk from his mews and went with him to my delight he was in hunting weight of 1.12 and a quarter ounces. I changed his jesses to flying ones to save time and with his tail guard on I put him into his travelling box, two other people were coming with me, my son Daniel who was going to hunt for me, and my friend Richard, to fly a female Harris Hawk. We were travelling from Doncaster and it takes about one and a half hours to get to Grassington and so we do stop off for breakfast at a well known bikers cafe, a bacon bally and coffee goes down very well as it is now about 8.30 am. Back on the road we soon get nearer to Grassington and so we do stop off for breakfast at a well known bikers cafe, a bacon bally and coffee goes down very well as it is now about 8.30 am. Back on the road we soon get nearer to Grassington and so we do stop off for breakfast at a well known bikers cafe, a bacon bally and coffee goes down very well as it is now about 8.30 am.



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again, things were not looking good and we began to wonder if we would get a fight and the maybe we may have waited our time even coming here today! The snowfall was really heavy now and we left the car outside the farm gates as there was no way we would be able to drive down to the field, we will usually go now, so we decided that we would only stay about an hour to give ourselves a chance of getting back down the lane and home, whether we caught or not. Richard had first slip on entering the field, but he Harris Hawk didn't like flying in these conditions and as the rabbit made for the safety of the wall one of us had to go in to see what to be seen as they stuck out like sore thumbs, shouting from the horrible conditions near the side of the stone wall, as we walked along the side of a wall we disturbed a rabbit which started to run towards the middle of the field. It was my slip and I released my goshawk, Glamo, willing him to catch, he pinned the rabbit in seconds and had a clean catch in hand, quickly to dispatch the said rabbit and let him face up on the warm mat as his well earned reward. In the meantime so as not to waste time and get out walking for me and my bird, Dan and Richard had begun to attempt to walk up some more rabbits for his Harris Hawk who had been seen mine catch was totally switched on and scouting the land in front of her for lively prey. Glamo was now a full and contented bird and I joined Richard and Dan as they entered another field, walking through the gate he kicked several rabbits up and his bird did well in her choice and successfully caught, she was also rewarded and two full crops later we were heading back for the warmth of the car, happy that the birds had flown and caught in this kind of weather. If we had stayed much longer we would have been surprised there for a while. When we had finished hawking we had seen the farmer enter the same field as us in his Landrover, but his tyre tracks were nowhere to be seen as several inches of snow had fallen since then! Oh yes in case you were wondering what happened to the poor feline! She was very and warm at last time in her bad inside her travelling box left in peace in the car. BLOODY LUCKY FERRIE!!



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The Prairie Gentle



by Ellis Phytian

Prior to last season my old gylperpentine was in a pen with Phil Ashley's Female Peregrine. I decided to give him a season off as he is now ten and hopefully he may bond and mate with the Falcon. It is probably most falconers dream to breed their own Eys and fly them.

I decided as my old bird was forlornly indisposed, by something different. An article by Clara Duane-Waters in a BBC magazine put forward the case for Hybrids. In her article Diana enthused about Peregrine/Hybrid which were the Hybrid of choice before the advent of the Gylperpentine. I investigated further, asking and reading as much as possible about them especially the females.

Maxim Kerry told me about his friend Mike Crowe and his High flying second year bird bred by Ryan Coak. The desiveness of the birds seem to alternate between rather in some birds to very Peregrine like in others, obviously the latter ones would be taking after the Prairie.

Finding a Female Peregrine/Hybrid was not an easy job as breeders such as Ryan Coak had not had an luck with breeding Females this season. One was finally tracked down in Loughanish near Antrim. Steve Field was an ex keeper and he had a Female in his arrangements to pick up the Falcon/Steve lived in a nice part of the country close to Loughanish House which was where the famous 19th century sportsman Col Hauser once lived.

The father was a nice leggy sapphire Tinted whilst the Mother born a Prairie was the best specimen I have seen. The Eys Hybrid was

perfectly formed and I was pleased with the purchase.

The training began with taking her weight down to a flying weight. She was very amiable with no signs of being and took to the hood with no problems. She flew at 1lb 12 Ozs and by day she made a higher pitch and after Mike Roberts set out her back pack for the stationary Falcon and she took to the hood with no problems. She flew at 1lb 12 Ozs and by day she made a higher pitch and after Mike Roberts set out her back pack for the stationary Falcon and she took to the hood with no problems. She flew at 1lb 12 Ozs and by day she made a higher pitch and after Mike Roberts set out her back pack for the stationary Falcon and she took to the hood with no problems.

The three day meeting came around and I had high hopes of actually catching something! The first day I flew a jay was worked a copious and finished. She was very amiable with no signs of being and took to the hood with no problems. She flew at 1lb 12 Ozs and by day she made a higher pitch and after Mike Roberts set out her back pack for the stationary Falcon and she took to the hood with no problems.

The second day was in Carrig with the perfect set up with a pond with Duck in residence. Once flushed they would have to fly across the field to reach the safety of the river. I set her off where she would have to fly across the field to reach the safety of the river. I set her off where she would have to fly across the field to reach the safety of the river. I set her off where she would have to fly across the field to reach the safety of the river.

The third day was at Lurgagh and surely her luck would change. We walked through down into a hedgeless where I put her up and she mounted to a perfect pitch. Mike Robert his Spanish male Peregrine took to it all decisions she picks out a good bird and takes us into a



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Artemis

by Colin Aquib

First of all let me introduce myself my name is Colin and I am originally from Yorkshire but have lived in Wales for the last twenty four years and have been a member of the WHC for just as long.

The year I thought I would write an article for the Austringer on something different as we don't really see enough of this sport and the falconry you can get are sometimes out of this world. I have been doing falconry for some 25 years now and have seen many different kinds of birds but my true passion is for falcons. This year I took on a young peregrine falcon which I took at around twelve days old and imprinted and named Artemis. She has proven to be a very efficient hunter on gulls. Now at the moment there are three main types of gull which you can hunt in Wales which are herring gulls, lesser black backs and greater black backs but the main ones are herring gulls although this may change in the future as they may be taken off of the general licence very soon.

Now Artemis started off being fed 40 times a day from two tins from when she was old enough for a bowl but I always bring them with my fingers top when some say you shouldn't but I always have with my imprints and have never found this to be a problem and to date she never screams or makes. Once she was flying she was allowed to take back in work and I would take and place her on the works. She could go off and fly as and when I called her and once she was in the work for a couple of hours or more at a time but will get in much food as she wanted to eat every time she came back to me.

Now when hand making the day always comes where they start to chase things and once this



day arrives its time to start feeding them on your own now to date Artemis has taken 70 gulls, 13 crows and 4 ravens but this means nothing to the quality of the falcon that I have seen her be.

After a long flight its nice for her to make a kill and have her feed but some of her best flights have got away and conceivably so but the flight for me has to be the 40-500 greater black back gull that she took when I was on holiday in Scotland. Although I got to her very quickly she had killed it by herself I probably took a minute or two. Although gull hawking is very exciting in the right place probably away from water is not for the faint hearted as the flights can quite easily go for miles and end up in some real awkward places and off the top of my head I think the furthest Artemis has gone is about 6 miles. If you are not very good at tracking it could be hours before you find your bird so if you intend to take up this sport learn how to use your telemetry. The quality of flying you will see from a gull fight has to be seen to be believed and is a part of falconry that every falconer should witness.

With your interest gull which in the case would be gulls you will find while you take hawking after a few weeks the day will come when the bird will make its first kill. Now I have found over the years this is around twelve weeks old and in my case usually a crow and this one happens I start them on their first training ready for gull hawking.

By now your bird will be eating gull readily or at least it should be and what I use is a lure machine like the one you see for the simulated covering at game fairs. Place a dead gull on a line run it out around a peg or pipe and bring it back to you as the lure and set every time she comes back to me.

Now when hand making the day always comes where they start to chase things and once this



the line a little bit and let the falcon jump onto it and have a feed.

Then each day increase the distance between you and the bird just as you would if you were training a show dog or rabbit. Once the hood is removed and the falcon is taking the dead gull at about 100 yards I then a few days of that and I should be able to see for the simulated covering at game fairs. Place a dead gull on a line run it out around a peg or pipe and bring it back to you as the lure and set every time she comes back to me.

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Dog Training



by Mike Roberts

What is it about falconers and dogs? Most of us have a dog or two for our falcons but come the field meets, where are they all?

Usually but not always, the dogs you see at the field meets are of a good standard and the owner is either happy to bring them out in company or has had them to be bothered by the comments about "Whose chin dog is that?" (When I say I trained my own GWP chick pup I lie).

But what about the rest? Why are they all at home? Why is it that generally falconers don't have well trained dogs? They put an immense amount of time and effort in to their birds and every season but the dog training is neglected as they are simply expected to do their job when out in the field.

Some of you may think that dog training is difficult. Well it will be if you avoid it. It will be very simple and you only need a or a minutes each and every day to achieve a well behaved dog that you

quickly learn to associate their new name with something positive and this leads to you on hearing their name.

Following on from the introduction of their name is what I believe to be one of the most important parts of the dog training recall. There is nothing worse in my view than watching someone calling their dog and the dog simply ignoring them and going to own thing. This may not be resulting in game being flushed at the wrong time or even the dog coming to harm. A good recall recall is essential for any dog not just a working dog. With almost all young pups of any breed I usually find that a food based reward to instill a sound recall.

I do not use treats as such, but useibble from the pup's daily ration. (My pockets are usually full ofibble which is not what when trying to call a hawk to the fist and it is very difficult to be a falcon user) this exercise is usually best started in a confined space being in the garden or a room in the house. Start off by making sure the pup has emptied their fist there is no room, teaching a pup at the very young age that can stop on the way back and empty their fist on recall is the best potential to become a very annoying habit later in life.

Let the pup move away from you and have a little free time of its own for 20 seconds or so using a nice soft tone or their name when they look at you get yourself down on the floor and sit on your bum legs a part and the pup will almost certainly start towards you as they are coming towards you you can give the recall command just once - I use the word "here" - make this a nice and soft command when the pup comes with you you can give it the food reward and a little praise, do not try and restrain the pup in anyway just make it look off for 5-10 seconds. Now stand up and move away slowly. Once the pup has moved away from you again, this may take some time as they will now associate you with a good thing again say their name and get down on the floor and repeat the exercise.

The reason behind the one command is a simple one you want the pup to start the way you want to command and that will be "One command one action" - by using repeated commands you are simply teaching the dog to come the previous command and come when it wishes, the same will become apparent when we move on to more advanced lessons.

Do not be tempted to move on from this lesson until the pup comes to you each and every time you call it first and it must come first time. What do I do if the pup does not come though? I can wait for you up to 10 seconds from when you call it and if it is unlikely at this stage that you will get a pup that will ignore you intentionally. If you come after you call they may get distracted on our back or by

something else more interesting. The key here is to make yourself more interesting to the pup good use of voice inflection for your initial command and a nice inviting posture on the floor will be very tempting to a young pup as will the food reward.

If you have called your pup and they have not responded in the way you desire, they have not come straight to you. Simply stand up and brisly walk away from the pup or a pace and then sit down again. (You are losing focus) all the better if you are in your hand and this should encourage them towards you. If it does not then repeat they will not get you very far but this is the important bit then they come to you after you having to move away from them, only give them a little reward and a nice word of praise. If it does not then repeat they will not get you very far but this is the important bit then they come to you after you having to move away from them, only give them a little reward and a nice word of praise.

Over the course of seven to ten days you can gradually reduce the visible reward for all but the fastest of the recall, this teaching the pup that if it makes haste back to you it may or may not get a reward - just like training a hawk with the visible reward system.

The next command in the sequence of events I teach is the sit or "up" this is probably the easiest of all commands to teach a young pup there are lots of ways of doing so but the way I find the quickest are easiest is with the pup in front of you, place one hand gently under the chin and the other on the rump and gently push the pup in to the sit position - once the bum touches the floor you give the sit "up" command and then a little praise, repeat this 4 or 5 times and then try it without using your hands to manoeuvre the pup in to the sit position - if they sit give them plenty of praise and if you do desire an edible reward.

The important thing here is again "one command one action" you must only use the sit or "up" command in place of sit once per exercise, otherwise you are simply teaching the pup to ignore your commands.

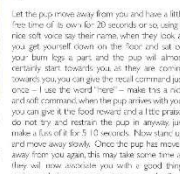
If when you give the verbal command the pup does not sit first time, then using your hands place the pup in the sit position, do not get another verbal command, hold the pup then for 2-3 seconds before praising. Repeat the exercise until the pup will sit first time of asking every time you ask. Once they are doing this each and every time you ask, ask it from 10 times to ensure it with the recall. If you must start the dog sit each and every time you call it back to you, it will very quickly learn what is required of it and start to sit without command waiting for its reward. (Either verbal, praise or edible) by varying the length of time that the pup sits in front of you before you give a reward you will prevent - from despatching the hawk to jinking as you go to praise it. If the pup does move as you go to praise it, simply stop and wait until it has settled before being

rewarded otherwise you will end up teaching it that it is acceptable to jump up to receive its praise.

Now that you have the pup settled at home it is the ideal time to introduce the bird in to the partner ship, depending on the time of year that you have taken on your new pup your bird may be come to moult in which case the introduction will have to wait until the bird has been picked up from the moult however, if the timing coincides with the start of your flying season all the better as you will be in a position to train your bird around the pup at all times. As a simple rule if have and it is to be trained then whenever it is on the field, you will raise the pup with me, no matter if it is just to weigh or to set the bird to weights, make sure you have the pup with you. Be careful though as even at the young age the pup could still injure your bird especially a bootless puppy. This find the local area to introduce the all important "up" commands, if the pup shows to much interest in the bird then a short firm "No" will help to keep them under control. The more your young pup sees your bird and the more time it spends in your presence, the easier they will be later down the line for training and fly introduction to the field with the falcon.

When the dog sits at your right hand side, (as a falconer we walk our dogs on the right) place both of your hands in the loop of the lead with your thumbs in to the top of your trousers. Now bring forward your spot in the distance. Say the dogs name to get its attention and then "sit" in a soft voice, just the once now with a nice voice, just as if you were talking to a friend. As soon as the dog sits in the correct field position, you need to let a sharp jerk (to distract) and without stopping continue in a straight line (keeping a spot in the distance will help you keep straight, do not use any voice commands other than the initial bark, to get the dogs attention or to praise the correct position. Continue turning sharp left each and every time the dog is out of position or walk at the "No".

During the early stages of teaching he will want to keep the seasons short, but sharp, no more than 60 seconds per session, but there can be repeats several times during the day. After a few days you will notice that your dog has started



moving on to the biggest them in most ponds (sit, lie down). This is a technique that is well practiced over the years and as if you had not failed with any dog of any breed.

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to look at you whilst, doing heelwork, they are anticipating your turn and their heelwork is now slowly improved. At the stage you can start to walk in turns even when the dog is at heel and they should turn tight with you.

At this lecture on teaching heelwork it is the ideal time to add in the "stop" to again with the dog at your side, lead held in the foot with both hands, you are off at a brisk pace pulling in one or two turns to help settle the dog down. Now comes the difficult part - it is all about timing as you get foot flat the ground you say the "heel" command - we already know the dog understands this command so we know it will all - the key is getting the dog to sit alongside you and not a yard or so in front of you, as you say the "heel" command you take a full step forward with your left foot and then bring your right foot to join the left - your dog should know he is alongside you. The extra pace allows for the dog to interpret the command and stop. A good place to practice this is along side a fence or hedge, line to help prevent the dog from sitting at an angle. Now you have both joints together you can continue to practice until the dog follows you without command where ever you turn.

Right turn one a little more easily at first than left ones as you will be walking across the path of the dog the key here is as you turn right, make sure you are leading with your right leg thus helping to turn the dog using your body instead of striking the dog with your left knee as you turn.

With the heel on the lead firmly encased in the dog and this should only take 7-10 days with 2 or 3 sessions each day to reach the stage where your dog will follow you at heel round in squares with either left or right hand turns it is now time to take off the lead and see if your dog understands what is required of it.

With the dog at at your right hand side without the lead on, set off at a nice brisk pace, the command as you set off is just the single "heel" command, your dog should be walking nicely to heel if all has gone well to this stage, without any warning turn sharp left and continue to walk in that direction - looking down you should find your dog right nose to you! If however they have continued to walk in the direction you had originally set off in, then don't call them to you simply keep walking until they come and join you. Once they have joined you call them up and stand on the lead, this simply demonstrates to you that they have not fully understood the heelwork and that more on the lead work is required before they can progress to off lead work.

Once you are able to perform a complete stop with the dog off the lead with the occasional stop you should now be confident that you can walk across any field with your dog at heel, turn left or right at any point and your dog will turn with you, the only command you will need is your initial heel command. You will also make at this stage that each time you stop the dog will stop and all without command from yourself, this is simply a

result of your repetitions carried out during the early stages of the heelwork training. If the occasional reminder is needed to make the dog stop, you stop, then it would be worth while doing a short 60 second session of heel work with the dog on the lead just to reinforce that training - a dog is never fully trained and only remains trained by careful reinforcement of the learnt behaviours.

Now that you have your dog doing heelwork both on and off the lead it is time to add your hawk or falcon to the equation so with the lead on the flat dog at at your right hand side, you set off at a nice pace and carry out a square of heelwork in each direction, this enables the bird to get used to the dog and the dog to the bird personally I find this the ideal time to give the hawk a tiring to keep it occupied whilst carrying out some important training and also training the dog.

So there you have it, a dog that will walk to heel change direction with you and stop when you stop - it will do all of this without needing constant reminders to "heel" and will allow you to concentrate on your bird, of course always keeping half an eye on your dog!

Mike is a full time professional gun dog trainer in company with his partner Rhona, they specialise in training HPRs for the shooting field and falconry. For further details or advice on training, www.mikesccolour.com

Ray 'Tubby' Hooper 1957 - 2009



Friends of Ray from within the Welsh Hawking Club have travelled here today from all over the UK to pay their respects to a man that they had great affection for and the owner of the high regard and esteem in which he was held within the club.

Ray was a great ambassador for falconry. In life we all meet people who help us shape our lives and make us a better person. Ray was one of those people. Ray's kindness has had a positive influence on us all.

It has been an honour and privilege to call Ray our friend.

The following poem was written by a member of the Essex region of the Welsh Hawking club and perfectly sums up the feelings of us all. For those of you who wouldn't have known Ray, I presented not to Mike being called 'Mate' and therefore his buddy Steve's poem clearly demonstrates the lovely bond that existed.

My Mate Ray

By Steve Vaughan

From your very first meeting

Sincere was the order of the day,

My Mate Ray

His fatherlike advice I always sought,

It was often met with a witty retort,

My Mate Ray

His willingness to help was open to all

No matter if the hawk was big or small,

No detail was ever missed,

My Mate Ray

As I walk with my hawk in the sunlight of a crisp winter's day forever present now will be,

My Mate Ray

A true friend crossed but never forgotten.

I am quite sure by now you will have noticed the common thread running through this piece.

Ray 'Tubby' Hooper was a very special man and a true and respected friend to all that knew him and I feel privileged as a friend to have been asked to write this piece.

of characters. It is well gifted in the art of being able to relate to children in a most amusing fashion and before very long he would be sharing his passion with youngsters who will one day perhaps, as a result, turn out to be the next generation of falconers.

The magic that is seeing a hawk land on the arm of a child, giving them a memory that will stay with them always, is very powerful.

Ray most certainly had an enduring effect on everyone he met as I know and very many will testify.

For those who were unable to attend his funeral I can only describe it as an incredible experience. I don't know the exact attendance figures but it was many hundreds way beyond the capacity of the church.

If you were present Cl. Bentley Green during the service you might believe it to be the funeral of someone with celebrity status! But on no this most evident man had literally hundreds of REAL friends.

There were four tributes read at Ray's funeral, one of which was compiled and read by Essex Region member Peter Dawson. Such was the impact of this eulogy that I have reflected many times since on its content and feel that it is important that part of it is shared with you.

by Stuart Byers

At the time of writing this it has been nearly four months since the annual field meeting in Wales. It was towards the end of this year that Ray affectionately known as 'Tubby' fell gravely ill though we were unaware of the seriousness of his illness at the time.

Two days after his return from Wales our very dear friend 'Tubby' died, aged only fifty-two at home with his devoted wife 'Mandy' and sons David and Daniel.

It is very likely that most people reading this will have known Ray, some extremely well, as this was the measure of the man who had the most incredible number of friends and very likely no enemies!

Ray was extremely well regarded in the falconry world for very many reasons. Like all true falconers his enthusiasm and passion for the sport and all its facets, particularly the practical, was clearly in evidence whenever you were in his company.

Frequently during the Essex Region field meets Ray would be deflected by children that were attending very often the landowners children, who would curiously look on to this most affable

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Squirrel Hawking



by Lynn Palmer

A lot of austringers do not like Squirrel because of the risk of their hawk getting bitten. It takes an old bird to get the hang of it and mine has been bitten a few times but she is used to it now. I carry a bottle of antiseptic with me in my hawking bag all the time.

The Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) was first introduced in many parts of Great Britain between 1876 and 1930. There were no native Owls, Goshawks or Pine Martins to prey upon them so they colonised parkland and mixed woodlands very quickly.

In the United States the squirrel is treated as a game species and the shooting season in some states is as short as three weeks. On the whole, no fish is said to be equal to that of rabbit out! Have never eaten it.

Squirrel hawking can start as soon as the leaves have fallen. Squirrels do not hibernate in the true sense but spend the wet, cold windy days curled up in their den. They can be spotted by asking the vixen with long poles.

On most winter days squirrels can be found out and about but as there must be a certain amount of noise with hawking, as in the hawks fields, then many will "freeze" on the branches and be missed by.

They sometimes dwell in old nests of crows and hedges but mostly they are found in their own dens which are easily recognised as they are constructed of branches that are still bearing leaves. Two types are built:

(a) The breeding and nesting den, which is lined with grass, moss, horse-droppals or bark strips.

(b) The wintered nesting den, which is in an ivy covered tree you are sure to find - often in pairs and trees.

Squirrel hawking is one of the few hawking occasions where a male is used they can tell you when they appear quietly and keep track of the feeding signal.

On being jocked from the tree some squirrels fling themselves into space and crash to the floor of the wood. This is covered by bramble they are lost, if not they are soon caught by the hawk before they can go ground. Others dash to a known sanctuary close to the tree such as an old woodpecker hole.

It is the squirrel that goes straight up and jumps from tree to tree that shows the sport in the canopy of the trees. Time and time again the hawk darts with the squirrel only to get her wings entangled in the small branches, thus allowing her to make a quick escape.

Sometimes she will take to him in a mid-air between trees and dash in a vertical line up the dishes earthward down the main trunk. Those are the best flights as they are very strenuous for the hawk. I have had an exhausted squirrel in a tree with the hawk below. It too tried to fly lower to fit.

The squirrel is twenty odd ounces of muscle with powerful jaws and teeth and contrary to the authors we find that Goshawks, Redtails and Harris Hawks both male and female are frequently taken.

Tree rat or not, I must confess I am addicted to Squirrel hawking with my Harris.

Fieldmeeting 2009

2009 Welsh Hawking Club Field Meet Hangleton by Neil McClann

Once again the weather was kind for the Welsh Hawking Club annual field meet. As you can see by the groups it was one of the smallest turn out for some years, this can only be expected with the present financial situation.

It was nice to see a few new members, after the annual field meet as I can remember flying on my first meet, not knowing many members, but making a big mistake by committing every cog this very excited me to get to know the members in the group I was in. I did not make the same mistake the following season I stayed in the hotel and have never looked back, the members met then have become great friends and I have hawked all over the country and have also been to check (played in most 5 star clubs).

As the game fully shows, the gamekeepers are kept so busy at a great day out over the seasons I try to accommodate for all members what ever they are flying but I struggle every year to secure land that will keep a group of hawks to fly rabbits all day near the hotel also I got same but it was a 90 minute show, plenty of rabbits but I thought it was too far for the members to travel, so I set out but a rabbit dace on after talking to the Harris group and the goshawk they said they would travel so for 2009 I will have a rabbit dace as long as the vixen does not wake them out.

For the falcons I have been informed they need more partridge to hunt so I will book a new venue for the coming season and hope the club can get a group to attend with the goshawk only being small, your slip came around a lot of outdoor enabling your bird to get a better chance to catch a pheasant or wood as you can see the Harris group soon started to fill their hawking bags although there first day was a bit grim there were plenty to fly at the end of the day and the woods in Hangleton will see one or two pheasants.

There were plenty of vixen from the Essex, dan and many a flight called to the jet set on in the morning Ed and Mike Coupe chased a few partridge on farms but they just managed to make the score. On flying an owl this season was unlikely on the dace at Camp. If only the wild peregrine falcon had come over a couple of miles later in sure he would of had a duck in the bag.

Mike Kane (now a top male female) you taking a cock pheasant in fine style across the field on the farm only for record 6pp on pheasant and few woodcock in a later 60 yard and took it that a male on the field Dave Rhodes was well impressed with goshawk. I, the wale Trevor Watson and few vixen catching a pheasant after a chase across 2 fields and ending up at the back of dace house.

The hotel was better than expected, music car park, brilliant weathering grounds and the food was the best we have had as yet, hopefully more members will be with us next season as the hotel has been booked again for the 2010 season.

Cheers, Neil

Dedicated to a great guy Ray Hooper (tubby)

Harris Hawk Group			
Wed	Carrog	1 Pheasant	
Thur	Llaneglo	10 Pheasants 4 Ducks	
Fri	Boys-A-Pys	1 Squirrel 1 Rabbit	
Fri	Boys-A-Pys	10 Pheasants 1 Duck	
Goshawk Group 1			
Wed	Carrog	3 Pheasants	
Thur	Llaneglo	2 Pheasants	
Fri	Boys-A-Pys	2 Pheasants	
Goshawk Group 2			
Wed	Janette	8 Pheasants	
Thur	Boys-A-Pys	3 Pheasants 1 Pheasant	
Fri	Camp	5 Pheasants	
Goshawk Group 3			
Wed	Llaneglo	5 Pheasants	
Thur	Boys-A-Pys	3 Pheasants	
Fri	Camp	1 Pheasant	
Goshawk Group 4			
Wed	Boys-A-Pys	11 Pheasants	
Thur	Camp	5 Pheasants	
Fri	Llaneglo	5 Pheasants	
Goshawk Group 5 - LONGWING GRP			
Wed	Boys-A-Pys	3 Pheasants	
Thur	Camp	1 Pheasant	
Fri	Llaneglo	5 Pheasants	
Fri	Camp	5 Pheasants	
Total Game Caught			
		PHEASANTS	95
		DUCKS	2
		PARTRIDGE	6
		RABBITS	1
		SQUIRREL	1
		TOTAL OVERALL	111



Then & Now

by Anthony Adams



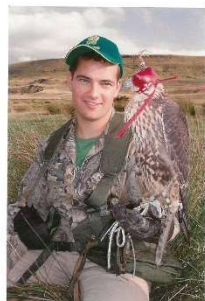
Anthony Adams, 1980



Anthony Adams, 2009



John Adams, 1997



John Adams, 2008



Lyn Palmer, 1978



Lyn Palmer, 2009



Ian Blantern, 1982



Ian Blantern, 2010



Roger James, Aged 12



Roger James, 1982

Spring Rook Hawking



by Andy Hulme

The Easter bank holiday on the Saturday saw myself accompany my good friend Peter Hill to travel across to Cambridgehire to meet up with Bill Burgess. We were there in the Fens for Spring Rook Hawking armed with two Peregrine Falcons and a Tereel.

I have hawked Rooks and Crows with Pete in the past with Peregrine falcons and a Peregrine Falcon in Norfolk in the Autumn and Winter but this was the first time I had been out in the Spring.

The Fens are much more open and flat than Norfolk and are previously used to grow cereals and vegetables due to the rich soil. Spring wheat had been sown by the farmer the week before we were on the ground so there were plenty of small groups of Rooks and Crows.



24 The Austringer

Pete took the first slip at a small group approximately 250 yds away from cover. Luckily we were able to park up in the field and approach unseen. The braces of the food were struck and as Pete walked around the jetonize boxes the Falcon was stopped as the Crows filled and took to the air. She took them out away from the farm then they turned and she picked out a Crow and pursued it past the farm over the road and it was caught as it tried to put into the garden of a cottage. Pete fed her up. Then it was Pete's slip with his experienced Falcon.

We soon found a slip as we drove along the farm tracks past many pheasants and pairs of Ring-necked Pheasants. Pete took on a large group of Rooks and Crows but the bird killed a Crow the evening before and moved around with them not pressing them hard and was called into the lunge and given a small reward so the could be flown later.

We decided to break for lunch and had a bite to eat at the local pub. Then we were out again this time looking for a suitable slip for the Tereel. We soon found a small group of Rooks feeding out in the middle of a heavily drilled field. Pete relooked the Tereel and slipped him but he flew in the opposite direction of the Rooks and we thought he had mistaked him but the Tereel had a cunning plan, he went away gained a little height then he turned and came in a nice knock and pulled one out of the small group which he stopped at first. The Rook evades the stoop and takes advantage well heads for cover which is a barn on the edge of the field. The Rook makes it with the Tereel commencing in and nearly grabbing him on the roof of the barn so



with the Rook making over the Tereel called in.

We drove around looking for a final slip for Bills Falcon and we finally had one, a pair of Crows which she takes on and angles one bird out and brings the Crow towards us but the Crow keeps itself under the raptor's wings which doesn't allow the Falcon to press home a stoop and put the Crow under pressure. Finally the Crow makes a break for it when the Falcon drifts away but she sees the Crow and soon circles up to the Crow and puts in a stoop but the Crow evades her and hovers for the safety of the worm again and this time the Falcon has had enough and throws up onto a telegraph pole where she called in and fed up, so seeing an ending and entertaining day.



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Partridge Hawking on the other side of the pond

by Mark Williams, Alberta, Canada

Without question my favorite quarry for long-range are the Hungarian or Grey partridge (huns), more so than any other prey species. They are generally found in good numbers locally they hold well to a point, are less likely to dump and put on a very good effort even against the most seasoned game hawk.

My personal experience has shown that generally speaking the optimal grasses by comparison are for more spiky and susceptible to burning when lightest cover is anywhere near 40% for falcons... well let me say they can be the enemy in the grass and the enemy of a predator flight. In direct proportion the number of predators before you. The more you have of predators, the lower chances of a good flight. Ducks are an exception and are indeed great sport. Duck flights can be made as easy or as difficult as you want to make them providing you have an abundance of set up. However in these parts of base class do not set at all season but as a great build up to when the crop are all off and the upland game hawking gets good.



Locally we start both new and interbreed birds on ducks and switch to upland by late September/early October when the crops are all off and the quarry is fully mature. It and somewhat "street smart". Ducks usually move by end of October early November when the winter freeze up starts. To start a young falcon on upland and switch to ducks later is asking for trouble and many birds are reluctant to take to ducks when those upland birds first. My experience over the past 22 years of hawking them shows size has nothing to do with it but more to do with conditioning. The birds confidence levels or mental conditioning. I have had my 325 gram (18.5oz) peregrine take consistently late ducks including mallards. Currently my 350 gram (22.5oz) male grey-winged takes as many mallards as he does any other species of duck. Although it does not compare

hunting big ducks with small birds, like others before him he often goes to pick which duck he wants out of a flock and seems to prefer a big target.



Hawking Seasons
Our upland season officially starts August 15th and goes through to March 31st of the following year but no one I know hunts them that early in the season and besides most traps are not off until early to mid September to provide the stubble so they don't get shot over in search of them. In Canada the term "upland hawking" in North America refers to any game birds be it grouse, partridge, quail or pheasant as like in the UK so early I recall that term was strictly used for Red Grouse and all others were called "lowland game".

Upland hawking on the Canadian Prairies is a lot different to the heather and the somewhat confined fields of England. My measures of good hawking with long-range are limited partly due to my slight mind but also limited to a few brief personal experiences and also as a spectator of others during my formative laboratory years growing up there. I flew most gamebirds for the first 15 years of my falconry career before immigrating to Canada. Compared to the wood-popen Canadian prairies it is a lot different. All of our game in Canada is locally wild and to capture been released places with exception to some very limited pressure released in certain areas in Alberta, essentially everywhere else and including all partridges are to be wild and are certainly behave a lot different to released birds that I used to hunt in the UK.

Partridges are not indigenous to Canada or North America for that matter. The first records of the introduction of Hungarian partridge were back to around late 1820s to early 1900s in Washington and California. The 1908 stocking of south western Alberta is credited with establishing huns in the Great Plains, which now remains their main stronghold. No French (red-leg) or Chukar partridge have been released in any numbers and certainly none have survived in Canada but there

are some in the mid to southern USA. In spite of harsh cold winters our Hungarian partridge populations have now spread as far east as southern Ontario and as far west as eastern British Columbia with the most densely populated numbers remaining in southern Alberta, Saskatchewan and Western Manitoba, not to mention the central US states of Washington, Montana and the Dakotas. Today's NA farming practices have encouraged partridge numbers and in spite of many wild predators still over and under-staring they continue to stay strong.

Unlike most of Europe, our farmers do not turn the stubble into deep swarded summer follow right after harvest and our stubble is left standing throughout winter as a means to hold moisture (snow) and reducing soil erosion. In turn this also provides shelter and protection along with food (both grain) for the birds to food on even in deep snow. Several studies show that our hawks have an approximate 60-80% mortality each year but with large chicks sizes of up to 100-120 birds this helps them recover well each year. This year and the next year saw the "perfect storm" of cool wet weather during the spring and early summer perfectly timing with the chick hatch which has obviously had a significant adverse effect. However as in previous years I am confident that they will bounce back over if it takes a few seasons to do so.

Habitat
Huns prefer open farm country ranging from flat prairie to gentle rolling hills locally at least 60% of the average acres to be small grains such as wheat, oats and barley with the rest being native grassland. Natural pasture and retired crop land are great for most hawks. Roadsides and grassy areas around homesteads, also offer good cover and protection. The best hunting involves low to moderate rainfall so the birds get enough water to drink. This "m" will also explain why rainfall during hatch time has such a negative impact on young ones. Some studies have shown that huns remain within 50 feet of the edge of cover but I think that is based upon local conditions and where I live in the generally well open prairies, white huns are found in cover such as farms and



homesteads. I also find a significant amount of cover right out in the middle of nowhere in areas where sloughs might be good. These set ups make for amazing flights as the quarry knows they have no where to go and put an incredible effort to reach distant cover which provides incredible high quality flights, unmatched anywhere but the most open areas.

Hawking Techniques
By mid to late September I begin to actively search partridge at a main quarry with only periodic flights on ducks for a change of scenery. In early years I relied upon spotting them in the stubble fields close to the road from driving the grid back roads that "clicks" over our country's obnoxious one square mile apart. As in the UK and other areas that they are found, Partridge by their curious nature, can be easily scared by their heads popping up out of the stubble. Spotting positions are used to look for disturbing associated hunts from farm woods or upland oaklike woods but more commonly a good pair of binoculars are used since no window watching is needed. I prefer a good quality (Leica) 10x42mm optics and since I use them daily throughout the season, I just simply spend my \$45 when I see a good pair of German gear but I rarely use my eyes so don't get any better as I reach middle age.



Use of dogs
These days my preferred method of hawking partridge is to run large Varco breeds are used but most commonly the English pointer and English setter being used to have over dogs most of my hawking life. Usually HPR breeds and mostly for hunting. I prefer them with penmanship or ducks under falcons. While they served their purpose, it was not quite the same as the rich experience I feel when running a big running pointing dog over large expanses of wheat stubble and then putting your trust in the dog's nose on what I call a "blind point" (one that the dog has



located and I have not seen the quarry) and then releasing the bird and eventually finding under your falcon. It has brought a whole new dimension to my hawking so much so that in times of deep snow when running dogs is impractical, I find resorting to hawking off roads to be a far less rewarding experience.

Competing predators
Our partridge have to contend with so many wild predators, mostly great Horned owls (which are the number one killer of trapped flocks), snowy owls, wild prairie falcons, goshawks, and of course hawks and crows to name but a few. By the time I start hawking them they have most likely encountered an attack of some kind from one of these predators and possibly bird strikes to them. As a result they fly strong and honest and by mid season are full of cover birds in avoiding a strike from a swooping falcon. By late winter in late January through March they are indeed season birds that are well matched quarry for even the finest and experienced of falcons.



Weather Conditions
No question the nicest time of year to take fall during September through October when the weather is at its best for hawking. However the harsh winter hawking conditions can be challenging for both predator and prey alike. It is not unusual to be hawking in temperatures of 20 to -30C but frankly as much as I have done a lot in recent years up to and including the past season, hawking below -20C is too risky for comfort and allows for lots margin of error on both equipment, dogs and birds.

Other predators act in desperate ways in order to find food and your birds as well as their quarry pose a promising need to sustain another day of life. Transmitter batteries tend to fail to hold a charge and exposed bare skin freezes so in only a few minutes of exposure to the wind I find my birds warm and one foot up as they stretch heavily in the sleep in these temperatures. Getting your



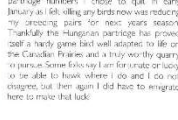
birds stuck in deep drifted snow and then trying to walk to a distant farmhouse in -35C is a recipe for disaster and one could easily succumb to hypothermia. It is so easy to tell your spouse where your quarry is remote of an area as even those days of old phones, I can remember areas I think there is no sign.

While huns have a remarkable ability to survive harsh winter conditions, at these extreme temperatures they do not require necessary hard on them to hawk. In these temperatures even though birds like goshawks and hawks they're not too hot and it's not a problem. Like the North American native white quail huns form a "roosting ring" in present body heat using the insulating properties of snow and their bodies to keep warm. Breeding a covey in from the weather and protection they grow is putting them under unnecessary stress and pressure particularly as having to hear call coveys and regular etc. not to mention that I do not fall as well as I once did even though a warm running stock is not usually too far away.

Because our humidity is very dry on the Canadian prairies the cold is tolerable and you, even for it, Canadian's get a lot of other winter sports or cold temperatures, but like I said, extreme cold weather hawking is usually only practiced by those few die hards or those who enjoy the snow and/or bottom to know when to quit. As hard as it is to believe hawking in -30 to -20C is quite pleasant and there are many such layers of clothing and your birds tend to fly with an extra pair in their case. Given a choice this is the temperature range I prefer to hawk in but our winter weather is unpredictable.



Time to quit
Even though our winter seasons goes through to March 31st, by late February or when the warm up begins you will find the partridge starts to wear up. Some folks will say I am far from old but I am able to hawk where I live and I do not change, but then again I did have to migrate here to make that luck.



Trapping in the USA



by Julie Clowers
It's late November and Mike and myself are on the last leg of a 7 week trip visiting family and holidaying. We arrive at Boise airport for our flight to Denver Colorado where we meet up with Eddie and Heather Allum who are joining us for our trip to Garden City Kansas.

We are attending the Gathering of Eagles meeting and catching up with friends old and new. On our second night there an old friend, Peter Elliott, takes me to a local hawk. One of the English contingent immediately picks up how many of us can be accommodated in his truck!

The chance to experience trapping first hand was too good an opportunity to miss. Tommy explained that he had the licence required to trap a passage Red-tail in Kansas, this being a first-year immature bird caught by means of red tail lures. A group of us arranged to meet up with him the next day. We were Peter Elliott, Eddie and Heather and myself. Tommy had already been out and spent some time driving around keeping a keen eye out for any likely hawks. We were leaving 1 1/2 hours before dawn when we set off. The bait car had just been prepared with 7 mice. I affectionately called the old ladies, they had just finished the trapping of numerous hawks in that year.

Eddie was selected to be trap driver and as such was riding up front with Tommy the rest of us sat behind steering, the seats for the likely hawks. It was only a matter of minutes before a likely candidate was spotted on a nearby telegraph pole. We approached slowly to about 50 yards away. Eddie threw the trap, ensuring that it landed the correct way up. In our time we missed a likely way off. So we stop, not to speak

the bird but close enough to keep an eye on what was happening. There was a feeding of anticipation as we waited to see if the hawk would take the bait. We waited with bated breath as the hawk hit the pole and flew over the trap, obviously interested, but then landed on a large migration system before returning to the pole he had just left. We gave it a few more minutes during which time there was much discussion about the possibility that a real tail could be seen through the binoculars, making it

He weighed the bird and she topped the scales at 580g. She is called Jack, after Jake Eddie Fide and Heather. She is now hunting in 500 acres and her first kill was a fox squirrel. I am very pleased to report that the 'old ladies' are also doing well.

Many Thanks to Peter Elliott for the falcons and Raptor Conservation Magazine for providing the photos for this article.



Looking Back

by Harry Robinson

*Looking Back,
The Day I Joined the Welsh Hawk Club.*
IT WAS A RAINY DAY SOME TIME IN 1967 WHEN I WAS THE FALCONER AT THE WELSH HAWKING ZOO AT CELEUWEN. MY MOTHER SERVED ME BENT SHEEP SOUP VISIT, IT MY COUNTRY WORKERS, GARDEN SUNDERS AND I WERE THERE. THIS WAS THE DAY I SIGNED MY FIRST HAWK. I HAD TO BE SURE AND CAN ONLY HERE TO SAY THAT I GOT MY FIRST HAWK DUE TO HEALTH PROBLEMS. BUT ON THAT DAY I FLEW MY LITTLE MALE CUCKER. "TRIGY" WHO NEVER LET ME DOWN WHAT EVER THE WEATHER. HE WAS PROBABLY THE BEST LITTLE FALCON I HAVE EVER HAD. CATCHED IN IRELAND AS AN IMMATURE BIRD AND WITH TWO WEEKS WING AND FULL WINGS. HE LOVED TO FLY. HIS THROAT WAS WITH ME, NO ONE ELSE COULD FEEL HIM UP, HE LOVED ME WE HAD A SPECIAL BOND. AND HE CERTAINLY BOOSTED MY CONFIDENCE IN MY EARLY DAYS AT THE ZOO. GOOD MEMORIES. THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN ON THIS DAY.

RES ALLAN SOLDIER, GARDEN SUNDERS SOLDIER. YOURS CHAP IN FRONT, IVE FORGOTTEN HIS NAME SO I. OTHER PHOTO IS "TRIGY"



Notes from an Eagle Falconer

by Joe Ashton

I get asked this question a lot... "Joe, what's it like to fly a bird like that?" A question like that cannot be answered in one or two words. It's awesome or unbelievable; flying a golden eagle is all of that but so much more...

Long before falcons were able to fly golden eagles in the USA, I was flying a hawk which prepares them for release back into the wild. Not just any hawk, but the young ones, eagles that had not yet learned to fly on their own. It's not just eagles, but also falcons and many other raptors. They fly without any additional help from me, but a first year eagle that has not had the opportunity to naturally follow its parents around learning the necessary skills to survive, are a different story. These are the ones that need some help. I have flown, hunted and released dozens of golden eagles over the years and in the course of hunting them I have caught hundreds of jacks rabbits and a few raptorial birds like crows, chick pheasants, a halcyon and more than a few ferns. I believe that if a young eagle can fly down a jacks rabbit and catch up to 30 jacks rabbit ready to do it on its own in the wild like all predators eagles need to develop a go to move, one that they can count on to produce a kill, and after catching 20 plus jacks I can see them performing their move and know that they will have a chance to be a wild eagle.

Years ago I started creating my falconer buddies with eagle eagles and talk of my eagle flying experiences. Things like flying a partially trained eagle that was flying low over the ground right down the middle of a very busy two lane street with no running after a wrong car out of the way or running through backlots in a rather noisy housing tract, asking if anyone had seen a large black bird anywhere. I hope that, which seemed to happen to me all too often, may be something you will try to fly a golden eagle in places like there. Well, it's simple really, those areas were surrounded by and surrounded on agricultural fields, clearing with jacks rabbits and one has to go where the game is.

Over time, as the word spread about my eagle hunting adventures, my little group grew, a major jump to include 10 different countries and falcons from all over the world in the process. I started to receive some interesting emails from people, including one account of flying the phenotype of my jacks on hills that I was not being the truth about catching game with eagles because you can't catch game with an eagle, and that eagles were slow and not worth training as a falconer's bird. Of course, the way is completely untrue and in some cases rather harmful, and finally it was those kinds of attitudes that motivated my wife, Cori, and myself to produce our first eagle hunting DVD "Eagle Journal: The Movie". The DVD was produced with one thing

in mind - to show what a well conditioned golden eagle can do in the field hunting jacks off flight.

So what is it like to hunt with a golden eagle? Well, off they are extremely quick and super fast. I have been told by more than a few well known golden eagles, one in particular being Mr. David Perkins, author of "Understanding Golden Eagles", who has been in the field and witnessed golden eagles fly that he is faster than a goshawk. This past November David and I along with Scott Shinn were hunting a field of winter stubble in Kansas and they saw a jacks rabbit, a very still bird with the jacks zig-zagging back and forth many times. I'm assuming the jacks run for him, and they crash out and sing. It was a very nice flight, so much so that David's reaction was to start howling like a wolf. I guess howling is a goshawk thing!

The golden eagle is very intelligent and demands that the falconer go to another level in the training process. Golden eagles are not big red tails or hunting hawks. Many a falconer that has treated them as such has had little if any success. In fact, rapid weight reduction, along with traditional training methods, coupled with high stress, has been proven time and time again to be the wrong way to train an eagle and it's a high percentage of cases that prove fatal. Release golden eagles are very prone to anger, stress and if the stress level is high they will succumb to the disease and die. In order to be successful hunting with an eagle the falconer must take the relationship to a new level, one of hunting partners on nearly equal grounds where food is not the primary motivation, hunting is. Once this level is achieved between eagle and falconer a whole new world will open up because once your eagle looks on you as a means to get to hunt, you'll be the one. Golden eagles can fly down anything in the field - distance is not an issue and they can overcome winds up to 30 mph. As an example, when other raptors in a falconry can you hunt in 500 feet wide in the middle of the field, take 5 jacks rabbits and would



still keep going except that the falconer (me) was tired out. Not the eagle mind you, he still wanted to hunt! It was then that I was done. What other falconer bird could average 35 jacks rabbits over the course of 7 consecutive days in a rainy wind from 18-20 mph? This is what a golden eagle can do. Having success hunting an eagle requires two things - your eagle must be in condition and you must have game to hunt. It's that simple. You'll be in an awe that has nothing to do with or not suitable for a fly in eagle, you should not have an eagle. It will fly in a heartbeat.

The temperament of golden eagles varies greatly. I have had some that are very gentle and a pleasure to work with, some fussy and just plain mean. Then there are others... but are not so nice. Some eagles I have trained were downright nasty and would try to kill me at any and all opportunities, and did. Over the years I have found myself having to handle eagles that have let's say a high degree of hatred for people, being mean golden eagles chased down with men and been determined for all sorts of reasons. All for their own good of course but the eagles don't know that, so all the dogs to make them that much more resentful towards people. And then I come along and want to be friends with them and, frankly, they don't care and are looking for ways to show me they can't care. Make no mistake, eagles are extremely powerful. If they get you their little toe on something they love it and it's not getting away and, unfortunately, this includes the falconer.

A golden eagle can strike in front or rear fall right through your hair. In one case, about the other side. When this has happened I could pull the talons of a male golden eagle back out of my hand but I couldn't even damage the talons of a female golden eagle. You are a lot stronger until the deceleration is gone. After all when they are in the deceleration, they are a lot stronger. Some people anticipate you better than some powerful falcon. In short if you handle eagles you're going to get gashed, you'll be hurt, usually in the early days of training. Once they are trained and hunting the

With many falls in tow, Cori and I drove out into the main ranch outside Garden City looking for a field to fly. I remembered an area on the outermost edge of the ranch that had caught my eye for a few times. I drove past it. The field is a cut wheat field with a pool in the middle and patches of alfalfa. I had myself would connect at all costs and I have done. People in the field hunting with me have not been an issue for a couple of years now, so much so that he is a veteran of two NALGO programs and will now hunt in front of anyone. It's a funny thing about jacks... some fields just don't hold his attention and a falconer just built up the wind was not a falconer. I stood on the jacks like a mowing machine. I ran and simply disappeared. I jacks rabbit looked at 15 yards away jacks caught in 30 yards out.

Mid week of the GDE: With 17 cars following us I found a previously unknown field that looked like a falconer type field, low cover with big areas of open space. Earlier in the morning I had stopped and gained permission to fly in the whole area and many fields looked good. But I chose this one and boy did it pay off.

The wind was at 25 mph with gusts up to 30 mph, it was going to be a nice day. All could do was keep a 200m or downward from us and hunt, that's it. It was in prime condition so I know



chances are less and less as they aggression diminishes. Like I said most golden eagles are very gentle and there is little danger of being bled. However, it would be foolish not to point out that the possibility is very real: that you could get gashed.

Notes from my eagle journal from the year's eagle meet, the Gathering of Eagles (GOE), that took place in Garden City Kansas:
Wind 18-25 mph
Temperature 85
Clear sky
Jackrabbits were 85 lbs

Jackrabbits were on his plane, as good as I've seen him, flying at a very high level and maneuvering it throughout the entire meet. I won't recount the day by day flights as there were simply too many to remember. But I will say some highlights.

One of my goals was for Jackrabbits to show what we can do to our friends from overseas because the last time they hunted with JH I did not do well. He was slightly overweight (I've built and was put off by people in the hunting field, which I told myself would correct at all costs and I have done. People in the field hunting with me have not been an issue for a couple of years now, so much so that he is a veteran of two NALGO programs and will now hunt in front of anyone. It's a funny thing about jacks... some fields just don't hold his attention and a falconer just built up the wind was not a falconer. I stood on the jacks like a mowing machine. I ran and simply disappeared. I jacks rabbit looked at 15 yards away jacks caught in 30 yards out.

Mid week of the GOE: With 17 cars following us I found a previously unknown field that looked like a falconer type field, low cover with big areas of open space. Earlier in the morning I had stopped and gained permission to fly in the whole area and many fields looked good. But I chose this one and boy did it pay off.

The wind was at 25 mph with gusts up to 30 mph, it was going to be a nice day. All could do was keep a 200m or downward from us and hunt, that's it. It was in prime condition so I know

he could handle many jacks in all directions. My first indication on how the field was going to be was that jacks were already flying as I was winging up. In the end, I had everyone some 30 plus jacks worth of my right side and I stayed just slightly in front of the line. Sometimes it's like jacks even with me. JH and I cannot see the jacks fall and in strong wind like we were in that a jacks fall, I don't think we had gone 20 feet and I missed a jacks but JH did. I just got up. I just missed him due to an outstanding jacks. The jacks rabbit using handbills and the words are all advantages.

They set and set the scene as I fell in. I recall... off to my right were 30 people walking in a straight line and I was looking maybe 10 yards in front of the line. Up in front of it, on the left side, was the photo gallery consisting of Cori, Joe Ashton and Mark Williams. So, when we had clear was to create an alley for the jacks to run in, effectively funneling them in a crowded or confined direction. We were watching, slowly because many jacks were rushing way ahead of us and with the wind those would have been very difficult flights and out of the camera range. I asked everyone to stay out of our way. The core jacks in front of them to look for the dove. Fall slip that JH does... took maybe 3 steps and a jacks was up and running right toward JH. It was on just as fast, regardless of the strong wind. The jacks were left, through with a matching it move for more see he slammed into the sack... number two for the day with tons of fall left and no other birds, easy to fly trace JH off and we continued to hunt, working our way back and the jacks were in for the day. The last two jacks were just the end of the line, speed on speed, with the jacks running in full burn out mode and JH catching the way in... finished.

Throughout the course of the meet we saw many great flights with the jacks rabbits using all manner of flying tactics, particularly the "top high into air over the eagle" very effective.

GOE meet gone to Jackrabbits:
23 jacks rabbits
1 custom tail
1 master pheasant

So, which is like to fly an eagle? For me it's like no other bird I have ever flown. The bond that forms between eagle and man can only be compared to that of you and your dog. Golden eagles will challenge the falconer to think outside the box on all levels, unless any other bird in falconry. Walking into a field with a golden eagle on your fat is a feeling like no other. You can clearly see your eagle's unbridled excitement to fly, its power and speed is unmatched. Flying on my fat, jacks rabbit is like a color spring just waiting for the slightest movement. With this comes a great deal of responsibility because anything that gets into a field with a golden eagle on your fat is my mate and I'm a jacks rabbit.

To read more about hunting with golden eagles go to www.potomacconservationjournal.com



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Rules & Constitution
 of the Welsh Hawking Club

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 Clive de Courcy, "The Star"
 Nick Hinchey, "The Goshawk"
 Graham Rowser, "The Hawk"
 Diana Durran, "The Hawk"
 Harry Rowson and "The Club"

Name and Objects

- The name of the club shall be the Welsh Hawking Club.
- The objects of the club shall be:
 - The promotion of Falconry.
 - The provision of advice and information for members and other interested parties.
 - The promotion and maintenance of the Club Code of Conduct amongst members.

Constitution

The club shall consist of a President, Vice Presidents, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Membership Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Editor, Press and Publicity Officer, Education Officer, Breeding Officer, Legal Officer, Newsletter Editor, Field Officer, and a Webmaster. Each of these is entitled to attend the committee meetings and to vote, except the Chairman who does not have a vote. However in the event of a vote resulting in a tie the Chairman shall have the casting vote. Proxy and Postal votes will not be allowed at committee meetings. Only full members are eligible for election to office. The business of the club will be conducted by the Officers and committee which will meet as often as the committee which will meet as often as is necessary. A quorum for a meeting shall be five members. Meetings shall be held at such times and places as the committee shall determine.

Elections

- All members of the committee will be elected individually annually at the AGM. Prior to the election the latest record at committee meetings for the last year shall be given.
- During the year should any committee member fail to attend committee meetings regularly then he or she may be asked to give an explanation. If the reason is of sufficient justification the committee may co-opt a member to fill the position. They may also co-opt any person to the committee if considered desirable.

Membership

- Members of the club will be elected by the committee.
- No person will be elected without consultation to the Membership Secretary in writing.
- The annual subscription rate shall be determined at the AGM each year.
- Any member whose subscription is unpaid by the end of May of any year shall cease to be a member but shall be eligible for election as an ordinary member.

Meetings

- The Annual General Meeting shall be held at the main field meeting each year.
- Meetings shall be presided over by the Chairman/Vice Chairman or in their absence one of the other Officers as appropriate.
- A summer meeting shall be held annually at which reports of the affairs of the Club can be given. General meetings will normally be held monthly. Informal meetings will be held as required.

Alteration to Rules

Rules may only be altered by a vote taken at an AGM or an EGM. Notices of motion for the AGM or EGM shall be sent to the Secretary in writing in time at least 8 weeks prior to these meetings. The member bringing to an AGM shall inform the Secretary in writing, stating the reason for such a motion. The application must be countersigned by 20 full members.

Code of Conduct

- The well being of all birds of prey both domestic and wild together with the conservation of Falconry must be the aim of all members.
- Falconry is the King of trained skills of prey and wild, it is a subtle quarry found in a natural state. No action must bring the take disrupted.
- Every hawk must be properly managed and equipped.
- Every endeavour must be made to recover a lost hawk.
- All hawks flown free should be equipped with field proof at least one bell and if possible a transmitter and the name and address of the owner. In the use of unlicensed or aggressive hawks, goggles, hawks, avionic, etc. special care must be taken to prevent loss.
- Permission must be obtained before entering upon ground and it must be ascertained whether another falconer already has permission in which case his permission must also be sought. Due respect must be given to landowners and their property.
- Innocent birds that are no longer wanted must either be returned to the state state in a suitable country or passed on to someone who will treat them in accordance with the code of conduct. Before a hawk is released the falconer must ensure that it is in good health and in the highest possible condition, that it can fly for itself and is suitable for release. If there is any doubt that it is able to do so it should be reared back.

Regions

Purpose of the Regions

- To provide social meetings for members and potential members living locally although any member will be welcome to attend.
- To arrange local field trips, which will be governed by the main Club field rules and to arrange field raising to assist with paying for speakers and field fees.
- To promote falconry and the Welsh Hawking Club.

Rules

- No new region will be formed by members unless it has been agreed by the Club committee as a committee meeting.
- All regions must open a bank or building society account in the name of The Welsh Hawking Club. It is recommended that an account has 2 signatories.
- Any non-members, including other than hawk partners or children of members will be made to welcome for 3 meetings. After this time they will be given the opportunity to complete an application form to join the club. If they decline they will no longer be allowed to attend the meetings even as a guest of another member.
- A register of attendees will be kept at all meetings, primary to enforce rule 2.
- A written report will be forwarded each year by the regional Secretary to the Editor of The Austringer to reach him no later than the end of February for inclusion in the Austringer.
- Each region will hold an election at its next meeting following the AGM. It will select from its Full Members a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer to run the meetings. One of those may also be elected as a member to attend the main committee meetings. This representative will have full voting rights.

Jan Franco
 Hon. Secretary, January 2010

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