

With kind regards from Frank Richards

AUGUST, 1949

IN YOUR AVIARY

BRITAIN'S BRIGHTEST BIRD MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Short Story by Clive Fenn

New Strip Cartoon

Hints to Novice Canary Breeders

With the Budgies in August

Special Article by Frank Richards

Show Results

Article by Ern Bradbury

How Birds Hear

MONTHLY HINTS ON CANARY MANAGEMENT

All cages and racks should be treated with an insecticide containing 5% D.D.T. to kill any Red Mites which may be present. Birds should be given a staple seed containing 70% plain canary. In addition a small quantity of soft food should be given daily. Fresh green food is important this month and should be offered daily. Two drops of French Iodine in the drinking water once a week will prove beneficial. Make sure that the birds have ample supplies of grit and cuttlefish bone.

BIRD ODDITIES

No. 3.

The GIANT LAMMERGEYER

IS HALF VULTURE AND HALF EAGLE! NATURALIST HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DECIDE TO WHICH SPECIES IT BELONGS. THIS BIRD, WHICH IS A NATIVE OF SWITZERLAND, MEASURES FIVE 40 FEET FROM BILL TO TAIL AND HAS A WING MEASUREMENT OF TEN FEET.

ONE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL ADAPTIONS OF NATURE IS THAT BIRDS WHICH HAVE FEW NATURAL ENEMIES HAVE SMALL BROODS, WHILE THOSE MUCH PERSECUTED — SUCH AS DUCKS, GROUSE, ETC. — HAVE LARGE FAMILIES.

The JAVA MINO-BIRD

IS SOMETIMES CALLED THE "HOLY BIRD" OWING TO ITS PECULIAR HABIT OF FREQUENTING TEMPLES!

RUSSIAN SCHOOL-CHILDREN ARE BEING TRAINED AS BIRD WATCHERS, AS A KNOWLEDGE OF BIRD HABITS IS CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL TO AGRICULTURE.



JOHN HATHORNE



THE CUCKOO

SOME LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT ONE OF THE WORLD'S STRANGEST BIRDS

The old theory that a cuckoo lays its eggs in other birds' nests simply because it is lazy is ridiculous. The real reason is that the female cuckoo lays anything up to twenty-five eggs and it would be a physical impossibility for her to rear such a large family. She could not incubate such a clutch of eggs, and even if that were possible she certainly could not feed the chicks, as each nestling cuckoo is a rapidly growing bird, requiring prodigious quantities of food.

The cuckoo has been known to deposit its eggs in the nests of over one hundred different species of birds, but the most common foster parent is the meadow pipit. The adult cuckoo will choose the nest of this bird in preference to others because of the striking resemblance of the meadow pipit's eggs to its own.

Baby cuckoos are provided with a hollow in their backs for the purpose of raising and ejecting the other occupants of the nest. This hollow disappears shortly after he has got rid of his nest companions! Nature has provided the baby cuckoo with two claws in front and two behind, so that it is able to climb the sides of the nest to throw out the other nestlings. A newly hatched cuckoo cannot endure to be touched, and contact with its nest fellows throws it into a convulsive fit! This is what causes it to eject the other tiny occupants.

After the female cuckoo deposits her egg in another bird's nest she visits the place every day to see if the egg is all right and not until her baby has successfully left the nest does she and her mate fly away to the warmer south.

A strange but true fact is that if you take a cuckoo's egg from the nest where it has been deposited and place it in another nest, the occupants will immediately cast it out!

SHOCKING ACT.

We have received a letter (reproduced below) from Mr. A. Brown, 41 The Terrace, Hylton, near Sunderland, the contents of which have shocked us. Despite the fact that the perpetrators of this act of hooliganism and sheer cruelty are known, it appears that they will escape scot-free, leaving Mr. Brown with little hope of any redress whatsoever. We have reason to believe that Mr. Brown's case is far from being an isolated one, and if any other readers have had similar experiences, we should be glad to hear from them.

Sir,

I wonder if you could give an unfortunate happening to me a little publicity. I have been a member of Sunderland Cage Bird Association for a number of years, and before the war finished I was instrumental in reviving this Association and temporarily undertook the work of secretary until last year, when I gave up the office.

I am a Yorkshire Canary Fancier, and my birdroom is situated in my vegetable garden beyond my kitchen garden. At 2.45 on Monday, June 25th my wife went to put in chickweed for the young birds and found a gate was open and a lock from the wire netting door missing. Two boys—one aged five and the other six and a half—were inside the birdroom. They had strewn and scattered all my seed stocks, liberated all birds, broke in cage fronts, smashed drinkers, thrown young birds on to the floor and tramped and beaten others to death. Out of 34 birds (22 old ones and 12 young) 16 were dead and missing. My loss in birds is valued at £45; seeds, etc. £5; and cages and appliances £10.

The Police here inform me that as the boys are too young for punishment I can only sue the parents for damages, and as they are evidently in poor circumstances there would be little chance of obtaining any compensation. As the same two boys have done considerable damage elsewhere without any proceedings being recorded, can you give me any guidance, and thank you in anticipation of any recommendations offered.

Yours, etc.,

A. BROWN

NOW TURN TO THE BACK PAGE AND READ THE STRAIGHT-FROM-THE-SHOULDER ARTICLE BY FRANK RICHARDS, THE WORLD-RENOWNED WRITER OF SCHOOLBOY STORIES, ON CRUELTY IN CHILDREN.



John A. MOLLINDINIA

"Once heard never forgotten."

SPECIALITY—LIGHT GREENS SEXED-LINKED LUTINOS

If you want winners in **LIGHT GREENS** maybe I can solve your problem.

Every advice given to novices and beginners. Write or pay a visit to—

**31 DENBIGH ROAD,
LUTON, Beds.**

IF YOUR BIRD'S LOOKING DOLEFUL AND MEEK KIND OF "FED UP" SO TO SPEAK, HE PROBABLY NEEDS BETTER QUALITY SEEDS, SO SEND TO H. BRENTNALL, OF LEEK.

The Crime of CRUELTY

by FRANK RICHARDS

(World-famous author of the "Billy
Bunter" Stories)

Most of us love animals. Every normal man and boy is kind to them. It is not easy to understand how anyone can be cruel to them. Yet every day we see evidence of this strange and repulsive abnormality.

Mr. Brown, of Sunderland, has just sent us an account of two small boys breaking into his bird-room, and wantonly ill-using the hapless little creatures. Such cruel acts are of daily occurrence. We despatch missionaries to foreign lands; yet every day we see evidence that some of us, at least, are in the same mental and moral state as the savages of the most backward tribes of Darkest Africa.

Parents have a great responsibility in this matter. Children are thoughtless and often commit cruel acts for no reason except that their intelligence is undeveloped. No such act should ever be passed over carelessly. Bad inevitably leads to worse.

A boy who will tear the wings from a butterfly, or stick pins into a sparrow simply does not know what he is doing. His mentality is too low for him to realise it. But he can be enlightened.

He will understand such an argument as "Put yourself in the other fellow's place." Try to make him imagine himself a sparrow or a butterfly, and how he would feel, if a powerful hand grasped him and tormented him. Any boy will understand that. He will understand, too, when he is told that it is as cowardly for a boy to ill-use a small helpless creature, as it is for a big boy to hit a little one. Cruelty due to thoughtlessness—and that is most of it—can be eradicated by parental patience and care.

Persistent cruelty should be dealt with more severely. There are backward boys whose mentality is so crude, that only punishment will keep them from wrongdoing. A boy who cannot or will not understand that he must not be cruel to animals, will understand the effect of six severe swipes from a cane. A thrashing will penetrate the dark depths of his stupidity. And the parent who spares the rod, in such a case, is responsible if, or rather when, the boy goes from bad to worse, and turns against his fellow-men the brutality he has indulged towards helpless animals.

To the boy who feels the impulse towards cruelty, and would indulge in it, I give this counsel. Cruelty is not only a cowardly act unworthy of any self-respecting lad. It has the effect of warping the mind. From cruelty to animals to crime against human beings, is only a step; and that step will be taken, when the heart has become hardened, and the mind brutalised, by indifference to suffering. A cruel boy is a criminal in the making. Only too often, men guilty of the dreadful crime of murder have been proved to have been cruel to animals in their boyhood. I counsel the cruel boy to control and avoid that horrible impulse, for his own sake, lest later in life he stand in the dock, a loathed and condemned outcast, for crime of which he does not yet dream. Let him avoid cruelty, as he would avoid a dangerous disease of the mind, for that is what it is.

OLDEST CLUB ?

The City of Glasgow Ornithological Society holds its 89th Show on November 18/19th this year. Allow for five years during the war when no shows were held and we have a total of 94 years, which means that the "City" was formed not later than 1855 and maybe earlier if there was a lapse during the 1914—18 war.

The Editor would be glad to hear from any club claiming to have been formed earlier than the above date.



With the . . .
BUDGIES IN AUGUST

EXHIBITING

By Frank Swinden

This series of articles will be devoted to activities as they affect the season, but if you have any difficulties with feeding, breeding, housing or exhibiting, I am here to help you, and your problems will be used to form the nucleus for future articles. If you experience unusual results from our hobby, I shall be interested to hear about them.

If this should be your first breeding season I hope you have enjoyed "beginners' luck" and that you now possess some grand young ones. If you have not been so lucky, do not despair, as we shall try and remedy this for you next year.

The breeding season will now have finished for most Budgie fanciers, and once again we have the show season approaching, so I intend giving some advice on this subject, particularly to the many newcomers to our hobby, for a greater number than ever will, this year, be wishing to make a start in this most interesting branch of the fancy.

Fortunately for beginners, there are no secret methods of getting Budgies into show condition. An ordinary or poor bird cannot be turned into an outstanding show specimen, but a decent bird can stand little chance if not turned out looking its best, and you may often see a bird beaten at the shows for this reason, so if you get into the habit of sending one's birds to the shows in the best possible condition, you will never feel satisfied in doing otherwise.

Selecting the Potential Winners

This is not easy as even the champions cannot always do this, but the beginner should obtain an illustration of the Budgerigar Society Ideal Cock and Hen, and study these very thoroughly. I advise them to hang these two illustrations in their bird room, and compare them with their own birds. Then select the birds which conform nearest to these, but do not be too hasty and say you have not a single bird which would stand a chance—remember the illustration is of the IDEAL, that is, perfection, and there are few birds which reach this high standard. If you are in doubt, do not hesitate to ask for advice. The fanciers

from whom you purchased your initial stock will be only too glad to assist you.

Having made your selection, the next important point is to get them steady, and by this we do not mean finger tame—they should become used to being moved about in a show cage. No judge will waste his valuable time with a bird, no matter how good, if it tries to get under the water-pot, or persists in climbing the show cage front. A well trained bird should have a fearless action, moving proudly from perch to perch.

Most authorities advise the caging of youngsters as soon as they leave the parents, and there is no doubt that is good initial training, but after a period in the flights or aviary, they need a further stage of training. I think the best time to do this is when the birds are in the moult, then there is no fear of broken feathers, and the new plumage grows clean. Again, the birds are usually not so fit, and therefore more docile, than when in full feather.

Most bird rooms are equipped with a training cage, and these take various forms, but generally they are not too deep, and have show cage perches fitted to the back. If only two perches are provided they should be placed as far apart as possible, but be certain that the birds do not scrape their tails against the sides of the cages. A useful addition to a training cage is a wire floor, as this protects the birds from getting their clean feathers soiled. Better still is an old Yorkshire canary show cage, as this is all wire, and the birds can be sprayed from any angle. Flighty youngsters will benefit by having a trained adult caged with them, but only put birds of one sex in each training cage. If your birds should break any feathers, remove the stumps and they will grow approximately as follows:—tail and flight feathers 9 weeks and spots in four weeks, but I do not advise pulling the latter as it is surprising how they can grow much smaller.

During this period of training, the birds should have a staple diet of canary seed and millet, plenty of clean water and limestone grit. Do not give green food carrot or cod liver oil, or this will disfigure the mask.

A number of training cages have a door at the end leading to a show cage, and the food is usually placed in this show cage. They will then get accustomed to going into the smaller cage, and every time you enter the bird room the birds should be run into the show

cage, one at a time, and moved about a little. They should become used to this handling, and if one uses a small cane or pencil the bird should move smartly from one perch to the other.

The potential exhibits should be given a spray twice a week; the new "Monitor" spray is ideal for this purpose, and clean water should be used. Several birds can be sprayed at the same time, an old clean show cage can be used. See that the birds are thoroughly dry before letting them back into their cage. Be careful not to let them stand in the strong sun while they are wet, and do not allow them to be exposed to a draught. Spraying takes away the sheen of the feathers, but this quickly returns, so it is advisable to spray the birds a day or two before the show.

Show cages should be perfectly clean, the enamel should be white inside and black outside, and NEVER put birds into freshly painted cages. Remember also that although it is the bird which is the exhibit, many a good bird has been spoiled by a dirty or bad showcage. When sending your exhibits, place plenty of seed on the cage floor, besides filling the seed pot, but DO NOT fill the water pot, as the stewards at the show will attend to this. I have seen some very good birds looking quite pitiful after travelling with filled water pots.

Shows are advertised in this journal and the intending exhibitor should write to the Secretary, enclosing a stamp, requesting a SCHEDULE. This should be studied carefully, and the rules will explain most of the points. Note if a reserve price is compulsory—if so, you can state an exorbitant price, say £500, but this practise has caused so much comment that many shows now allow exhibitors to put N.F.S. (Not For Sale) alongside their entry, but do consider

this point carefully or you may find your bird sold, should it turn out to be a stormer.

Before you make out your entry form, study the Budgerigar rules relating to STATUS. If you are eligible to show as a beginner, then do so—don't think this section beneath your dignity. Competition is again getting very keen in these classes, and you will find the experience gained well worth while.

In Breeders' classes at Open Shows the entries must be wearing the close circled rings of the actual exhibitor, bought through the Budgerigar Society Ring Secretary, and be owner bred. But in the Adult section you can show any bird (even if not rung at all) so if you wish to show a young bird (1949) which you have purchased, you will have to exhibit same in the adult classes. Send in your completed entry form, together with the necessary fee, as early as possible in order to assist the Show Secretary. He will send you the cage labels, case label, etc. The cage label is fixed on the centre of the front rail of the cage, and the case label is fixed on the case top AFTER YOU HAVE FILLED IN your own name and address on the portion under the address flap.

Try to send your first entries to a local show, then you can see the results. Don't be disappointed if you fail to win the first time, but study those that are higher in the cards. If you should win, however, take care not to brag about it! Don't be afraid to ask advice—a good listener will always learn a lot from the old hands. I hope all Show Secretaries will have a bumper entry. I am sure they will if they provide a good section for beginners this year. To the exhibitors I extend the wish that they will have plenty of red cards. If I can help you in any way, do not hesitate to drop me a line

A "NEW LOOK" SHOW

Scotland's All Border Show, to be staged by the West of Scotland B.F.C.C., will be a departure from the ordinary.

Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Miller, the Club's hardworking joint secretaries, are introducing a new three-platform staging of 7 inch wooden boards painted in a bright blue. The ends will be of silver coloured metal.

The black of the Border cages, together with the colours of the various exhibits, Yellows, Greens, Cinnamons, Whites, Blues, Fawns, etc. will complete a really harmonious colour scheme. Mr. and Mrs. Miller are to be congratulated on their go-ahead methods.

"IN YOUR AVIARY"

Your Paper, which will include all results of coming Shows throughout the Country

Please supply monthly "In Your Aviary" for which I enclose herewith Postal Order value 4/- which entitles me to enter for free competitions and 12 monthly issues, post paid, to:—

Name.....

Address.....

Town.....

County.....