

Newsletter

Summer

2017



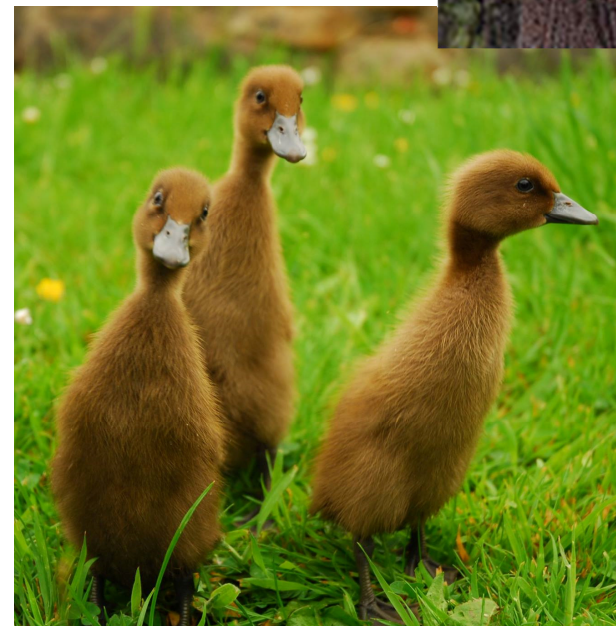
Indian Runner Duck Association

INDIAN RUNNER DUCK ASSOCIATION

Tom Bartlett
1923 – 2017

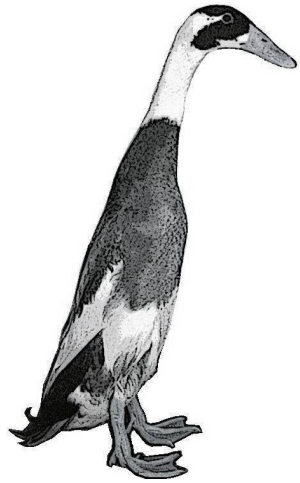
During the 1980s and 1990s Tom was the public image of waterfowl. His collection of domestic and wildfowl in the Cotswolds was a Mecca for enthusiasts. The idyllic setting of Folly Farm, alongside his charismatic personality, must have drawn hundreds of youngsters (and oldsters) into the fancy. Reviving the Silver Appleyard and 'creating' the Miniature Appleyard were just two of Tom's conservation achievements. No-one has replaced Tom Bartlett.

[Photograph BWA]



James's Fawns

This year's youngsters look very appealing. We hope they mature into show winners for Dr Rigby.



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Cover
Working birds at Vergeno-
egd. Photo: John Faure

EDITORIAL

The Poultry Club of Great Britain has finally accepted the affiliation of the Indian Runner Duck Association following the disaffiliation of the defunct Indian Runner Club. This was confirmed in a letter from PC Council which suggested that the Association take on the name of the original 'Club' (founded in 1907) and to allow members of the IRC to apply for positions on the committee. The suddenness of this communication came as a bit of a shock, after sixteen years of 'banging on the door'!

Allowing members of the IRC on to the committee has never been a problem. They would, of course, have to join the Association first; then they could either be co-opted or elected under existing procedures. Changing the name is a bit more complicated: the name of the Indian Runner Duck Association is the prime element of the constitution. Agreement for this at the next AGM would be fundamental. All financial arrangements (banking, website, Facebook, PayPal, etc.) would then need changing. It doesn't happen overnight by magic.

Many of us have a strong affection for the name of the IRDA. The formation of the IRC, and its later rebirth as the 'Indian Runner Duck Club', has left a sour taste in the mouths of most early members of the IRDA. However, when I first telephoned Mike Clark in 2000 it was a request to form a Runner 'Club' and to affiliate to the Poultry Club. Mike's voice betrayed his surprise: 'But there already *is* a Runner Duck Club!' he explained. It had been accepted by the Poultry Club even though it had no constitution, no members, no elected committee and no official inauguration. In fact, the IRDA and the IRC (sic) inaugurated on the same day at the 2000 Poultry Club National, an occasion at which the IRC secretary refused to countenance amalgamation of the two organizations.

An archive of material was given to Chris for safe-keeping some years ago by Mrs Mary Smith, daughter-in-law of the long-term secretary (Matthew Smith) of the Indian Runner Duck Club. Significant items, including original letters and scrap-book material, were included in *The Indian Runner Duck: A Historical Guide* (Ashton and Ashton, 2002), dedicated to Matthew Smith, his family and colleagues in the original Indian Runner Duck Club. Personally, I would be happy to continue with the name and traditions of this famous Indian Runner

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www.runnerduck.net

Duck Club and patiently bury the unnecessary breed club politics of the last 16+ years.

It is not my decision! This is why the future of our club/association will need to be determined at the next AGM, planned for the BWA National Championship at Stroud this autumn. It is very important that as many as possible (paid up) members of the IRDA attend the meeting. The committee looks forward to a 'large' gathering and one which will launch the organization into a new era of collaboration.

Finally, I have been informed by telephone that the IRDA Standards have been accepted *en bloc* by the Poultry Club. They will be used at all PCGB recognized shows; they will inform the schedule classes of these shows and provide the material for the next Standards publication. A serious thank you to all contributors: good job done!

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The IRDA is now nearly seventeen years old, and still retains three of its founding members on committee. We are lucky to have had so many Runner enthusiasts over the years who have been willing to give their support, and also help to produce the Newsletter. This year, long-term committee members Sue Carroll-Wright and Helene Towers have regrettably said goodbye to the committee because of changing circumstances. They have both provided searching and amusing articles and photographs in the past, and will remain IRDA members.

If you would like to stand as committee member, please send in your application to the Secretary by the end of September, preferably by email, and it will be forwarded to the Chairman. Election will take place at the AGM held this year at the BWA Championship Show at Stroud, Gloucester. [Clause 8. of the Constitution below]

8. Officers and members of the Committee must be paid up members of the Association, nominated and seconded by paid up members, and having a minimum of five years' experience breeding or keeping Indian Runners.

The location for the 2017 AGM was to have been at the National Federation of Poultry Clubs Show at Stafford. But the ongoing situation over avian influenza has meant that the timing of the AGM has

been brought forward into early November in case there are further outbreaks this autumn. The earlier shows may not be affected by outbreaks, which tend to become more numerous in the December–February period (i.e. over the winter months).

Shows and avian flu

Unfortunately this H5N8 flu variant seems to have become more adept at surviving the warmer months in Europe. There has been an outbreak in Belgium, for example, in July 2017. The virus may be changing its behaviour.

Whilst there were outbreaks of avian influenza (up to June in the UK), 'bird gatherings' (e.g. shows and sales) were cancelled, but they have recommenced during this summer season, with restrictions. Negotiations have continued between Defra and Poultry Club representatives, Lee Grant and Phillippe Wilson. The PCGB has published the following Key Notes from the meeting held on the 7th July 2017. The full version is available as pdf from the Poultry Club Facebook page, but some of the most important points are given below.

Disease Update:

- Whilst there are no active cases of avian influenza in the UK at present, England will not achieve 'AI disease freedom status' until 13th Sept (providing there are no further cases)
- Meaning the poultry and egg industry has, and continues to be under restriction, with no poultry and eggs trade to 3rd countries (it's not just PCGB members that are affected ...)
- Therefore, it is an absolute priority for the authorities to achieve AI freedom
- The current general licence is likely to remain in-place for a further 12-months as a minimum.
- Each of the 13 premises that were affected by AI are still under certain restrictions as the deep cleansing is completed at each.
- Of the 13 infected premises, six were backyard flocks, three were game farms and the remainder commercial units.
- The risk to humans is relatively low. However, H5N1 and particularly H7N9 have been known to mutate and infect humans

- During this time of heightened risk, a small number of poultry sites may be randomly selected by the authorities to provide samples to test against AI.

Rules and Restrictions for Shows and Showing

On receiving a schedule and entry form for a show, exhibitors will also be supplied with information regarding type of boxes, boxing, litter etc., and also the timing of the shows.

There are now 13-day and 7-day rules for exhibiting birds; each for different situations.

The **13-day rule** applies to gatherings and their locations - **example:**

Bird A is taken to gathering from Premises 1 (owner's premises). Premises 1 buys Bird B at the gathering and returns to Premises 1 with both birds A & B. Premises 1 is now considered a 'gathering' and no bird from Premises 1 may be taken to a gathering for 13 days.

The **7-day rule** applies to birds returning from the premises of origin after attending a gathering - typically a display or exhibition - **example:**

Bird B is taken to an exhibition from premises 2 (owner's premises). The owner returns bird B to premises 2 after the exhibition and no new birds are introduced on to the premises at this time.

Bird B should be isolated from the remaining flock and observed for signs of disease for 7 days. Providing there are no symptoms, Bird B can attend another gathering after 7 clear days have passed.

Other birds at premises 2 can attend gatherings within the 7-day period (provided they have not attended a gathering, or been in contact with bird B, and no new birds from outside the flock have entered premises 2 during this time).

Complaints and suspicions of abuse should be directed to the local Authority/Trading Standards.

In addition to the full literature, there will also be a **Participant Declaration Form:**

- I have read and will comply with the biosecurity information provided.

- The birds entered have not been in contact with any notifiable avian disease agents and do not show any signs of infection
- The birds entered have not attended a poultry gathering in the previous 7 days, nor have any other birds been brought onto the premises of origin in the past 13 days
- The address of the place of origin of the birds entered (above) is not from an area of the UK which is under restrictions relating to notifiable avian disease (including Prevention, Protection and Surveillance zones) imposed by Ministers
- I accept full responsibility for my own birds during the poultry gathering.

Clearly, one will have to plan well ahead to decide which shows to go to. If there are only a small number of birds kept, this will restrict show entries. Similarly, a lack of space to quarantine birds after exhibition will restrict entries. The safest course of action seems to be to go for the 13-day gap. A list of autumn show dates currently known is given towards the end of the Newsletter, and on the IRDA website.

Ducks do make you smile

On a more light-hearted note, ducks do make you smile. One of the most popular Facebook posts was the duck in the pub: which loved his beer: 'Duck Wearing Bow-Tie Walks Into Pub, Drinks Pint, Fights Dog, Loses'. This Huffington Post item clocked over 2000 views, as did the most recent Vergenoegd vineyard publicity video.

And finally there is this lovely item:

A duck was about to cross the road when a chicken came running up and said, 'Don't do it—you'll never hear the end of it!'

Fancy Fowl

For people who exhibit their birds, there is the exhibition poultry magazine, *Fancy Fowl*. With items on breeds, exhibitors, breeders and breeding, and exhibitions, this magazine brings up to date poultry show results.

The editor, Grant Brereton, would like your help: 'Hi all. I would really appreciate your thoughts on future *Fancy Fowl* waterfowl features or breeder interviews. You guys know better than me what would be really interesting, so please let me have your ideas'. The website and contact details can be found at <http://www.fancyfowl.com/>

OBITUARY: TOM BARTLETT OF FOLLY FARM – 1923-2017

The legendary Tom Bartlett passed away on Monday 27th February, aged 93. He was a past president of the BWA, author, and developer of the Miniature Silver Appleyard duck. Tom was one of the most expansive characters in waterfowl I've ever met. Welcoming, enthusiastic, and passionate about his birds, he would search for the best stock for breeding—and really enjoy showing as well. I caught him quietly ticking off what he had won from the dozen or so birds he had at Stafford one year in the 1990s—he had done rather well!

Folly Farm, near Bourton-on-the-Water in the Cotswolds, began as a private collection of rare breeds of domestic waterfowl, and initially included chickens. In 1976 The UK had its worst drought year ever recorded, and so work began on three lakes on the farm for the purpose of water conservation. As a consequence, the farm naturally gravitated to waterfowl, and also expanded into a holiday site, shop and cafeteria. The family, including Tom's wife Diana, worked hard on the business. The lower lake was for the wildfowl, and had a resident 'heron', which never moved, and which was often photographed. It was made of plastic, and caught many people out!

The domestic waterfowl area began at the spring, near Tom's house, where the ducklings were reared. Pens of ducks and geese in the pure breeds followed the watercourse downstream. It was a beautiful set up which show-cased his star Toulouse goose, Belinda. She was even featured on a special edition of UK stamps! Sebastopol geese teetered on the dam at the edge of their pool, and Cayugas, Buff Orpingtons and his rather special Appleyard ducks followed.

Tom did a great deal to rescue and build up some of the rather rare breeds of waterfowl which had virtually disappeared during World War II and the post-war years. Stock brought from the USA by Christopher Marler contributed greatly to this, as did John Hall's expertise in breeding waterfowl. Together, these three breeders put many breeds of domestic waterfowl into the mainstream. Tom also reinvigorated his stock by importing from the continent, introducing new lines of Sebastopols, Embdens, Hook Bill ducks and Apricot Trout (*blaugelb*) Runners. Eggs went the other way too: Folly Farm White Campbell eggs went on to Holland to revive the fortunes of the Dutch Hook Bill duck, which had nearly disappeared by the 1980s.

Folly Farm Trout Runners were in high demand in the early eighties, and were featured in the magazine 'Fancy Fowl'. His White Runners were stars too—they were a beautiful type and they and his Black Runners must have provided the foundation stock of many Runner enthusiasts.

One of Tom's most well-known achievements in breeding waterfowl was the Miniature Appleyard. He told us that he bred the size down, but never explained how he did it! But he had an eye for the birds, recognizing what was compatible and what was not. For example, his explanation that he kept two lines of Buff Orpingtons for breeding—one for the ducks and one for the drakes—was based on experience, and is confirmed by genetics. Homozygous blue birds i.e. blue-headed drakes could still produce the perfect seal-headed drakes (heterozygous blue) if they were with the correct ('brown') duck.

The Miniature Appleyard made its show debut at the 1987 BWA Champion Waterfowl Exhibition, initiated by Tom Bartlett and Debby Shinton. It took place at the Three Counties Show Ground at Malvern and was terrific success, celebrating 100 years of the British Waterfowl Association. Many people regret that the event had to move on to Solihull in 2000, but it was matter of costs: the Malvern show venue just got too expensive to run for bird events—as indeed did the Royal Show Ground at Stoneleigh.

Tom finally retired from Folly Farm in the late 1990s and went to live on Islay, taking his Embdens and Call Ducks with him. He received IRDA newsletters as an honorary member, having provided inspiration for so many waterfowl breeders in the past—including Julian Burrell and ourselves. We'll never forget talking to Tom about his birds at Folly Farm, discussing BWA matters in meetings held there, and visiting the rearing shed. Here, the tiny ducklings were on show to the public to captivate everyone. As Tom said (after the poem by F.W. Harvey), they are 'Beautiful, comical things'. Tom's video on Folly Farm and the ducks is still available, now as a DVD <https://www.oldpond.com/keeping-ducks.html>

Chris Ashton

THOSE FEET . . .

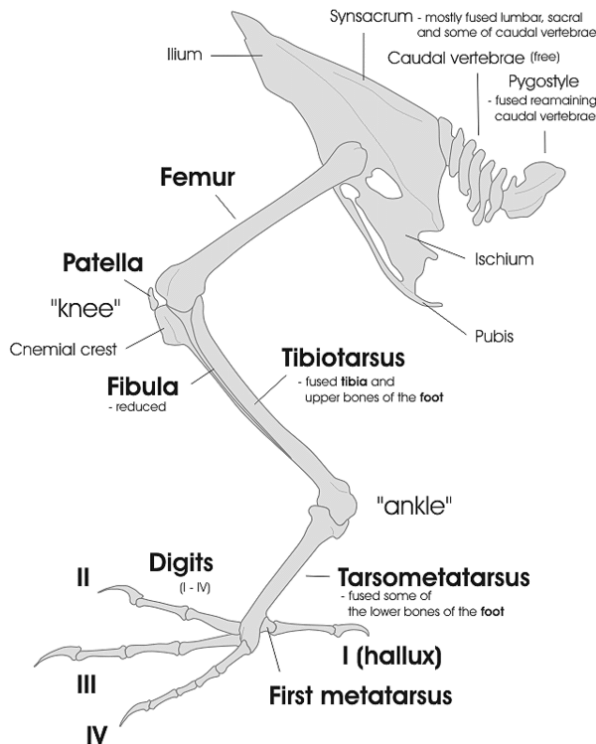
Chris Ashton

Runners seem to be more vulnerable to leg and foot infections than other breeds. Call Ducks rarely limp, probably because they like to spend nearly the whole day on water. The Abacot Rangers have good feet even though they forage a lot. It's the Runners who bash their legs, develop callouses under their toes and even get a swollen leg. It's probably their lifestyle that causes it. They are always active foragers, and also their upright stance may also put more pressure on the soles of their feet.

If you examine the underside of their toes, each joint may reveal cracked skin and, quite often, there is roughened skin as well. The extent of this depends on the colour of the bird, and how it was reared. Our Whites are the worst for poor feet. At first I thought it was because they were perhaps kept too long on wire floor and paper

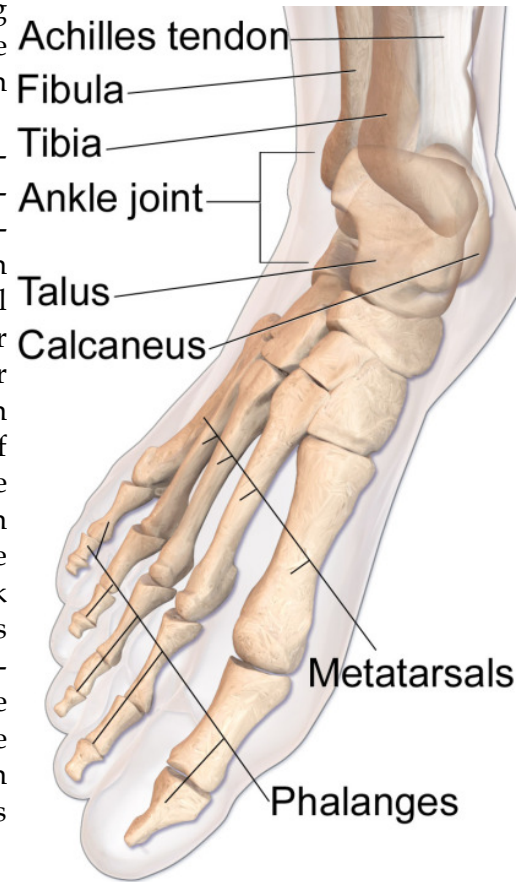
mats, before being moved on to shavings and then grass-covered runs. But on examining other people's White birds, they too had the same problem. In contrast, the Trouts and Silvers reared in the same conditions had perfect feet.

Do watch the soles of ducklings' feet as they are being reared. The most vulnerable area is the 'ball' at the back of their 'foot' which is not a heel at all, but is the joint between the tarsometatarsus and the phalanges (mid-foot joint in human terms). If



this becomes enlarged during the rearing period, it may cause problems for the bird later on in life.

The leg, foot and toe arrangements of a bird are functionally similar, but proportionally different to the human structure. Birds have a typical thigh bone (femur), but their knee joint is hidden in their feathers. The backward bend in a bird's leg (as in the 'hock' of the horse) is the bird's ankle joint. So birds actually walk on their toes. What appears to be the lower leg below the hock actually consists of the bird's extended foot bones, comprising the tarsometatarsus. The bird's webbed 'foot' that we see is not the foot, but a collection of extended toe bones (phalanges).



Surfaces for Runners

Runners are best kept on grass surfaces, for the sake of their feet. Don't be tempted to keep them on concrete or coarse gravel to reduce the mud in winter, if you can avoid this. Muddy conditions don't matter to them--but if they matter for you, it is possible to use well-rounded 10mm pea-gravel or platy, slate shingle. 20mm gravel may be safer if the birds attempt to eat the 10mm gravel. Dark bark chippings are also used, but keep an eye out for toxic fungi that might start to grow.

Lower Leg and Foot

Typical problems

The cracks on Runners' feet may allow pathogens to infect them and can result in a discrete infection, or one which spreads from a hot hock or swollen first metatarsus. Swelling can be the results of a bruise, but if it gets worse or does not resolve, an appropriate antibiotic might be needed to deal with a *Staphylococcus* infection. Over the years, we have used amoxicillin injections to resolve such infections, but now find that an *S. aureus* infection is resistant. A really nice Fawn Runner drake with a swollen leg did not respond to amoxicillin and his infection was found to be resistant to Ampicillin, Penicillin and Doxycycline in a bacterial culture. The bacteria were sensitive to Lincomycin, Trimethoprim and Tylosin but in practice we have found that Tylosin no longer works well, which leaves us few options.

The vet prescribed Clinacin (clindamycin) which did eventually reduce the swelling but too late, because the swelling had caused displacement of the ligament which runs over the back of the hock, so the bird could no longer walk.

Discrete infections which do not spread are less of a problem. Anne-Lise Cox found her Runner limping with just a lump as shown in the photos on its little toe. "None of her leg or the 'heel' [ball] was



swollen or warm. There was a tiny cut but that didn't look like the cause. I gently scraped the blacker skin with my finger and it came off with clean skin underneath so no plug or scab I could see. I will try Epsom salt baths until Monday to see if it eases and she will take her to the vet if she is no better."
[Anne-Lise Cox]

Treatment: "We bathed her foot in Epsom salts for about 10 minutes a day for about 10 days. When she stopped limping I stopped the baths. I used a couple of tablespoons in an inch of warm water. We didn't wrap her foot as I didn't think that would help. We learned to remem-

ber to wait until she had emptied her bowel on a piece of kitchen roll before standing in the water or it was a bit stinky. The 'corn lump' is still there but not hurting."

An Epsom salt bath sounds good because there is also magnesium sulphate paste (Epsom salts) product you can buy over the counter from Boots. It's only around £3-4. You apply it as a poultice and it draws out the infection. The problem with ducks is in actually keeping a bandage/plaster on! I've seen cling film and strips of duct tape recommended and this will work where there is a plug of pus (known as 'bumblefoot') for the poultice to draw out. Take care that any plastic material is not chewed off and eaten!

In conclusion, amoxicillin may well work best for your birds. The resistance shown to the product here is probably because of its use for over 30 years, and the local bacteria know it.

CORRESPONDENCE AND QUERIES

We have just lost a beautiful young IR duck, by a horrible death. She died from natural causes. When Dave went to feed them their tea one duck was missing. He found her gasping for breath, and blood running from her beak in a straight river down her front. She was standing perfectly tall in her distress. We had a good look and could not see any gash. Eventually with Dave holding her I opened her beak to see where the blood was coming from inside her beak. It was coming from her throat. I thought I could see something vertically across it, so I put my finger inside felt something like a penny. We did not know what to do, so put her quietly in a shed on her own in the patch with our other ducks while we had a think.

Bank holiday Monday, and anyway a trip to the vet would only cause her more distress, and it was obviously a bad injury judging by the loss of blood already. We imagined he would just put her to sleep. I thought, if we wrap her in a towel to prevent her struggling and Dave holds her, I will boil up some tweezers to use to try and get hold of it. He went to fetch her while I cleared the draining board, but he found her already dead.

We wanted to know what had killed her, so I prised open her beak. The tweezers were no good; the thing was too wide and bony and my

finger could just go past it. In my ignorance I briefly wondered whether that might be her voice box. It did not matter now. I used the small pliers and extracted a large broken snail shell. The spiral bulge on the proud side was missing leaving a sharp serrated edge. Maybe the rotary mower had sliced it off, or perhaps as when one duck cannot swallow a snail we see him/her drop it and another has a try. Maybe it was damaged like this?

Thankfully, I had not thrown the ducks a snail for weeks, and I will not toss them any big ones, if any, again. They find their own. I watched one duck running away from the competition, struggling to swallow one but could not, so she gave up and another took over, and I think a third. They either gave up or one was successful.

I guess she grew weak from loss of blood, and it took a lot of effort to draw air in past this obstruction. Poor duck. This has upset the balance, so we have now separated them.

Best wishes, Sally Harris

Thank you for the information, Sally. I usually put broken mussel shells on the compost heap for the garden. I shall stop doing that in case the ducks get in and injure themselves on the broken edges. Chris

* * *

I have three ducks and one drake who all get on 'swimmingly' (no pun intended). They run in a quarter acre with a small pond near the house where Charlie Farley usually has his wicked way with his girls. However, I have caught him treading on dry land if he can persuade them. The other day, within the space of an hour, my Bali duck was found on her own unable to stand. After putting her in the small run to observe her, I gave her Metacam in the evening and bedded her on straw, segregated from the others in the duck house. In the morning there was no change. Her wings and legs were strong when lifted but she would drop to the floor on her belly as soon as I let her go. After another day of no change I took her to the vet who agreed with me that the drake must have trodden her into the ground and injured her back. She was bright in herself, eating and drinking, and her reactions to my vet's tests for walking and wing flapping were good. He gave her a steroid injection and said, if no improvement in a couple of days, I could try chiropractic treatment (we have a fantastic animal

chiropracter here on the island). After a couple of days of massage (while watching TV), and supervised hydrotherapy in the pond, she is now fine, walking tall and keeping up with the others. We are keeping Charlie Farley away from her for another week then, fingers crossed, it won't happen again. I am so glad I did not give up on her, but it did not look good a week OK! Love the Newsletter.

Sue Pragnell, Isle of Wight.

* * *

Query: I have 9 female runners (and 6 males) all siblings except for mum and dad and one uncle. Mum and dad are totally unrelated to each other. Back about 3 generations ago, the grandfather at the time was half runner, half wild mallard. Anyway I keep them for eggs and as pets. They are laying very well at the moment, and I usually get 9 eggs per day. The other morning I collected 10 eggs. Just a fluke, I thought. However, this morning I collected 11 eggs. There is no way I missed any - I cleaned them all out yesterday so the entire house had new straw. We are not wrong about the sexes (they are so easy to identify and anyway the boys are full of spring and doing what boys do). Is it known for Runners to sometimes produce more than one egg? Just curious, and somewhat amazed!

With regards, Caroline

Reply: They can sometimes produce more than one a day. They are programmed for one every 24 hours. But sometimes an extra egg shoots through. Eggs like that tend to have a thinner shell – or no shell (just a membrane). Most 'extra' eggs that are found have been buried and missed when looking for them on the first occasion.

* * *

Query: I would like to keep a few Runner Ducks for light slug eating duties, and I was thinking about keeping young drakes (I don't need extra eggs). Would it be problematic to keep a group of drakes on their own?

Reply: They can get on OK but definitely get over-sexed in spring! If you do get males, get them as a group brought up together because they are then less likely to pick on one and pin him down. You could

not keep several drakes with females in chickens or ducks because they would be after them all the time, and damage them, by over-mating. Drakes should be cheap to buy because they sometimes have to be culled if nobody wants them. Two together would probably be best; I would not keep more than 5 in a group.

Continuation Query: Thank you so much for your response—you have stopped me getting into a really difficult situation. I had been planning on keeping them in with a group of rescue hens, but realise now, following your email, that this would not be a kind thing to do. Sorry to ask a further question, but would a male and female be OK with hens? Or would it have to be two females if I was keeping them with hens?

Reply: A pair or trio (male plus 2 females) would probably be OK because the male should be imprinted on female ducks and stay with them. The rule is: just one male per group, otherwise the drakes are a nuisance. If you just get two females they would also be OK but they are generally happier with one drake—they are more confident as a group.

People do house chickens and ducks together, but I think they are better housed separately which is a further consideration for you. Hens and ducks are all right outdoors together if there is plenty of space and the ground is clean. If space is limited, don't get ducks. They dig in the ground and will pick up diseases from the ground because earth-worms are a host for parasites, especially where droppings are concentrated. In addition, the bacteria count will be high on dirty ground.

* * *

Black Runners

Query: I am interested in breeding black Indian Runners but in NZ we only have whites and Fawn&whites. I am thinking of crossing a white runner with a Cayuga as a starting point. I would appreciate any advice/tips you could offer to help me.

Reply:

According to Dr Coutts (*The Indian Runner Duck*, 1927), 'The Black Indian Runner is a comparatively recent creation. The first foundation

was laid on an Indian Runner duck among Walton's birds imported in 1909. This duck was white with a black tail and some black on the head and neck. A Black East Indian cross was used to give the pure black colour with greenish metallic lustre.'

The choice of Black East Indian was a wise one. It is closer in shape and size to the wild mallard than the Cayuga and possesses fewer morphological genes that give large size and low carriage. I would think that later generations would be easier to develop towards the pure runner shape using the BEI.

Secondly, the original so-called 'white' Runner probably possessed 'magpie' genes (white bib, pied [fawn-and-white pattern] and extended black (e) genes). In other words, it was not pure white, (c/c) genes.

Thirdly, the pure white Runners usually have bright yellow bills, something you need to avoid in black derivatives. Many European Black Runners have bright green bills from a recessive (y) gene, something the British breeders have tried hard to avoid from their flocks.

Personally, I would choose a Fawn Runner (male) X Black East Indian (female). That way you would get some Chocolate Runners quite quickly and a proportion of Blacks. The bills would be dark and you would largely avoid getting white splashes/bibs in the new Black Runner flock.

White is a 'colour' that conceals any underlying colour genes. You never know what is underneath. Also, later generations will produce the odd white 'sport' from the recombination of recessive (c) genes.

Fawn-and-white also has difficulties. The pied pattern (R) is largely dominant but hard to get rid of completely. In reality it is incompletely dominant and can recur annoyingly to produce white spots under the chin, white flights and other anomalies in whole-colour plumage.

Mike

British Waterfowl Association

30th NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WATERFOWL EXHIBITION

Sunday 5th November 2017

Stratford Park Leisure Centre,

Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 4AF

Lots to do in the Park or in the town!

Plenty of free parking.

Open to the public 10.00 - 15.00

An outstanding display of hundreds of ducks and geese

Sale of domestic waterfowl and wildfowl (prices displayed)

Indian Runner Duck Association AGM

Catering Facilities

ENTRANCE £2.50

CONCESSIONS £1.50

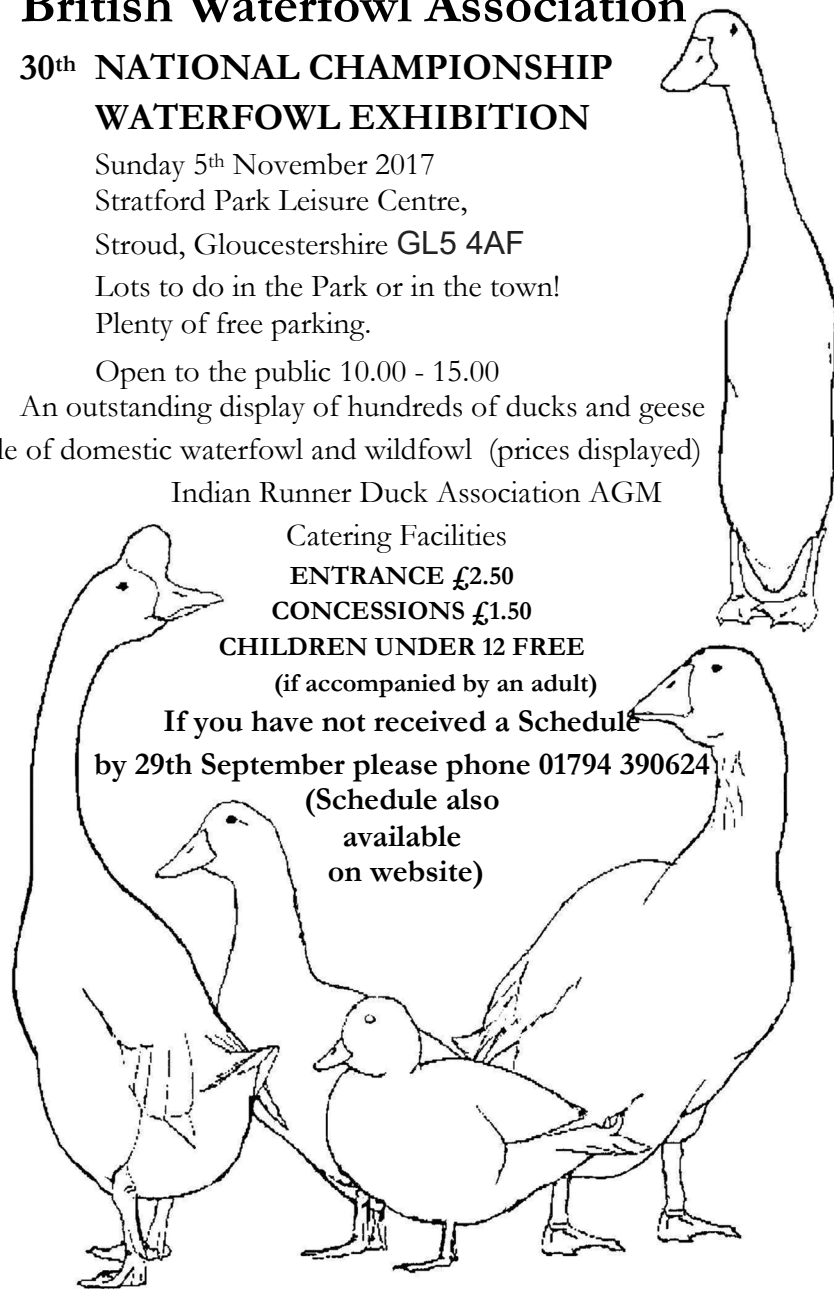
CHILDREN UNDER 12 FREE

(if accompanied by an adult)

If you have not received a Schedule

by 29th September please phone 01794 390624

(Schedule also
available
on website)



Entries close Tuesday 10th October.

PIONEERS OF THE RUNNER DUCK

Mike Ashton

The following is published in Fancy Fowl (August 2017). It presents a case for establishing a tradition extending from the early pioneers. The IRDA was founded on that very premise and, indeed, our present constitution is based on that of the original IRDC (1930). It is not always realized how much the development of the modern Indian Runner world-wide has depended on the work done by these pioneering enthusiasts.

John Donald, MRCVS, is credited as the first populist of a peculiar duck. Even today people are shocked when they first set eyes on this upright mallard which looks more like a bowling-pin than a duck and shows no ability to fly. He called it 'The India Runner' (without the final 'n') in his undated pamphlet published around 1890. Alongside the Grand Old Man of the Runner fancy, Matthew Smith, and with the importer of new bloodlines from Malaysia, Joseph Walton, and the writer of arguably the best history of the breed, Dr James Coutts: these are the great names behind what has become an outstanding pure breed and the foundation stock for countless commercial strains.

Donald related the traditional tale from his native Cumbria of a sea-captain who brought special ducks from India and presented them to farming friends in West Cumberland. Matthew Smith recalled how the 'best' (which were all-fawns) were sent to Dumfriesshire across the Solway border. The ones kept in Cumbria were 'the broken fawn-and-white'. Unfortunately, the fanciers were slow to pick up on the breed, possibly because distance from London. When they did, in 1901, when the first standard was drawn up by the 'Waterfowl Club' and published by the Poultry Club, the all-fawns and the all-whites were omitted. It took a while for the balance to be redressed.

Harrison Weir (*Our Poultry*) recalled similar birds in the Surrey Zoological Gardens (1837-38) which were light and dark fawn and their specula were dull slate in colour. These were clearly dusky mallards like the Fawn Runner. Later (1858) he noted birds of 'rich hazel and fawn in colour' belonging to Lord Berwick. Others were 'dull blue, light brown, blue black, and splashed.' He called these birds 'Penguin Ducks' (as did Darwin and other scientists at the time) but

they were clearly of the same genetic background (colours, stance and body shape). The apocryphal sea-captain may not have been the first importer of Indian Runners to Britain.

Mongrelization

Apart from the Muscovy, all domestic ducks are basically mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*). Runners are no different. They had just been bred in relative isolation over centuries and kept 'pure' for practical reasons: they lay lots of eggs and they do not fly. The eggs are easy to collect; they hatch easily under broodies or even primitive incubators; and in the Far East, they 'walk to market'. Where there is a regular supply there is little need to cross them with other stains. However, in Britain where wild mallards fly free and farmers might be less particular about the separation of their duck strains, there was a great opportunity for cross-breeding, especially if new Runner stocks were not being imported.

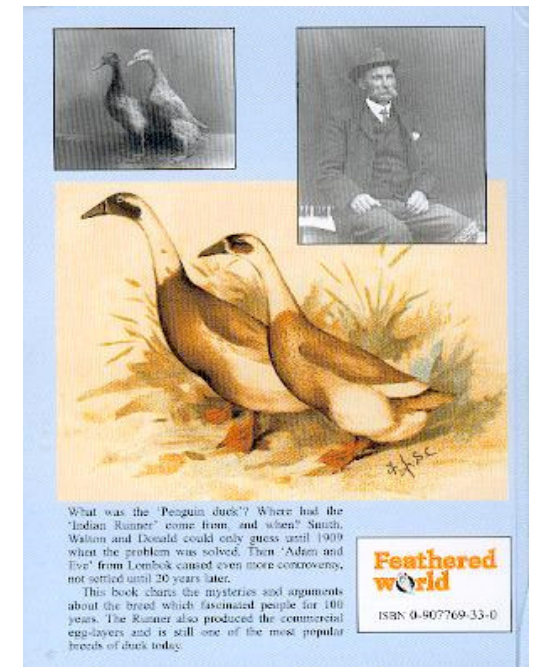
In his famous 1890 pamphlet, Donald wrote: 'That a great many cross-bred runner ducks have been distributed over the kingdom is a well known fact, and the general ignorance of their origin and characteristics has enabled this to be easily accomplished; indeed very few of the original type are now to be found, having always been kept in a very few hands. The large majority of so-called "India Runners" have been produced by the use of "Runner" drakes with farm-yard ducks, and the object of this *brochure* is to record the characters of the earliest ancestors, and preserve from annihilation the true characters of the birds as originally imported.' [*The India Runner Duck: its History and Description*]

Preserving the Breed

John Donald, Matthew Smith and Joseph Walton were early members of the first Indian Runner Duck Club (founded in 1907), and they made it their goal to try to preserve the unique characteristics of the Indian Runner. A nice little pamphlet had been published (1906) by Jacob Thomlinson called simply *The Indian Runner*. It explains and illustrates some of these salient characteristics: namely body and head shape, upright posture and special plumage colours of the pure breed. The first written standard had appeared some five years earlier.

The key question remained: how do we know what the original birds looked like precisely? Later illustrations look very little like the modern forms. Even Donald's 1890 frontispiece (seen on our cover below) is a bit weird by recent standards. The obvious answer would be to observe the birds in their oriental habitat. Unfortunately no-one really knew where they came from. Certainly the word 'India' was uttered, even 'Bombay', but the lack of evidence of such birds on the Indian mainland was a mystery. Where John Donald had initiated the fashion (or 'boom' as they called it), Joseph Walton was to trace the origin of the Runner and managed to import a small number of specimens, mainly Fawn, from the island of Lombok. This was the big break-through. So, to Walton must be given the accolade for establishing the origin of the breed and physical evidence of what the birds actually looked like in their original condition. The detective work involved and the dogged determination are clearly documented in the 1927 book by Dr J A Coutts, *The Indian Runner Duck*, published by Feathered World. This is a wonderful little book that gives credit to the real pioneers behind the rise of the upright Runner Duck. Sadly, very few copies are now available but the original documents lent to Coutts by Matthew Smith have been archived and used for the production of a special volume dedicated to Matthew Smith's daughter-in-law, Mrs Mary Smith. Matthew, as long-term secretary of the Club, had preserved the historical material and she was loth to see it go to waste.

A hard-back copy of *The Indian Runner Duck, A Historical Guide* (also published by Feathered World, 2002) is available from the authors, Chris and Mike Ashton, and other outlets.



DUCKS TO BE USED FOR PEST CONTROL

'The Furrow' October 2016

The Vergenoegd Wine Estate in Stellenbosch, South Africa, is serious about integrated plant protection – they use ducks as a means of pest control. For the past 30 years, the 57 ha wine estate has been rearing ducks and shepherding them daily in the care of a duck shepherd into the vineyard. 'Our Indian Runner ducks can eat 6ha clean in just one week' says winemaker Marlize Jacobs. Snails are a delicacy for poultry and they also eat mealy bug larvae from fallen leaves. 'During the past five years, we have hardly needed to use any pesticides and, when we did, it was only a small quantity during a severe snail infestation. The duck also fertilise the vineyard and hence we need less nitrogen'. As Jacobs also explains, this method is profitable only because the customers are willing to pay a higher price for wine which has been produced in an eco-friendly manner. The ducks parade also entices thousands of visitors to the wine estate, which also offers hospitality and direct sales. The costs are up to seven times higher than with conventional plant production. 'The ducks eat large amounts of corn and the breeding costs are enormous. We even keep a herd book'.

The fame of these Stellenbosch ducks has spread worldwide, and we often get requests for info at the IRDA from areas such as Portugal and Texas. Unfortunately, estate managers don't initially realise that the ducks can only work if they are managed well i.e. they are protected from predators even in the day time and certainly at night. The Vergenoegd estate also provides a lake for the daily bathe. At one time there was a problem there: John Faure, who introduced these ducks, found that the Runners were reluctant to enter the water and discovered that otters were preying on his birds. So Runners are not an instant vineyard fix – they need experienced management to make them effective.

Our thanks to Herbie Lusby for spotting this article from 'The Furrow', the excellent publication of www.johndeere.com on land, soil and crop management.

KONRAD LORENZ AND HIS BIRDS

Konrad Zacharias Lorenz (1903–1989) was an Austrian zoologist, ethologist, and ornithologist. He shared the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Nikolaas Tinbergen and Karl von Frisch. He is often regarded as one of the founders of modern ethology¹. He developed an approach that began with an earlier generation, including his teacher Oskar Heinroth.

Lorenz studied instinctive behavior in animals, especially in greylag geese and jackdaws. Working with geese, he investigated the principle of imprinting, the process by which some nidifugous birds (i.e. birds that leave their nest early) bond instinctively with the first moving object that they see within the first hours of hatching. Although Lorenz did not discover the topic, he became widely known for his descriptions of imprinting as an instinctive bond. In 1936 he met Dutch biologist Nikolaas Tinbergen, and the two collaborated in developing ethology as a separate sub-discipline of biology.

Lorenz wrote numerous books, some of which, such as *King Solomon's Ring*, *On Aggression*, and *Man Meets Dog*, became popular reading. His last work *Here I Am – Where Are You?* is a summary of his life's work and focuses on his famous studies of greylag geese (Wikipedia). The photography in this book is outstanding. Second hand copies of this book, and *King Solomon's Ring*, often turn up on Amazon and ABE books, and are well worth owning.

In addition to his animal and bird studies, Lorenz also predicted human behaviour: the relationship between market economics and the threat of ecological catastrophe. In his 1973 book, *Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins*, Konrad Lorenz addresses the following paradox: "All the advantages that man has gained from his ever-deepening understanding of the natural world that surrounds him, his technological, chemical and medical progress, all of which should seem to alleviate human suffering . . . tends instead to favor humanity's destruction". His ideas were in agreement with the Club of Rome's 1972 model *Limits to growth* and *The Population Bomb*, a best-selling book written by Stanford University Professor Paul R. Ehrlich and his wife, Anne Ehrlich (who was uncredited), in 1968 (Wikipedia).

¹ **Ethology** is the scientific and objective study of animal behaviour, usually with a focus on behaviour under natural conditions, and viewing behaviour as an evolutionarily adaptive trait.

Their ideas were interrupted by the Green Revolution (which increased food production globally) but has simply deferred the population problem to the 21st century. On a less serious subject, readers will probably enjoy his engaging 'ducky' tale.

LORENZ AND HIS MALLARD FAMILY

(a quote from from *King Solomon's Ring*)

I was experimenting at one time with young mallards to find out why artificially incubated and freshly hatched ducklings of this species, in contrast to similarly treated greylag goslings, are unapproachable and shy. Greylag goslings unquestioning accept the first living being whom they meet as their mother, and run confidently after him. Mallards, on the contrary, always refused to do this. If I took from the incubator freshly hatched mallards, they invariably ran away from me and pressed themselves in the nearest dark corner. Why? I remembered that I had once let a muscovy duck hatch a clutch of mallard eggs and that the tiny mallards had also failed to accept this foster-mother. As soon as they were dry, they had simply run away from her and I had trouble enough to catch these crying, erring children. On the other hand, I once let a fat white farmyard duck hatch out mallards and the little wild things ran just as happily after her as if she had been their real mother. The secret must have lain in her call note, for, in external appearance, the domestic duck was quite as different from a mallard as was the muscovy; but what she had in common with the mallard (which, of course, is the wild progenitor of our farmyard duck) were her vocal expressions. Though, in the process of domestication, the duck has altered considerably in colour pattern and body form, its voice has remained practically the same. The inference was clear: I must quack like a mother mallard in order to make the little ducks run after me. No sooner said than done. When, one Whit-Saturday, a brood of purebred young mallards was due to hatch, I put the eggs in the incubator, took the babies, as soon as they were dry, under my personal care, and quacked for them the mother's call-note in my best Mallardese. For hours on end I kept it up, for half the day. The quacking was successful. The little ducks lifted their gaze confidently towards me, obviously had no fear of me this time, and as, still quacking, I drew slowly away from them, they also set themselves

obediently in motion and scuttled after me in a tightly huddled group, just as ducklings follow their mother. My theory was indisputably proved. The freshly hatched ducklings have an inborn reaction to the call-note, but not to the optical picture of the mother. Anything that emits the right quack note will be considered as mother, whether it is a fat white Pekin duck or a still fatter man. However, the substituted object must not exceed a certain height. At the beginning of these experiments, I had sat myself down in the grass amongst the ducklings and, in order to make them follow me, had dragged myself, sitting, away from them. As soon, however, as I stood up and tried, in a standing posture, to lead them on, they gave up, peered searchingly on all sides, but not upwards towards me and it was not long before they began that penetrating piping of abandoned ducklings that we are accustomed simply to call "crying". They were unable to adapt themselves to the fact that their foster-mother had become so tall. So I was forced to move along, squatting low, if I wished them to follow me. This was not very comfortable; still less comfortable was the fact that the mallard mother quacks unintermittently. If I ceased for even the space of half a minute from my melodious "Quahg, gegegegeg, Quahg, gegegegeg", the necks of the ducklings became longer and longer corresponding exactly to "long faces" in human children and did I then not immediately recommence quacking, the shrill weeping began anew. As soon as I was silent, they seemed to think that I had died, or perhaps that I loved them no more: cause enough for crying! The ducklings, in contrast to the greylag goslings, were most demanding and tiring charges, for, imagine a two-hour walk with such children, all the time squatting low and quacking without interruption! In the interests of science I submitted myself literally for hours on end to this ordeal.

So it came about, on a certain Whit-Sunday, that in company with my ducklings, I was wandering about, squatting and quacking, in a May-green meadow at the upper part of our garden. I was congratulating myself on the obedience and exactitude with which my ducklings came waddling after me, when I looked up and saw the garden fence framed by a row of dead-white faces: a group of tourists were standing at the fence and staring horrified in my direction. Forgivable! For all they could see was a big man with a beard dragging

himself, crouching, round the meadow, in figures of eight, glancing constantly over his shoulder and quacking but the ducklings, the all-revealing and all-explaining ducklings, were hidden in the tall spring grass from the view of the astonished crowd.

THOUGHTS ON EGG POSITION IN THE INCUBATOR

Dear Brinsea, I would be most grateful if you could provide me with any scientific evidence about the effect on hatch rates when the eggs are set pointing down in the Ovation 28 Ex automatic turning (giving maximum carrying capacity of 28 eggs) compared to setting the eggs lying horizontal in the egg carriers.

Many Thanks, **Dr James Rigby**.

* * *

Hi James,

There is rather a brilliant book that we sell called 'Nests, Birds and Incubators', and you may find it interesting. http://www.brinsea.co.uk/books?product_id=48/

New Insights into Natural and Artificial Incubation by **Dr Charles Deeming**

The only book for aviculturists and bird-keepers which compares the current scientific knowledge of natural incubation among wild species with techniques of artificial incubation. Dr Charles Deeming is one of very few scientists across the world with the balance of practical experience to be capable of writing such a book.

Essential reading for everyone interested in understanding what really goes on in the incubation process. The very latest, radical incubation procedures are also discussed.

'Egg position changes with time. At laying, the egg is full of yolk and albumen and will adopt a neutral position i.e. the long axis of the egg is nearly horizontal. As the egg is incubated and loses weight by water loss from the eggshell pores, the airspace grows and so the one end (usually the blunt end) of the egg gets lighter than the other and so the egg naturally adopts a tilt position with the air space upwards. This is crucial for the developing embryo because it orientates itself to the top

of the egg for the hatching process and so is able to position its beak next to the air space. Without this natural asymmetry in the egg there would be a danger of the embryo developing with its head in the wrong end of the egg.'

So, we know that keeping an egg in an upright position with the air sac at the top of the egg, is keeping any pressure off the air sac, the chick will not be malpositioned and will develop normally – and that position allows you to use the incubator to full capacity. In the nest, the eggs are horizontal, but of course we are in an artificial environment and merely mimicking the hen.

We recently went out to Holland to the Poultry Museum in Barneveld and they had made a wooden frame to sit the eggs in upright to hatch in – they did not lie the eggs horizontal to hatch. We were really surprised, but it worked! So, if you are so interested, take a look at this book. Frank Pearce the CEO of Brinsea wrote the foreword and worked closely with the author.

Kind regards, **Fiona at Brinsea**

* * *

Hi James, Deeming is a very good book. You will enjoy reading it. He also explains the function of bacteria in water-loss in eggs (the reason why goose eggs hatch better in the nest than the incubator). I agree about the position of the air sac. We've had MS and Curfew automatic turners, and these incubators hatch duck eggs OK in the egg inserts where the eggs are pointed-end-down/air-sac-up.

But goose eggs don't like automatic turning, either when lying on their side, or being tilted through a vertical axis. You get a lot of them pipping at the wrong end. I think it's the frequent turn every hour which does not suit them. Also, the automatic turn, which is only through about 100 degrees, is insufficient for goose eggs which do better with a larger turn.

In the old still-air Hatchmaker and Polyhatch incubators we still have here, the eggs are placed on their side. But I always check that the eggs have pipped upwards because, if they pip downwards, they can get glued down by any liquid albumen if they are a bit wet. I've heard it said that they pip upwards in the nest, in the direction of the duck and her voice and heart-beat. So air sac up in the inserts is fine.

Chris Ashton

SHOWS ADVERTISED FOR 2017

OCTOBER

East of England Autumn Exhibition, Sunday 8th October.
THE Small Livestock Show. From mice to shire horses, goats to guinea pigs.
Trade stands. www.eastofengland.org.uk
For poultry and waterfowl entries Tel 01777 700069

Welsh Federation of Poultry Clubs at the Builth Wells (Royal Welsh) Show Ground, Sat 21st Oct Tel: 01558 822243
www.poultryclubofwales.org.uk

Shropshire and Mid Wales Waterfowl Exhibition, Sunday 29th October, Oswestry Show Ground, Park Hall, Oswestry SY11 4AB.
For details and schedule Tel 01948 840011 or
e-mail fchrismillward@hotmail.com

NOVEMBER

30th BWA Champion Waterfowl Exhibition, Stratford Park Leisure Centre, Stratford Road, Stroud GL5 4AF. Sunday 5th November, 2017
Tel: 01794 390624 Email: beech997@yahoo.co.uk

Devon & Cornwall Waterfowl Show & Sale Royal Cornwall Showground, Whitecross, Wadebridge, Cornwall, PL27 7JE. Sunday 26th November, 2017
Tel: 01726 861354


DECEMBER

The National Poultry Show, The International Centre, Telford, TF3 4JH
Tel: 01830 520856 Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd
Email: info@poultryclub.org
www.nationalshow.poultryclub.org

National Federation of Poultry Clubs Championship Show, Bingley Hall, Stafford Showground ST18 0BD.
Contact: R Sadler - Email: fedchampshow@gmail.com
www.federationpoultryshow.weebly.com

JANUARY 2018

The Scottish National Poultry Show, Lanark Agricultural Centre, Muirglen, Hyndford Road, Lanark ML11 9SZ.
Secretary Mr R MacDonald Tel 01771622557
e-mail lorraine6591@sky.com



The British Waterfowl Association

An Association of Enthusiasts interested in Keeping, Breeding and Conserving Waterfowl (Established in 1887)

The BWA offers members:

- Waterfowl Magazine • Breeders' Directory
- Open Days / Workshops • Local Contacts • Bookshop
- Web-site • Information Leaflets
- National Waterfowl Exhibition

Write to: Kate Elkington, Secretary,
British Waterfowl Association,
The Old Bakehouse, Ashperton, Ledbury,
Herefordshire HR8 2SA
Telephone: 01531 671250
Email: info@waterfowl.org.uk

Website: www.waterfowl.org.uk

Inside Rear Cover:

'Going to work at Vergenoegd' [Photo: John Faure]

Rear Cover:

Mark Rubery's young stock. It's good to see Mark back into domestics. For years he concentrated on wildfowl and zoological specimens at Blackbrook. [Photo: Mark Rubery]

