

# LETTER OF THE WEEK

The winner receives a £10 voucher from Haith's.



## A chance to unlock the hobby's potential

I WELCOME the introduction of aviary displays, as seen at Stafford last month and as planned for future events, beginning this December. (See *Cage & Aviary Birds*, October 30, page 5.)

Such displays were a feature of many of the "old" National Exhibitions, where they represented a celebration of birdkeeping, by birdkeepers.

Now I feel that these displays

call for a wider audience: they represent a great way to introduce new people to the delights of the hobby.

Surely now is the time to publicise these Stafford events outside the familiar confines of birdkeeping, and seek to attract the general public?

That will present new challenges, I'm sure, but the potential is immense.

**D. Smith, Devon.**



Worth sharing widely: the display aviaries at Stafford Photo: Sam Wildes

## SINCERE THANKS

I AM writing to express my deep gratitude to two people at the recent Gainsborough show, show manager Kim Hing and contestant Shaun Collins.

I had entered birds at the show but had been feeling ill and inadvertently left my birds in the Drill Hall. Shaun made the appropriate phone calls and Kim made the 40-mile journey to

return the birds to my home.

Imagine how I felt when I realised I had left my birds and would have to travel the 40 miles back to Gainsborough – only to be told that Kim was on his way to my home with the birds. What a relief.

Thanks again, Shaun and Kim. Both Brenda and I are truly grateful.

**Les Hickin, Pontefract.**

## N11-304

LATE in this January night all outside frost bound and still. Checking emails in the dark with YouTube music turned down low.

The screen light one-candle dawn is enough to awaken behind me the occupants of cages lined there. A single soft rolling song begins.

Rising falling joined by others until most of twenty birds are singing. A wall of interwoven song so low though not a yard behind my head.

By chance beside my good right ear is N11-304. Deep, rich and faultless song. Unmarked white plumage amid his yellow feathered companions.

From Belfast raised to me by way I guess of Galway City, New Ross, Rosslare, Pembroke, Wednesfield, all through the hands of gentle men

with some notion of the longer travels of his heritage. From the wild green canary bird in sunny southern isles that I have never seen or ever will



'A single soft rolling song begins': rollers gradually break into song at the C&AB office, courtesy of Graham Wellstead

five hundred years or more through nigh as many generations onwards by sea to Spain. Walked to the Tyrol in migrant miners' chattels to the Harz.

Here was forged and set his song. On pedlars' packs this way and that travelled his line forward over lands and seas by so many ways to me.

Did he win prizes in his first unflighted season? I don't know, only that he is here and here I am in this dark night that I am privileged indeed.

**Jim Stidworthy, January 2013**

● Playing on YouTube was Iris DeMent, "Our Town", performed in the Transatlantic Sessions.



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## Editor's Letter

**W**HEN COLIN O'HARA and I discussed the impending new Animal Activities Licensing (AAL) law with DEFRA last year, we sensed that birdkeepers were low down on the legislation's target list. Those who dealt with horses and dogs seemed likely to draw the attention of local authority inspectors more urgently than fanciers selling canaries or budgies. So I'm not surprised when Colin Moore (who breeds spaniels as well as birds) reports that he has yet to find any trace of AAL in practice, a year after its implementation. After all, many inspectorates may lack the staff to enforce the law in all its aspects.

However, that does not mean that AAL has simply gone away. The letter of the law still holds that "business activities" require prohibitive licensing. Inspectors still have the authority to question the nature of transactions involving birds as well as animals. If AAL doesn't percolate down to our level, well and good. But we mustn't allow out of sight to mean out of mind.

■ Delving into an old volume of *Cage Birds*, I was tickled to spot this photo (right) of earnest judges intently scrutinising the novice goldfish class at the 1934 "National" at Olympia. (At that time, we still devoted a section of the paper to fishkeeping.)

■ Every responsible canary breeder must welcome the joint statement (left) from the chairmen of the LCA and BLCC. *Cage & Aviary Birds* unhesitatingly endorses the statement and the spirit of mutual respect that underlies it. Now let's all ensure that spirit is to the fore during the show season we've embarked upon.

■ Speaking of show seasons: personal thanks to Ivan Chapman, Glenn Brooker, Peter Finn, Simon Hughes and everyone at the recent BCCC Southern Championship show for making me so welcome and answering every single question! Glorious birds, friendly experts, handy venue... I couldn't ask for anything better.

■ So, the bellbird is officially much louder than the piha (page 3). As one who's had many birdsong recordings ruined by screaming piha displays, I say forget volume: the piha is the world's most irritating bird. You heard it here first. I said YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST.

Have a quiet week with your birds!

*Rob Innes*



Two chairmen, one message: Jeremy Goacher (left) and Garry Mann

AN INFORMAL meeting was held between senior officers of the Lizard Canary Association and the Blue Lizard Canary Club at the 2019 National Exhibition to explore the future relationship of the two societies. We are pleased to announce that the following principles were agreed:

■ Canary fanciers are free to keep, breed and exhibit whichever variety and colour they choose, provided it is within the law.

■ There are fundamental genetic differences between the classic Lizard canary and the blue Lizard canary.

■ The classic Lizard canary is the foundation of quality in Lizards of all colours, and it is in the interests of all Lizard breeders to safeguard the genetic purity of true-bred stock.

■ Breeders of pure-bred Lizards are rightly concerned about the risk of inadvertently

introducing alien genes into classic Lizard stock. The BLCC will continue to urge its members to use its closed rings and to make full disclosure of a bird's history so that potential buyers can make an informed decision about the birds they purchase.

■ In the event of a contentious issue arising in future, the societies will consult with each other and endeavour to agree a common position.

■ In order to avoid duplication, where both clubs have shows at the same event Natural coloured Lizards will be catered for by the LCA.

■ Members of the LCA and the BLCC should be respectful and acknowledge each other as fellow fanciers with different interests.

**Signed: Jeremy Goacher, chairman, LCA, and Garry Mann, chairman, BLCC.**



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