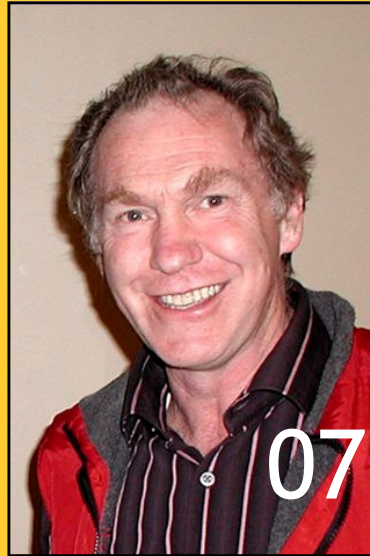


Volume 3, Issue 1 2008



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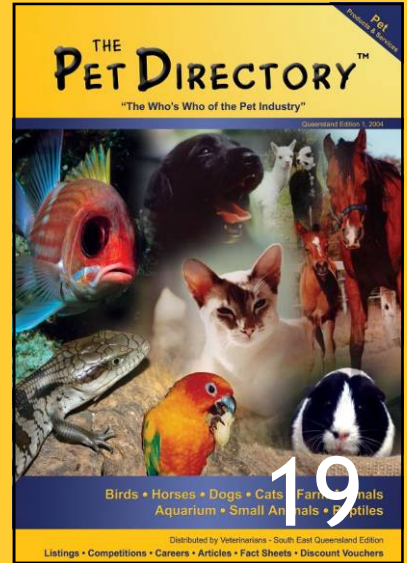


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## Editorial

What a year it has been in budgerigars! We have had the 2007 ANBC titles, hosted by the BCSA, which was an outstanding success. Letters of congratulations were received from fanciers far and wide regarding the event, its organization, and the warm welcome that SA hobbyists provided to guests. Everyone involved is to be commended for a job well done, and their patronage at the event. A special congratulations goes out to the Marshall Family, who won the Albino class at this event - a fantastic effort on behalf of the State.

Western Australia in 2008 now beckons, with the Nationals being held in The Bayview Geopraphe Resort, located in Busselton, approximately 2.5 hours drive south of Perth. The National titles will be interesting, with South Australia narrowly missing out on 4th place to this year's hosts, Western Australia. The 2007 result was an overall improvement for South Australia relative to the previous two years, with the home state defeating Tasmania and North & Central Queensland. Let's just hope we can follow the trend, and improve on last year's result in WA.

Outside of what's been happening in the budgerigar world, and the year to come, I believe I owe the hobby an explanation as to why I am stepping down from my role as the Editor of the BCSA Magazine. I must begin by stating that this is a role that I relish, and I get a great deal of satisfaction in doing, so it is with regret that I must step down.

In the early 1990's, as a 14 year old kid, I completed a similar editorial position for what was then the "Sale & District Cage Bird Society". In so doing, I got to research a lot about genetics and traits, as well as learn differentiating factors and management

techniques of different fanciers (their own little secrets) - this adventure for the BCSA has been no different. In hindsight, it is most likely that this learning and success is what has now brought me back to breeding exhibition budgerigars.

However, being back in the fancy now for my fourth year, I've come to realize the delicate juggling act that is family, work and birds. In my current employment, my job requires that I travel a lot overseas. In fact, in 2007 I spent 32 of 52 weeks abroad. During this time, my family traveled overseas with me, and with four children (and another one on the way), that's no simple task. It is a big ask to have anyone look after the birds during this time, and if it wasn't for the likes of Tony Van Den Brink, Bruce Stafford, Joe Roesler and my father Glenn, I don't know what I'd do. I am fortunate enough to have people around me who, from time to time, are able to support my breeding program, and help me look after the birds when I can't be home.

The dilemma that I have is what I call "doing things properly". I believe that if you are going to do something, then give it your all - 100%. I feel, as the Editor of the Magazine, that I can't truly write about what's going on locally, or what's happening in this state, when I struggle to get along to the monthly meetings. I would dearly LOVE to get to those meetings, as I remember just how much fun I used to have, showing birds in the night shows, sharing stories with fellow fanciers, and learning from well-respected guest speakers. Since rejoining the hobby, I honestly think that I've only been able to get to three meetings in three years, which in my mind is not even close to enough when you have the privileged role as Magazine Editor for the State.



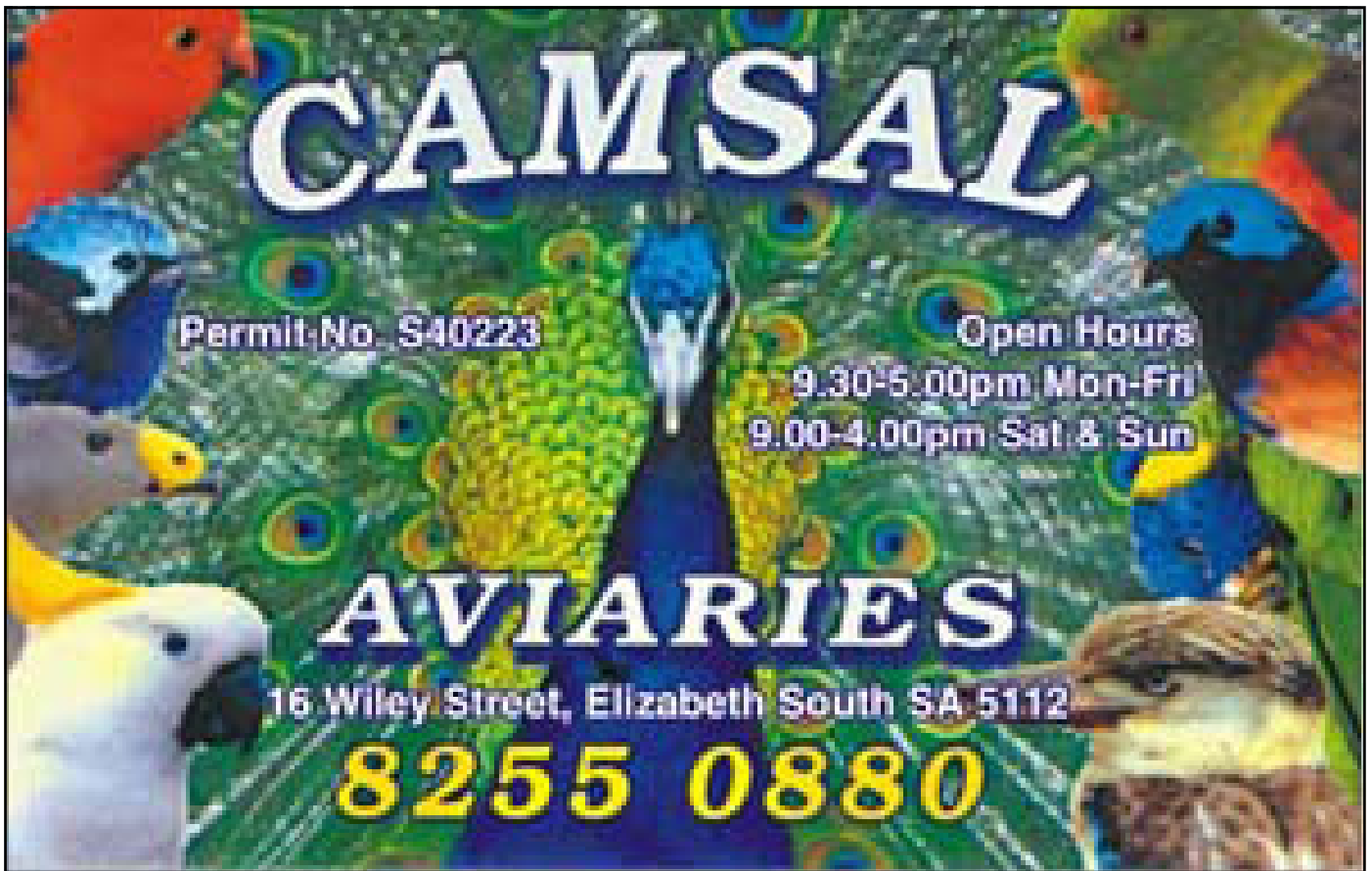
At the same time, being away so much, coupled with the pressures of work and family, creates demands on available free time to be able to create the magazine, the web site, and work on Council issues, which up until recently included the Media responsibility for the Nationals, and the organization of the BCSA Auction (in conjunction with Peter Glassenbury and John Mulley). Time is critical, and my family is young, and deserving of my attention. To feed, water and check the birds, I get up at 5:00 AM, and spend 1.5 hours (to the dot) out there, each and every day. I do this so that it doesn't interfere with my family life, who are normally asleep at this time of the day. Outside of that time, I find it hard to do a whole lot with the birds, without compromising something else.

I think that the Editor should be someone at the forefront of budgerigars in this state - somebody who is able to commit their time and energy, without fault, to preparing and distributing this magazine to fanciers alike. I think that there is a fantastic opportunity in this state for the hobby to grow, and I think that if we can all move together, that we can make this a very attractive hobby for newcomers.

I hope that in the years to come, as I grow older, and my children develop their own wings, that some day, the BCSA may reconsider me for this position, but until then, I feel I do not have the ability to commit the 100% effort that is required to get this magazine over the line.

I wish the incoming Editor all the very best for the future, and you will have my full support going forward.

Troy Holmes



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## From the President

By Nigel Tonkin

The BCSA Management Committee of the last year consisted of Lloyd Edwards, John Mulley and Graham Bell (NEBS), Malcolm Loveridge (Pt Pirie), Algi Lapinskas (BSSA), Doreece Brunton, Jennie Liebich and I (Mt Gambier). It was certainly pleasing to have an injection of 'new blood' on the Committee as a result of the Constitution change of last year - that was half affiliate representation, of which Pt Pirie and the BSSA took advantage of - thank you Malcolm and Algi for your valued input. Thanks to this Committee and the 2007 National Planning Committee for their input this past term - an excellent all round effort with a very successful national event.

The National Planning Committee comprised the Management Committee along with Wayne Weidenhofer, Shane Cripps, Bruce and Marion Stafford, Troy Holmes and Peter Glassenbury. Each person took their role seriously and greatly contributed to the event. A number of these folk have some pretty heavy work loads in their own professions and yet still managed to give their all to the fancy of South Australia.

As far as publicity and media coverage, no other national event has had such coverage and footage prior, during and after the event that I can recall - thanks to Troy for pulling this off.

To Brian Marshall thanks for auditing the books, again and over many years - an excellent job. Brian will not be taking on the auditors role from now on, thus we require someone to stand up to take on this task.

To Troy Holmes who again put together the magazine, the feedback from overseas editors of similar magazines were as one with their comments in relation to this magazine

being world class, thank you and congratulations on such an effort. Sadly, some of the local commentary has not been as positive. It seems some believe it should only contain local content. To have Troy put in such an effort to obtain information / an interview that covers the world scene is time consuming, challenging and a must if I can have my say on this. Troy is resigning as editor as of the next issue (September) thus a volunteer to take on the role immediately would be of great benefit to at least be involved with the September issue assisted by Troy thus giving a smooth transition for the 2008 issue/s.

Thanks to the delegates and bird carers that represented the BCSA at the nationals and to all those who made their birds available to represent their State and to those that did get them selected, congratulations. The idea of having two sets of two judges plus another judge assessing the birds prior to being judged had mixed reports. The time to complete the judging of the birds was reduced. I received positive and negative feedback on the placings and I guess that can be expected at any show.

The WBO rosettes were well received, with the winning bird being a Lutino hen of Kakoschke and Rice and the best opposite sex a Light Green cock of the Holmes Family. It is great to see some new blood on that top bench.

Congratulations to Pt Pirie on their 50th anniversary show, a great achievement for any Society, to say the least. Congratulations also to our one and only first prize at the Nationals—Marshall Family - well done.

To Lloyd, John and Jennie thank you for your dedication to the fancy over a long to not so long periods of time, to have you move on

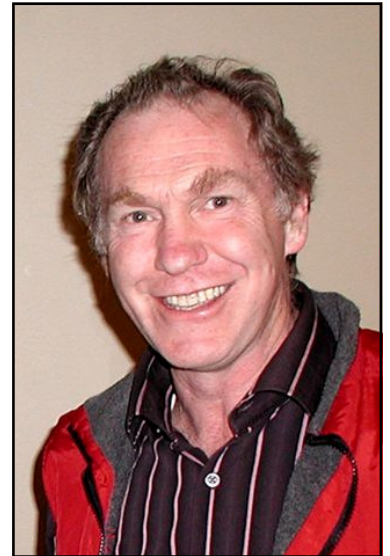
from the committee will be a great loss. What a collective loss. To Peter Glassenbury, Bruce Stafford (NEBS) and David Botha (Mt Gambier), welcome to the committee. We will be appointing a Vice-President, a Treasurer and a Secretary from the within Committee as there were no nominations for these positions.

I trust the suggested changes to the Constitution are met with a positive vote - the changes fine tune the document to take into account the Half Affiliate changes of last year plus allows the price per membership of juniors to be adjusted to whatever price we might choose (if any) without linking this to the percentage of an adult fee.

Ring prices will need to go up this year. The fancy is seeking quality and the ring manufacturer is working hard to achieve a better end product as a result of numerous complaints, in particular from South Australia. If we are chasing quality, then we must pay for it. The latter batch of rings have had a new treatment, a plastic coat to protect the numbering and the paint as I understand it, any feedback in relation to issues with this product needs to be delivered to the BCSA Ring Officer via your Society ring registrar. Thankyou to Doreece for her professional approach as Ring Officer once again, a job well done.

We have had some issues that the Council has dealt with during the year and to those that have taken part resolving these issues, I thank you, a job well done.

We can only hope the fancy goes forward from here and ask that any ideas for improvement be submitted to your Council to enable the ideas to be discussed.





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## Preparing Birds For Show

By Ian Hannington

At a recent budgerigar tournament, the Editor overheard an interesting comment from one NSW fancier to his Victorian counterpart —“you know, the difference between our states really is Ian Hannington”. The other nodded in agreement.

Ian Hannington, or “Hanno”, as he is affectionately known, is an ANBC Hall of Famer, with 14 Logie wins, 8 of which were in the Fallow class. Ian is also the NSW bird carer for the National titles, a role which he has flourished in for many years. In this position, he is responsible for the preparation of the birds, from their selection at the NSW Interbranch Show, through until caging at the ANBC show the following week. He is generally assisted by two others at each event, but year in, year out, he provides a solid preparation routine that gives the NSW birds every chance of winning.

Given Ian’s reputation for preparing birds, the Editor thought it fit to ask Ian to detail what it is that he does with the birds to “get them right”. Ian’s response is below:

1- Select the birds you wish to show at least 5 to 6 weeks prior to your club selection. Remember at all times that the more birds your club has to pick from, the more points it will gain on the day. Please, don’t pre-judge your own birds before hand, as they only have to be better than 1 other bird in the class to gain an extra point.

Carefully spread the flights of each of the selected birds & check them for feather mites & lice by holding them up to the sun or a strong light, if they are present you will clearly see them along the barbs of the feathers. One thing which we all should remember is that, quality birds are far more wide spread now than in years gone by, so if you want the best

result possible on the day, the effort must be put in during the weeks leading up to the show.

2- Place the selected birds in a wire cage/ cages & spray them all with Coopex Residual Insecticide, At the dose rate recommended by the manufacturer on the sachet.

3 - Leave the cage, preferably in the sunlight, until the birds are completely dry. You may have to keep a close eye on any Red Eyed varieties, because I have found in the past that some times if the birds are not accustomed to direct sunlight, it can have an adverse effect on them & they may begin to scratch at their eyes, causing all sorts of future problems for showing.

4- I have on 2 separate occasions, pulled tail feathers in preparation for shows & both times the birds have not grown a tail again, so for me, I no longer do this. Some people cut the main 2 feathers with scissors, causing the bird to drop them of there own accord, once again this is something for you to make up your own mind about. Any broken or damaged flight feathers must be seen to at the same time.

5- I believe that there is nothing like plenty of water sprays to get the birds into condition, & for this reason I spray my birds at least once a day, sometimes twice if I feel they need it. Leaving them in the sun helps them to dry out in a short time, but always be cautious of the affect the sun may have as well as native birds such as Butcher Birds, etc.



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6- If a particular bird is extremely dirty, or has stained feathers, it may be necessary to wash them with a mild shampoo, such as Pears Baby Shampoo, and then continue to spray with fresh cold water every day along with the others. I quite often use the tooth brush on the birds without using water. This is mainly on the head & neck area, always brushing with the grain of the feathers. Any new head & mask feathers can be coaxed to open at this time with the use of a tooth brush, personally I like to keep 3 different brushes available at all times. The first one is used on the vent area only, the other 2 are used where ever they are needed on the rest of the bird. One of them is a medium & the other one is a soft tooth brush. The soft one is usually the main one used towards the end of the preparation period.

7- Care must be taken at this stage to avoid the confined birds from becoming overweight due to the lack of exercise. Plenty of millet sprays can help, as the birds spend a certain amount of time fossicking around the floor of the cage instead of just standing at the seed bowl.

8- The birds should not be spotted before your club selection, or you may find that in 2 weeks time, if the bird is selected for the National Show, it may not have the correct amount of spots available on the day. All the team should be spotted on the Wednesday night or Thursday morning prior to the Interbranch Selection only. If you are not confident about doing your own birds, ask someone with a bit more experience to show you how, or have them do it for you. Personally I prefer to use a pair of surgical tweezers, the reason being they have a finer point on them & there is less chance of me pulling the wrong feathers out by accident. Although I have witnessed people doing this job extremely well just using their fingers.

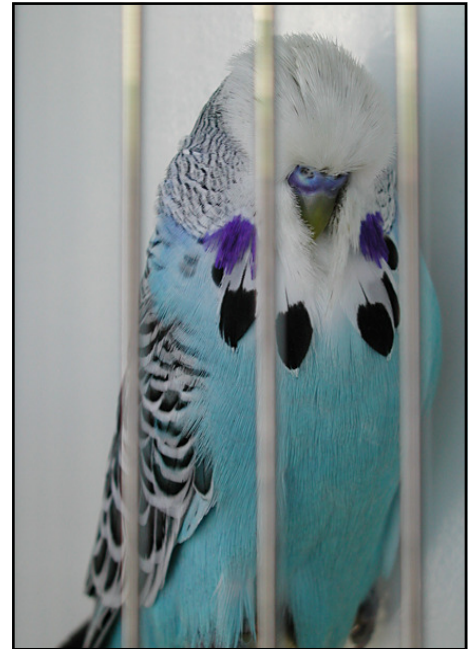
9- I continue to spray my birds right up until the day before the show, I have been told that this doesn't allow the bird's time to get the sheen on their feathers that they require for showing, but the last 2/3 days, the sprays they get are more of a mist instead of a spray.

10- The final job as far as preparation goes is to put a small amount of Baby Oil on the beak, cere & feet, (if you hold the bird close to your chest they will usually grab your shirt with their feet, which makes this operation really simple) this is done with a cotton bud, & only a very small amount of oil is needed, take care not to put too much on the cotton bud. The birds tail is then dipped into a container of boiling water, for approx, 5 seconds, wipe the excess water off with a clean white towel in the direction of the feathers, - towards the tip of the tail.


11- Before placing the bird in the cage, check that your show cage is in good condition & clean. Put approx 500 grams of clean seed into the cage while holding it flat on its back, turn the cage up to the correct position, & blow the loose husk of the back of the cage. I have at

times seen excellent birds benched in disgusting cages & this certainly doesn't create a good impression on the Judge the first time he looks at the cage.

If you follow these few simple steps during your preparation period you will make life much easier for your team carers during the final days prior to the National being held. At the same time, you'll give your bird every chance of a the greatest prize of all, a National Logie.



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## Gary Gazzard (NSW)

By Troy Holmes

Gary Gazzard is arguably one of the most acclaimed and influential breeders of the modern era in Australian exhibition budgerigars. Hailing from Newcastle in New South Wales, Gary began breeding exhibition budgerigars in 1982. Ten years on, he won his first two National titles, and went on to become a highly regarded National Level Judge. In 2005, he achieved the highest possible accolade, being inducted into the Budgerigar Hall of Fame with eight National titles to his name. In so doing, his stud has become synonymous with exceptional facial features and swank, and is highly sought after for its reputation as being potent and vigorous.

Gary's passion with budgerigars began as a teenager. In 1982, a disused green house was converted to a bird cage/ breeding room, and by 1983, interest got the better of him, and he joined the local Newcastle Budgerigar Club. At the time, he received a great deal of coaxing and mentoring from the likes of Alan Druery, and other life long members of the Newcastle Budgerigar Club, which cultivated his ongoing enthusiasm for the hobby.

As time progressed, imports from the UK and Germany played a major part in the Australian hobby, and Gary was able to import 10 birds from Terry & Claire Pilkington, and 5 birds from Eric Lane & Son, as part of the Hanington/Kearne syndicate. Two years on, Gary was able to bring another two birds in, this time through Ernie Sigston, which was facilitated by John Scoble.

From these direct imports, Gary bred his first National winning bird in 1992. In 1993, Gary made what he considers a fundamental addition to his stud - a purchase from the

sell out of the late Bill Hancock. Gary purchased 14785/92, a bird bred from pure Binks imports, which would go on to be the foundation bird for all his lines. The cock immediately clicked with Gary's existing imports, and bred the 1996 BS NSW Winner. Today, 14785/92 can be found in the background of 95% of Gary's birds. Bill Hancock imported some top class birds from Gerald Binks, which have gone on in the past two decades to underpin some of Australia's top studs of birds.

Over the years, outcrosses have been brought in from the likes of John Scoble, Robert Manvell, Geoff Woods, and others. In parallel, Gary has maintained a close working relationship with Alan & Chris Druery, Ian Hanington, and in more recent times, Clint & Margaret Ault and Mark & Rebecca Fellows, to continue the development, and enhance the features, of his stud of birds.

Gary's breeding facility, which is soon to be superseded due to a change in address, consists of a 5 m x 4 m brick breeding room, lined with 38 breeding cabinets on two sides. The room is delineated by a corridor, which runs into three flights, each approximately 1.3 m x 3.5 m, with external wire areas to facilitate access to the natural elements. The breeding cabinets are a melamine construction, measuring 600 mm x 500 mm x 400 mm, each with the nest box externally mounted. Perspex dividers are used between each of the cabinets, to separate the breeding pairs.

Air flow throughout the building is achieved using a ducted ventilation system, which maintains a high level of air quality during the breeding season. Gary is of the firm belief that hygiene is paramount to fitness



and the healthy appearance of a stud. He considers vitality, and vigour, as key points in pairing, as it is of no use to breed birds that in turn cannot go on to reproduce. His stud has plenty of access to direct sunlight and fresh air, which he considers vital to their overall wellbeing.

### BREEDING & PAIRING CONSIDERATIONS

Pairs are mated and allowed to breed between the months of July and February, and generally 250 to 300 birds are produced in any given season from the 38 cabinets on offer. Pairing considerations focus on visual attributes, as most of the birds are related. Gary stresses that as breeders, it is critical that we are able to recognize birds that are producing good birds with length of feather, direction, and brow, and work with their offspring. Surprisingly, he considers the most important feature of the budgerigar as



its outline - it does not matter how good the top end is, if the bird has a poor outline, it will never do well. This "swank", as many people refer to it, is showmanship, and considered fundamental to the modern exhibition budgerigar. Gary notes that you can fix a trait, be it good or bad, by doubling up on it, so his advice is to be ever so mindful of faults, in the same way as you would try to fix good traits.

Gary avoids the temptation to use a cock over too many hens at once, instead preferring to let a hen lay a full round, before moving him onto another hen, if required. He does prefer to let maiden hens hatch and raise their first round under a normal breeding cycle, so as to condition them for future breeding.

In Gary's pairing strategy, he takes into consideration what he knows about his families based around 14785/92. The original pairing of 14785/92, which bred the 1996 BSNSW Winner, produced a bird that was, in Gary's opinion, well ahead of its time. The bird featured fantastic modern day brow features, and Gary attributes this immediate success to the ability of Australian breeders to secure some of the best UK and German stock in the original imports. These birds were from aviaries that may not in the past have mixed and mingled birds, and by creating a local network of imported stock in conjunction with the likes of Alan & Chris Druery, Ian Hannington and others, Gary was able to create a bird that had fantastic modern brow.

Using his own breeding experience, Gary has identified certain birds that are decedents of 14785/92, which have the ability to produce birds that have feather, direction and

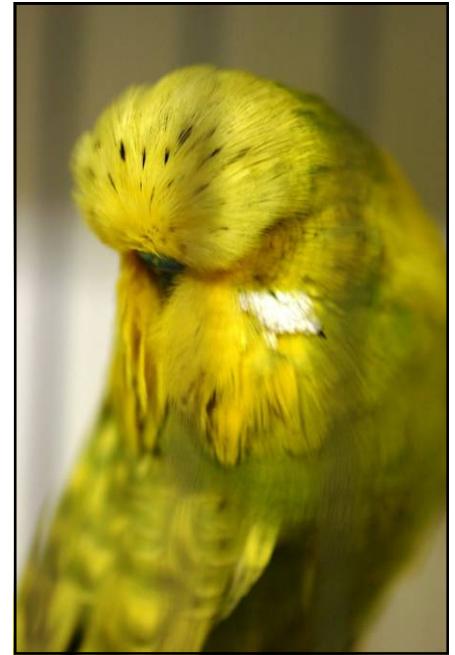
brow. He has concentrated on SLOWLY increasing the length of brow, without compromising other features of the exhibition budgerigar, in particular, the outline. Gary has taken these birds, and created "strains" around each key bird, colour coding families loosely into YELLOW, ORANGE, BLUE and PURPLE.

The BLUE line is based around GG 137/99, a Grey Green cock whose dam is a descendent of 14785/92, and whose sire is based around Manvell/Mannes lines. GG 137/99 has several decedents, namely GG 33/03 and GG 125/02, who have gone on to reproduce some very special budgerigars. GG 137/99 himself produced a National Winning Spangle in 2004, and one of his daughters produced a National Winning Double Factor Spangle the same year. GG 33/03, another son, produced the Grey Green that won the National Titles in 2005. GG 125/02, a grandson of GG 137/99, produced some lovely Cinnamons, including the mother of the 2007 National Winning Hen.

The BLUE line is characterized by good overall outline, with strong physical presence and no visible neck, where the head appears to sit directly on the shoulders. The line tends to be carrot-shaped, described by some as an upside down tear drop, and are generally very strong birds.

The ORANGE LINE is represented by descendants of NBC 3813/99. This hen, in Gary's opinion, has had the most influence on the modern brow on his birds. NBC 3813/99's grand-dam on the sire side was a daughter of 14785/92, while the dam was from Eric Lane & Son lines.

The YELLOW line is characterized by birds from GG 114/02. This cock, often referred to



as the "Cairns cock" due to the National titles that he participated in, was a Grey Normal, and his father was a son of GG 001/95, the BSNSW (son of 14785/92). Birds from the YELLOW line feature great length of feather (not to be confused with feather texture), giving them a lovely large appearance. Similarly, they also typical feature a great height above the eye, and when balanced with the brow and deportment of the ORANGE and BLUE lines, produce the exhibition budgerigar that has become a trademark "Gazzard" bird. GG 114/02 was the sire of the ANBC Winning hen from 2007, as well as the 2nd placed Cinnamon cock from the same event.



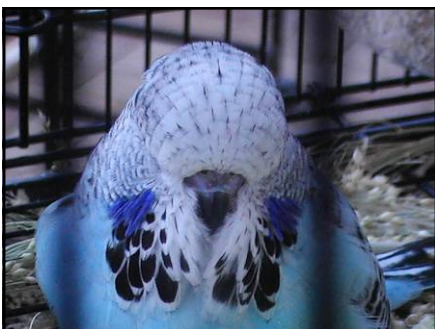


# Budgerigar Council South Australia

Finally, the PURPLE line was created around a Dark Factor Mauve Opaline cock, NBC 766/02. The PURPLE line was initially founded to improve the strength of the dark factor birds, but resulted in bringing to the table significant size and incredible depth of mask, that could be used across the BLUE, YELLOW and ORANGE lines. NBC 766/02 was the Grandfather of the ANBC Winning Spangle from Melbourne.

Gary uses his knowledge of the pedigrees, and associated family traits, to create pairings that visually compliment one another, whilst also providing strengths in the attributes that the other lacks. Gary has found that to firm a trait in a family, it is critical to continue to double up, and double up, and double up again, on this feature. He has focused since his BSNSW win on increasing the length and density of physical feather protruding from the cere (the directional feather), as well as increasing the overall brow, creating a beautiful crease over the eye.

Gary is also of the firm belief that in order to advance through this hobby, you must have a photographic memory of your birds, and their ancestors, to be able to visualize both their good and bad traits. Without this,



or a good digital camera, one can be clutching at straws, even with the very best birds at hand. Gary says that the top breeders of today can often memorize two to three generations back of any given bird in their stud, and he sees this as one of the reasons why the likes of Mark & Rebecca Fellows, and also Clint & Margaret Ault, have had such a rapid ascent to the top bench in this country.

## FEEDING

Gary maintains a constant feeding regime year round, consisting of a commercially available Pepper's seed mix. Individual dishes of white millet, plain canary, Japanese millet, and tonic seed are also provided, in both the cabinets and flights. The birds are fed Murphy's Minerals, in preference to grit, and are also provided with pigeon vitamin powder, charcoal and small blocks of sandstone and cuttlefish.

Year round, both the aviary and breeding pairs receive a basic soft-food in the late afternoon, which consists of soaked oats, supplemented with grated carrot, finely chopped spinach, mung beans and boiled eggs for protein. Gary has tried many variations to this, but always reverts back for ease and simplicity of preparation.

In the flights, over and above the soft food and seed mixes, the birds receive as much variety as practically possible, to keep them eager and interested, as well as rounded. His additions include oranges, broccoli, corn, carrots, seeded grasses, rosemary, wattle and gum tree branches, pinecones, and cuttlefish bone. It is not practically possible to feed these in each breeding



cabinet, so for this reason, the breeding pairs are limited to the daily soft food rations.

Water is supplemented with Vitamin B12 at a rate of 5 mL/L on a once/weekly basis, in



an effort to maximize the hatchability of chicks, and the overall vitality of the stud. Outside of this, Soluvet and Tracemin are also added to the water periodically, to ensure mineral and vitamin levels are sufficient.

#### SHOW PREPARATION

Three to four weeks out from a major show, Gary goes about collecting birds he thinks could be considered for the show team. They are placed in a wire holding cage, and left alone to put condition on, and minimize any possible damage to tail and flight feathers. The birds are sprayed daily, to help facilitate preening of the feathers, right up until the morning of the show. If the birds are travelling to a local event, they will be shipped in their show cages, but if the show is any distance, Gary will leave the birds in the wire cage, and transport them to the venue, before placing them into their exhibition cages.

#### DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Outside of a basic annual Psittacosis treatment, Gary does not adhere to a strict preventative medicine regime for the general flock, instead preferring an increased level of overall hygiene to avoid such issues. His preference is to develop a stud around birds that can build up a natural immunity to illness, and maintain vigour, rather than having a reliance on medicinal remedies.



Any new additions to the aviary however, are treated with care, away from the rest of the birds, to ensure they are sufficiently quarantined. They are held in separate cages for three to four weeks at a minimum, and carefully assessed on a daily basis for changes in droppings, and stress levels.

In treating a sick bird, Gary believes the most proactive thing that you can do for survival is apply warmth within the first 6 hours of it falling noticeably ill. In the wild, budgerigars that appear ill are often subject to attacks from predators, so for this reason, a budgerigar will not show noticeable signs of illness until it has progressed somewhat down the path of any given illness. If you can monitor your birds, and you know them well enough, and you have the time to observe them, then an astute breeder can notice a change in the behaviour of a bird, before it shows the more tell-tail signs of having fallen ill (dirty vent, panting, fluffed look). Gary believes that if you can capture a bird in the first 6 hours of an illness, and apply warmth, as well as medication to the drinking water, then it stands a much greater chance of survival, long term. If the bird has not improved 6 hours later, Gary puts the medication into a hand rearing mix, and dispenses it via crop needle to the bird in question every four hours.

When the bird appears to have gained strength and recovered, it is placed into a wire holding cage to gain condition, where it remains for several weeks before re-entering the flights.

To clean the breeding cabinets and ancillary equipment, Gary uses hospital strength disinfectant. Once this is complete, and the cabinets have been scrubbed, they are sprayed with bleach. To date, there have been no issues with this method, however Gary stresses that you should always read the label of any products that you want to use in and around the birds before deciding to use them.

#### CONCLUSION

The Gazzard stud is unquestionably one of the top budgerigar studs in this nation, and is highly sought after across the country. Gary has proven over time that a slow and methodical approach to developing the modern exhibition budgerigar, without the compromising its other features, is the key to his success. Gary considers his style of management very open, and his method of selection and pairing as the key to his continued success on the show bench.

His greatest challenge going forward is to continue to develop the length of brow, through closely examining adult birds for breeding consideration, as well as observing chicks in the nest as they feather up, noting features such as pin feather location, density of down, and overall facial structure. All of this of course has to be done in close consideration of the birds overall outline, wing carriage and other exhibition features, so as not to diminish the exhibition quality of the bird as a whole.





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## Galib Al-Nassar, A Rare Man

By Nigel Tonkin

I met Ghalib and his lovely wife Janice for the first time, personally, at the Budgerigar Society 75th World Championship Show in November of 2000. We have, over time, 'spoken' via the internet, thus I guess I felt as though we had in some way previously met.

Ghalib was born in Basrah, Iraq in 1946 and was sent by his family to the UK in 1962 to study Mechanical Engineering. He obtained his degree in 1970.

He only worked for 2 employers, the last one being British Gas in the research and technical department for domestic gas utilisation, lasting 17 years.

He took early retirement from British Gas at the end of 1996 (aged 50) and since then he has done some little work for Cage & Aviary Birds in their office. Ghalib is probably best known for his contribution to the Rare varieties. He has written many articles over the years for the fancy press and some of these can be found on his website ([www.al-nasser.co.uk](http://www.al-nasser.co.uk)).

NT: Ghalib, before I get into the interview proper, could you explain to me why the Budgerigar Society World Championship Show is called exactly that? Calling it the World Championship Show could cause some confusion - I have meant to ask this question of others in the past.

GAN: This is both historical and political. The name was changed in 1987 from being called the "Budgerigar Society Club Show" to its present name. Although I was not on the B.S. General Council at the time (joined in 1989) I can guess that it was for political reasons the change occurred. I can

only assume that, at the time, the conflict between the B.S. and Budgerigar World was at its highest and BW had their show called "Budgerigar World Championship Show". Even though the BW show ceased in 1993 (rather a shame) the BS name stayed, as it is now more of a "pro active" name.

NT: Give a bit of run down on your 'career' in the fancy?

GAN: I kept a few budgies (4 in a cage) at the age of 12 until I left Iraq at the age of 16.

During my studies I always had a pet budgie at my girlfriend's house (she became my first wife). I started in the fancy in earnest in 1971 after seeing a local show. I bought a few and was given some. Initially I bred a few in a small room in the flat before having consecutive bird-rooms in the back garden. Because of my academic background I was able to absorb technical information and genetics rather quickly. I read many books and was taken by the crested variety (love at first sight). A local fancier let me have some crests and recessive peds in 1972. I joined the Budgerigar Society in 1971 and then my area society (London & Southern Counties BS - similar to a State Society) in 1972 as well as the Crested and Variegated (Pied) Budgerigar Clubs and my local town club.

Again, because of my academic background, I was very active and assertive in my approach with the administration of societies. I joined the committee of my local club (Southend on Sea, Essex) and got involved in show administration and learnt my craft from there. 30 years on I am still their show manager even though I now live some

40 miles away. As time progressed I became more and more involved in administration work in many societies. Due to domestic reasons (separation from my first wife) I sold my stock in 1979 and in 1980 moved to Surrey. I kept all my official positions in the fancy at that time.

Back in 1983 I started in the fancy again breeding birds from my new house, I went into partnership with the late Ron Bissell (he was a past BS president and chairman) until 1986.

In 1990 I moved house again to Kent (always south east of England) and shared my life with Janice and went into partnership with her. In 1995 we were married. Janice was a successful intermediate fancier in her own right. So this is something I can sincerely thank the hobby for.

NT: You mentioned joining committees and being involved in administration of societies etc - could you give a bit of a run down with the ones that you were or still are involved?

GAN: Joined the Crested BC committee in 1973, assistant secretary in 1974, secretary 1976-86, chairman 1986-96 and president in 1993-96. Life vice-president and life member and now just on the committee.

Joined the Variegated BC committee in mid 70's and was their technical adviser for a number of years and vice chairman. Was president in 1981 and 1993, also life vice president. Came off the management committee in 1994.

Co-founder of the Spangled Budgerigar

Breeders' Association in 1987 (2 of us with Fred Canham founded the club) and their first chairman until 1996 and president 1993-96 and life vice-president.

For the above 3 clubs I have written their Handbooks (60 page A5 size glossy publications) selling at £3 each plus postage.

Joined the Rare Variety & Colour BS committee as their chairman in 1998 and will be their president as well in May. At the moment I am writing their Handbook.

Joined the London & SCBS committee in 1984 as their publicity officer. Very active senior officer; have held numerous positions in the past including that of editor (4 years), seminar organiser (7 years) and president in 1989. Now I am vice chairman, show organiser of the area show and president to the Council of Judges. I wrote their handbook in 1990 and am now working on the Diamond Jubilee handbook.

Was elected to the BS general council in 1989 and am now one of their senior councillors. Was publicity officer in 1992-97 and served on the two senior committees (General Purpose & Finance committee and now on the Judges Panel & Colour Standards committee [2nd time round]). I am looking forward to my presidential year commencing from 13th May. Was involved in writing the BS Colour Standards booklet in 1994 and recently updated the Budgerigar Matings and Colour Expectations book.

Was elected as the BS delegate to represent them at the first International Meeting in 1992, which became the World Budgerigar Organisation in 1994. I was the BS delegate till 1997 when I became the WBO secretary/treasurer.

Organised the first Specialist & Rare Variety Open Show in 1988 and have been show organiser and chairman of the show committee ever since. This national show attracts a total entry (with sales) of up to 1800 birds.

Chairman of my local club Croydon BS and their past president.

As you can see, I am a very much involved in the hobby as an active administrator and do all this work for free, my time does not allow me to go to work even if I wished to.

NT: Okay, you mentioned the World Budgerigar Organisation (WBO). Explain to me what it is and what advantage you see for a country to join? As you are aware, I have been against Australia joining the WBO as we are yet to put our own house in order. The Australian National Budgerigar Council (ANBC) is yet to be classified as this country's ruling body - although uniformity / common ground has been gained in lots of areas for all States / Zones through the

ANBC. Each State / Zone run their own affairs and are not answerable to the ANBC. Sorry for that Ghalib, now back to the question.

GAN: I hope that I will not bore you or your readers with my long reply but I think this needs a thorough explanation on how the WBO became into being and why the ANBC should consider the affiliation positively. The B.S. has held seven "World" Conventions since 1954, the last being in 2000. At each Convention, overseas fanciers from many countries have attended (2 from Australia at the Millennium Convention) and expressed a desire for the B.S. to take the lead to organise an International Organisation. This desire was based on the need for closer co-operation between countries due to the greater movement of birds and exchange of judges. The B.S. took this on board after the 1990 Convention and allocated the sum of £5000 to set up meetings of international representatives. Delegates from 15 countries attended the first meeting held in the UK in November 1992. And right at the outset those delegates decided that the International Organisation would operate in an Advisory Role and not in a Legislative Role and English would be the official language. Another meeting was held the following November to follow up on objectives, aims, priorities and recommendations put forward at the previous meeting on a variety of topics. At the November 1993 the historical decision was taken that resulted in the formation of the WBO to operate as from 1st April 1994. A draft Constitution was agreed upon with voting powers depending on the size of the society. The first meeting of the WBO was held in August 1994 in Germany and thereafter a meeting has been held every year either in Germany or the UK and on one occasion in Sweden, always coinciding with the hosting society's club show.

The major issues that we have and are still discussing now are; (remember the language barrier and distance involved) ideal budgerigar, colour standards, research, show cage, ring colour and specification, international judges panel, judges training, anti bird keeping lobby, watering at shows, bird movement between countries and many other topics.

On many issues the WBO has reached decisions for countries to adopt if they wish, bearing in mind that that the WBO has an advisory role. The way the WBO operates is that decisions reached by the WBO Council go back to member countries for ratification, approval or amendments. These come back to the following meeting of the WBO for final discussion and only then, after approval by the WBO Council, do they become WBO policy.

Now, because of the INTERNET, fanciers all

over the World, are able to communicate with each other much faster and easier and the message I get from some fanciers in Australia is the concern that Australia does not want to be dictated to by a foreign organisation or by Pommies. I would like to take this opportunity to alleviate all these concerns. First of all I can only repeat myself by saying that the WBO operates in an advisory role and in no way will it dictate its policies to member organisations. Secondly, the UK has 2 representatives on the WBO as any of the other 24 organisations so it is virtually impossible for such a thing to happen. The WBO has only two elected officers; a chairman (equivalent to your president) and secretary. Both are elected by the Council on a 2-year basis. Roger Carr (chairman) and myself are from the U.K. but, by the wishes from the Council, these two positions can be filled from any country.

When I attended the 1994 National at Perth as a lecturer, I was invited by the ANBC to attend their meeting to present the case of the WBO, which I did. Since then the WBO's previous secretary and myself (since 1997 when I took over that role) have kept in contact with the ANBC secretary and every year I send a letter requesting the ANBC to consider their position. They have had my letter already for this year's meeting. Unfortunately the answer has always been negative and the feedback I get is expressed in the concerns explained above.

I also get feedback from some fanciers that they are not happy that their State or the ANBC are not members of the World body and hence two small groups from two different States have affiliated. I have said to all officials that the WBO would like to see Australia as a member of the WBO through the ANBC. In its absence the WBO will accept membership from individual States and again from individual groups if their State is not a member. Also should the ANBC affiliate then the States or the individual groups will forfeit their membership.

Often the question asked is about benefits as especially in your case you are so isolated and far away from the rest of the world. Showing is only a small part of the Organisation's function. In joining, the ANBC will have a say in world decisions regarding our great hobby. You can influence decisions, ideas and practices that can be adopted worldwide. With no representation you have no influence. Australia is the motherland of the budgerigar, yet it is difficult to influence the fancy on the world circuit level at the present time unless you become a member.

We are about to complete the work on an International Colour Standards, not a British, German or French but an International Standard and Australia would have had a tre-



## Budgerigar Council South Australia



mendous input and influence in this area and I feel they could do so even now.

Exchange of Research material is of benefit to all budgerigar fanciers worldwide. I have, since my appointment as secretary in 1997, been able to obtain two research documents, which I have distributed to member countries for publication in their national magazines for the benefit of all their members.

As part of the WBO, your national judges will be included on the International Judges List often invited by other countries to adjudicate at their shows. At last year's B.S. Millennium Club Show I provided such a list and 6 out of the 17 judges engaged were overseas judges, including you Nigel. This will give Australia the opportunity to elevate their judges to a world level of great respect.

With all the lines of communication available to us these days the world is becoming so accessible that you, Australia, with so many votes to carry, could make contributions and influence WBO decisions regularly. I always remember the contribution Ann Spaak (New Zealand) made at the 1994 WBO meeting in Germany. Her (NZ) definition of the Ideal Budgerigar was adopted worldwide.

Although the WBO is young in age and only meet once a year we have made tremendous progress in this short period of time. We have issued a definition of the Ideal Budgerigar, a standard WBO show cage, formulated the Colour Standards, agreed to an international ring colour sequence, looked at ring specifications, formulated our resources to combat the anti bird keeping lobby, looked into ways to combat falling membership, watering of birds at shows, restrictions on bird movements across borders. And these

are just the beginning! Australia can influence all these issues but only if they are members. I could go on but I know I am passionate about this subject.

The next meeting of the WBO is planned for 5th November in Germany and I look forward to seeing representation from Australia at the meeting.

The essence is not on "What is in it for me?" but rather "What can I do to improve the situation?" I appreciate that distance is a factor, but New Zealand is that much further away and they are valued members and keen contributors to all decision making.

Well, that is enough about this subject and members and organisations within Australia need to review their concerns and think of joining soon. Again the WBO website can be accessed on [www.worldbudgerigar.org](http://www.worldbudgerigar.org) for further information.

NT: Now lets hear about your showing?

GAN: I have always been a very active exhibitor and in my early days of beginner, novice and intermediate I could easily show my birds up to 20 times a year. Now with mature age and costs, I, with Janice, only show 8-10 times and always at the BS club show (November) and the National (December).

I won my first well known special at the 1973 BS Club Show as a beginner; Best Crest & Best Recessive Pied. Since then I have those honours 8 times and 14 times I have achieved best crest at the National.

I have many records with these varieties:

The highest number of CC's won with crests

at all times and the highest crests registered as champions.

The only person to win best crest at the BS club show for 3 consecutive years (1989-89) with the same bird (crested grey green cock).

The only person to win best recessive pied at the BS club show for 2 consecutive years (1984-85) with the same bird (recessive pied cobalt cock) and the only person to win best pied in show at the BS club show in 1985 with a Recessive Pied, beating the best Dominant Pied.

Because of the above I became typecast as the Rare Man. This is because of 3 combinations - my name, the colour of my skin and the varieties I have been winning with since 1973. I was exhibiting the normal varieties as well, but Ghalib is the Rare Man as I was, and still am, the champion of their cause.

I have not exhibited a Recessive Pied in the past 3-4 years and breed very few each year (a change of direction).

In the last 10 years we have won many awards including Best Any Age in Show and Best Champion at the 1998 National with a light green cock. Winning BIS is one of our ultimate goals but the competition here is very stiff.

NT: Okay, lets get an insight into your stud.

GAN: Our stud consists of up to 250-300 birds housed in a 12x28 feet birdroom with outside flights of 6x24 feet. We have 40 breeding cages. We usually breed between 120-150 youngsters a year.



The stud consist mainly of dominant varieties (normals [including opalines and cinnamons], spangles, dominant pied and yellowfaces) with a few specialist & rare varieties (crests, recessive pied, dilutes, clearbodies, lacewings, greywings with the odd saddleback).

We utilise about 20 or more cages for the dominant varieties with the rest for the rare varieties. Janice and I get involved in pairing up the dominant varieties first and sometime it becomes hard because for example some of our best birds are spangles and we try to avoid using opalines or cinnamons as partners with them. When pairing up two factors come into the equation; visual compatibility and pedigree. We avoid inbreeding as much as we can even though this may not be possible at times.

We select the breeding fit hens and put them in their cages first for a few days. Three things that I do with the hens and subsequently the cocks are; trimming the feathers around the vent, cut long claws and put a drop of Ivermectin at the back of the head. During those few days with the hens in their cages we have the opportunity to catch up the cocks and start sorting them up to their best matched partners. There is no secret formula here but always avoid pairing dominant pied to dominant pied or yellowface to yellowface. After this task is completed I do the remaining pairing with the rare varieties.

Our feeding is not complicated as the seed we use is the one sponsored by the B.S. Before it was the Trill mix and now the Bucktons mix, which is very good. In the water I add products from the Vydex company, which consists of vitamins, probiotics and calcium powder. The soft food is rotated on a 4 day cycle with soaked millet sprays, soaked naked oats mixed with egg food, grated carrots mixed with egg food and hard boiled eggs then on the fourth day I give them tonic seed. Now I have started using the Frank Silva supplements with the soft food.

NT: Crests, how in the hell do you improve them? What are the best pairings?

GAN: Patience is a must in improving any rare variety. I have been associated with this variety since my early days and always have been in love with them.

There are 3 types of crest; tuft, half circular and full circular but without a doubt the full circular is the most appealing to fanciers and the public in general. The variety is semi-dominant in its breeding pattern as you can breed crests from crest to a normal pairing. However, you do not get the 50% theoretical expectation as you do from a spangle or dominant pied pairing to normal. This is the reason we say that the gene controlling the crest production is a semi-dominant gene. Also, we can obtain all the three crests in one nest from any type of pairing. Chicks bred from a crest to a non-crest are called crest bred not splits. I always found that the crest bred that have been bred from a full circular are most useful in increasing the crested percentage in the nest.

To improve the variety one always needs to dip into the normals as it is the only way to upgrade. I tend to pair quality normals to full circulars so that I can use the crest bred from such pairing back to full circulars. Sometimes you breed a bird with the odd feather appearing around the eye or a very weak tuft. I find these birds are of great value as I use them as crest bred paired back to tufts or half circulars. This way I try to strengthen the crested gene.

Again the Crested Budgerigar Handbook which I have written will be of great value to those who wish to take up this variety as a sideline. Remember the crest, as many other varieties, originated from Australia. There are many crested enthusiasts in Australia; I met a few on my last visit in 1994. Shiralee Reardon started a crested club in Australia a few years ago. Rob Hugo from WA has got some lovely crests as well as Frank Jefferies from NSW to name a few.

I believe both the club and the variety suffered for a few years from lack of recognition by the ANBC. It seems that the prejudice against the rares is universal.

NT: Ghalib, thank you for this very informative interview and I do wish both you and Janice the very best for the future. I do have one more question for The Rare Man, what would you recommend to any person starting out in the fancy in this day and age?

GAN: Our hobby is a fascinating one and can bring a lot of pleasures with tremendous social side to it. One's partner should always be encouraged to take part and be involved in the social side of the hobby as well.

It is important that at the start to set achievable targets and focus your energies to achieve them. At the beginning I suggest the newcomer to visit as many shows and aviaries as possible to establish what birdroom (size and design) and type of birds one would like to start with. It is always better to find a fancier that you feel comfortable with and try to be-friend him/her to learn the robes as they say.

When building your establishments try to start in a small way but with easy conversion for expanding. Again with the birds start with a few pairs from one source and for the first year or so try to learn as much as possible about the breeding problems, colour production and general birdroom management. When your feet are firmly on the ground then go to the exhibition side, if you wish to, and try to upgrade your stud. How awful it is if the first purchase is for exhibition material with a lot of financial outlay then the birds do not breed or die or whatever. We would have lost that newcomer for good.

As I said before this is a wonderful hobby and you can only get out of it what you are prepared to put into it. Don't just sit back and moan but be prepared to get involved and help. I know for sure you will reap the benefits eventually. ENJOY THIS LOVELY HOBBY.



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## The Pet Directory—An Insight

By Kim Cooney, Editor & Publisher of the Pet Directory

Dear Members of BCSA and Affiliate Clubs,

The Pet Directory is proud to become a sponsor of the Budgerigar clubs of South Australia through the BCSA.

On release of our publication for your state we will provide clubs with copies for use as show prizes. The Pet Directory makes a bright and interesting prize. It is a guide to products and services for the entire pet industry and includes directory listings for clubs, breeders, vets with their special interests for various species of animal, bird and reptile. The Pet Directory also contains articles written by specialist vets and other animal experts.

The Pet Directory is keen to promote the Budgerigar Fancy to the wider public and to put the general pet public in touch with the breeders through the clubs. We feel it is important to promote the Budgerigar as a pet and also to educate the public to the world of keeping Budgerigars and exhibiting them.

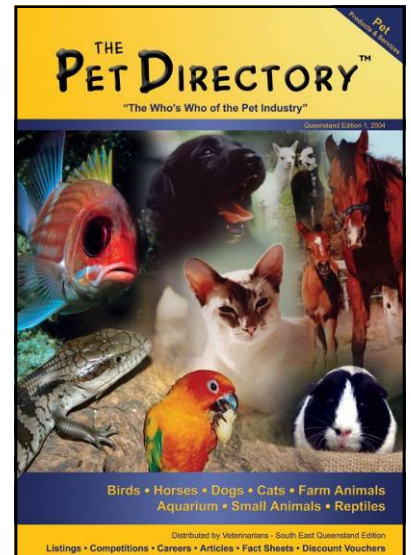
Quite often these days we see a range of larger parrots from Cockatiels to Sun Conures and lots in between featuring in bird and animal publications. The public are

becoming more aware of a range of birds that can be kept as pets or collections. We feel that it is important to continue to promote the beautiful Budgerigar as a wonderful pet and encourage people to learn about the range of mutations available and the points to look for in a good show class Budgerigar.

If the prospective pet bird owner is willing to pay \$10,000 for a pet African Grey then why not a \$500 or even \$5000 Budgerigar? This could only happen if we educate people about the Budgerigar and the high quality birds that are available in Australia.

We encourage breeders to place listings for their Budgerigars in The Pet Directory and thus make these high quality birds more available to the pet public as well as to other breeders. Our busy pet website is a great place to run a permanent listing for Budgerigars. I encourage breeders to list the varieties and colours and to offer birds across a range of prices.

Let's get away from the \$15 pet Budgie and give people access to the amazing birds that breeders in Australia have produced.



Please visit <http://www.petdirectory.com.au> and place a free listing for your aviary.

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The Pet Directory will also provide low cost professional Budgerigar Breeder Websites which once again are a great way of marketing your Budgerigars to the public and to other breeders.

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