



Official Newsletter of The Old English Game Fowl Club of Australia



February, 2015

A visit to the home of OEG royalty

Secretary Michael Paterson writes about his visit to Ewelme and Prospect Farm, the home of Herbert Atkinson, on a trip to the UK late last year.

I had the good fortune to return home to Scotland last August for my sister's wedding. Whilst it was not the best time of year to view game fowl, being late summer in the UK with the adult birds in the moult and the young fowl still growing, an opportunity arose that I could not overlook. My wife and children were keen to visit London and I reluctantly agreed on the proviso that I would be allowed to make a trip to the village of Ewelme – pronounced "You -elm" – in south Oxfordshire, about one hour North West of London.

The village was the home of Herbert Atkinson, whose paintings we have adopted as being the standard we should be trying to breed our game fowl to.

I am indebted to Carol Sawbridge, a local historian who I had made contact with before my trip and who I met in the village on a warm English summer afternoon, who gave me a memorable tour of the village.

History of Ewelme

Situated 15 miles south of Oxford and 50 miles North West of London, the village has a population of about 1000, and has a long and interesting history dating back over 1000 years. The village name derives from a fresh water spring which surfaces on the hill behind the village. "Aewhylme" is Anglo-Saxon for "water whelming". This spring was utilised to feed the watercress beds that developed around the village. This watercress was grown and sent to Covent garden market where it was sold for medicinal purposes up until the early part of the 20th century. The present day village church and some of the village buildings date back to the 15th century, including the "Alms-houses" adjacent to the church where the elderly-needy can live in return for services carried out in the church.

Herbert and his family

Herbert was the middle of three sons born to Doctor William Atkinson. Dr Atkinson was born in the nearby market town of Wallingford and lived and practised medicine in Ewelme for 23 years, and was also a senior justice of the peace. In Dr Atkinson's obituary he is described as follows: "The attention he gave to those who sought his aid, was given so freely, so conscientiously, so thoughtfully, so wisely, that patients felt it would be impossible to adequately reimburse him".



Herbert Atkinson.

VISIT TO HERBERT ATKINSON'S HOME – cont-

And also: "If ever a man deserved to be remembered as a good old English gentleman – it is Dr Atkinson".

Herbert's parents and elder brother George are buried in the local cemetery, whilst his younger brother Henry immigrated to Adelaide, and was married there in 1881 – some of Henry's descendants still live in Australia.

Herbert as we know remained a bachelor all his life, he served in the First World War and



ABOVE: The famous photo of Herbert Atkinson holding his Pile cock.

BELOW RIGHT: Herbert Atkinson with an Aseel cock in the 1930s.

returned to Ewelme, his home, after the war. He holidayed in the east during the British winter.

He died on January 3, 1936 in Ewelme – interestingly he does not appear on the burial records in the cemetery and there is no marked headstone to testify he lies there.

Herbert inherited his love of sport from his father, who had been a member of the first organising committee of the world famous Henley Regatta – a yearly rowing regatta still held today on the river Thames.

In Herbert's book "Cock fighting and Game fowl" an introduction memoir from his friend of over 40 years H.B Parsons described Herbert as a "naturalist, explorer, painter, sculptor and sportsman, he could cast a fly equally well with either hand, or in painting at the easel, could use either hand as he pleased".

His writings on game fowl arose out of practical knowledge. He had studied on the spot, in their native habitat, the jungle fowls of India, Ceylon and the Malay states. For many years he wintered in Ceylon or India. He was a fine horseman and at one period hunted regularly with the Devon and Somerset. He was a dead

shot with rifle or scattergun and a zealous fisherman. His artistic flair extended beyond painting game fowl, he was asked to paint King Edward VII's racehorse "Minoru" after it had won the English Derby in 1909. He also completed bronze and silver sculptures of racehorses.

An interview conducted by the historical society in 2000, with a local who had lived in the village all her life and remembered Herbert from her childhood, details how she recalls that he was a famous artist known for his cock fighting paintings and that he kept Game cocks in his back yard.

He was also remembered as an elderly Victorian gentleman who dressed with a high collar and wore a cravat and bowler hat. He was often seen around the village driving his pony and trap.

Herbert Atkinson's home – Prospect Farm

Prospect Farm was the name of the farm where Herbert lived. It is a double storey farm house set in about 10 acres of garden in Cottersmore Lane, which is a narrow peaceful winding laneway that sits on the edge of the village.

The surrounding paddocks were originally part of the farm but have been sold off over the years.



VISIT TO HERBERT ATKINSON'S HOME – cont-

The farm was for sale when I visited, due to the passing of its last owner, and despite being in need of extensive restoration, was for sale for \$3 million, a sum justified due to the size of land it sat on and its easy commute distance from central London.

As the property was vacant I was able to have a look around the grounds and sit in the garden and imagine where the chook pens would have been positioned, and Herbert tending to the birds.

There were several outhouses and stables in the grounds – several of great age which would probably have been constructed in Herbert's lifetime.



The gardens were full of old gnarled fruit trees – mainly apple and plum – and also multiple rose bushes of great age. Perhaps Herbert ate fruit from those trees while he tended his fowl, and wore a rose from those bushes in his lapel as he went around town.



Other owners of Prospect Farm

An interesting aside was to learn about the last owner of Prospect Farm who had recently passed away, and had lived at Prospect farm since the early 1980's.

He was Major General Logan Scott Bowden, who was awarded a CBE, DSO and a Military Cross and Bar. He had led a distinguished military career, which began by playing an instrumental part in the planning for the D-Day landings.

Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt had long been planning an invasion of Normandy, but aerial photographs appeared to show that large sections of the beach consisted of peat, which would be too soft for the military vehicles to traverse.

If the vehicles sank in the sand the soldiers would be gunned down by the enemy.

British military experts needed to know for sure what the make up of the beach was, and the only way of doing so was to obtain samples of the beach, label them and return them to England for analysis.

VISIT TO HERBERT ATKINSON'S HOME – cont-

At midnight on December 31, 1943, with another royal engineer, clad in only a thin rubber swimsuit, Scott Bowden swam the two miles ashore from a small boat, onto the German occupied Normandy beaches where the D-Day landing was planned for in the months ahead.

Their fate was uncertain but their orders were clear, to obtain soil samples of the beach to allow British scientists and military experts to plan how to land their tanks on the D-Day invasion.

Their samples confirmed the aerial photographs were correct – in places the sand was thin, below which was a weak peat material.

The samples allowed the planners to cope with the weaker than expected beaches – they sent ashore at the head of the flotilla “Bobbin” tanks, which lay out heavy reinforced carpet which helped spread the load of the tanks and troop carriers that followed.

Scott Bowden was in the lead vessel on the day of the landings, and went on to hold key roles in the British army both in the UK and overseas until he retired in the 1970's.

Reflecting

In closing, it was a memorable visit and one I shall never forget.

Whilst I do not think I will ever be able to afford an original Herbert Atkinson painting, I was fortunate enough to stumble upon a hand written letter on the internet that a bookseller was selling.

The handwritten signed letter details Herbert's acknowledgement for an order of 100 copies of “Life and Letters of John Harris” a book he had privately published.

This, together with the memorable visit to Herbert's home village, encourages me to continue to breed fowls as depicted in his paintings.



Colour prints of Herbert Atkinson's famous paintings of Old English Game are available through the club. Contact merchandise officer Terry Politch by emailing t.politch@endevour.com.au or calling 07 4661 4870.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Tim Polley

Hello members,

Welcome to 2015. I sincerely hope that this newsletter finds you all safe and well.

It is pleasing that there has been a reduction in the size and quantity of the natural disasters when compared to the summer period of the past few years. To my knowledge the fires in SA recently didn't impact on any of our members

or their families. Unfortunately there have been a few members effected by strong winds, however I believe thankfully there has not been any casualty to either man or fowl .

The weather down here in Cressy, Tasmania, has been very dry, windy and not the warmest for the summer so far, very disappointing but hopefully February is warmer and Tassie can have a taste of summer.

2015 is going to be another big year for the club and the return of the annual show to QLD. I know that the banana benders, especially Owen Glover, are getting very excited.

Owen has booked the Ipswich Golf Club for the reception and is currently looking into some accommodation options.

The show committee is engaged and getting well abreast of the needs for the Rosewood show.

Thanks Owen and Martin for being so proactive and starting early; it will make the lead up to the show run smoothly.

I have started planning for the 2015 show season with the club-sponsored Royal trophies organised and on their way.

Updating and preparing the schedule for Rosewood is progressing and if anyone is interested in sponsoring a class please contact me.

The Rosewood show committee is confident that we can crack 1200 entries. The current club record stands at Lismore for 1158 in total.

The first meeting of the year will be held at the Sydney Royal so anyone who wishes to attend is welcome, or if you have anything that you would like to see on the agenda for this meeting please forward it to Michael Patterson asap.

The Mel Pearson meeting room has been booked for 10am, Friday, March 27. The Mel Pearson Room is located in the Exhibition Building.

For those who aren't going to the Sydney Royal I look forward to catching up with you all at Rosewood, if not before.

As for the fowls I hope everyone has a couple of budding champions and is getting much enjoyment out of the hatching and rearing season.

Look forward to catching up with you all soon.



SECRETARY'S REPORT

Michael Paterson

Hi all, hopefully you all had a successful breeding season, and your young birds are coming along well.

I deliberately tried not to breed too many this year, as last year I had problems with overcrowding.

I had a couple of failures this year, one incubator got infected by bacteria from a rotten egg that oozed at 3-4 days. I removed the egg but did not

think of disinfecting the incubator or the remaining eggs. I subsequently lost 15-20 chickens at 3 days old – I think the bacteria left from the rotten egg entered the chicks prior to their navels sealing up.

The second failure was with a large Orpington hen that was set on fresh hay instead of straw and the eggs seemed to "sweat" excessively and did not develop. We live and learn.

We have had a reasonably cool summer in Victoria to date, but I am still misting all the birds every few days with the garden hose, as all my pens are fully roofed and I believe the misting helps the birds come through the moult.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – cont-

Feather pecking has not been too much of an issue this year with the young birds. As much as possible I feed on the ground and not in hoppers as this keeps the birds constantly looking for food and keeps them from getting bored, which I feel can lead to the feather pecking.

Owen and the Queensland team are making great in-roads with the organisation of the club's annual show to be held in Rosewood on July 18-19.

It promises to be a memorable event.

I am conscious though that the club is a national club and does not revolve solely around the annual show – the committee welcomes any suggestions of how we can embrace the needs/wishes of as many members as possible.

Best wishes for 2015.



EDITOR'S REPORT

Nathan Watson

It seems like only yesterday I was typing my last column for the newsletter, wishing all our members a wonderful festive season, and here we are already well into 2015.

It is looking like a fantastic year ahead for the club.

Over the past few months we have had a number of new members join, and welcome to you all, we hope you enjoy being part of this great club and the

camaraderie that it brings.

Everyone is especially looking forward to our annual show's return to the Sunshine State, with planning well underway to organise the Rosewood pavilion for an army of Old English Game entries and enthusiasts from across the country.

It will be hard to top the 25th anniversary show at Wyong last year, but I am hearing that is exactly what our dedicated Queensland members are aiming to do and are quietly confident there may be as many as 1200 entries – what a sight that would be.

I am one of those excited about the show and am looking forward to making the long trip from WA to catch up with old friends, meet many new faces and of course, admire the chooks.

I am also hopeful of being able to show a few, but there are many months ahead yet before I'll know whether I have any worth the expense of flying them such a long distance.

Having said that, the young ones out the back are bursting with promise and at this stage I am rather happy with last year's breeding. The oldest birds are maturing well and will hopefully be cherry ripe for the winter show season.

I hope you are all as equally excited about the potential of your young stock at this stage. It is always a tough time of year to assess their full quality as they are still growing, but as I have learnt the hard way over the years, there is nothing better than patience and giving them time to mature – an extra 6-8 weeks can make a world of difference.

It has been a very dry and windy summer here and I have been spraying all the birds regularly, which not only keeps them cool, but is also great for feather quality.

There have been a few bad bushfires too with the small town of Northcliffe in the South West evacuated as it was under threat and declared undefendable for several days.

Thankfully a large contingent of fire fighters from Victoria and New South Wales came over and helped save the town.

We should also tip our hats to the fire fighters who did such a great job saving so many homes from the bushfires in the Adelaide hills. Every summer, somewhere, fires threaten lives and homes and we owe our fires a great debt of gratitude.

As we approach show season, I again urge all our members to be mindful of putting some information together and taking a few photos for the newsletter.

We are a national club and are keen to share stories and photos of our members' successes from across Australia, and promote Old English Game that uphold the ideals of the Australian standard and Atkinson's plates, so send them in. Email words, results and photos to me at nwatson83@hotmail.com - they are all gratefully received.

Lastly, good luck to everyone exhibiting at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

MEMBERS PROFILES

Joe Hickey, Narembeen, W.A

My name is Joe Hickey.

I am 32 and I have been a member of the Old English Game Fowl Club of Australia for around 4 years.

I live near Narembeen in the WA Eastern Central Wheatbelt where I run our family's 13,000-hectare mixed-grain and merino farm with my brother.

I first had a few Old English Game bantams when I was about 10 years old but had to get rid of them as I needed to attend high school in Perth for 5 years.

I decided to get back into poultry about five years ago and purchased a few OEG bantams.

However, after learning a bit more about the breed and what they should be, I got rid of them all and started again. I purchased some wheatenens from Tim Polley and Tony Davis and have since got a few other colours from David Holden.

I now breed bantams in wheaten, grey, ginger, orange red, dun and am getting started in dark legged black reds. I hope to one day get into large OEG when time permits.

I attended the OEG Club show in Wyong in 2011 and thoroughly enjoyed seeing such a great line up of fowls.

I met many breeders and learnt a lot. I am hoping to get back over to another show in the next few years.



Joe Hickey holding a black red 1/1 bantam.



ABOVE: A pair of Joe's greys mated up during breeding season.

Although I don't show very much due to work commitments, I always attend the Game Fowl Club of WA annual show.

I am currently the secretary of this club, which sees a good line up of OEG at our annual show in Narrogin.

We have a great group of people involved in our club and have been lucky enough to consistently receive sponsorship from the Old English Game Fowl Club of Australia.

MEMBERS PROFILES – cont-

We are always keen to attract interstate judges and try to promote the Old English Game Fowl as outlined in the Australian Standard.

I can honestly say that if I had not joined the Old English Game Fowl Club of Australia and got to know some of its members, I would not have the knowledge or desire to breed the right type of fowl.

It is a great club and I look forward to being a part of it for a long time to come.



ABOVE: A very nice tassel Orange Red Bantam cockerel running with some of Joe's hens.
BELOW LEFT: A pair of Joe's Blue tail Wheaten hens. **BELOW RIGHT:** A D/L Ginger cockerel.



MEMBERS PROFILES – cont-**Owen Glover, Narangba, QLD**

When it comes to our breed the Glover family name needs no introduction having been in the breed for three generations spanning back to the early 1950's when the late George Glover first took them up and they have been in the family ever since with his untimely passing in 1992.

That passion has passed on to son Owen and grandson Jonathan.

In the 1960's George had a very successful stud of Brown Red large and won many shows around the Gympie area and that was where son Owen was introduced to exhibition poultry generally and in particular Old English Game.

Those fowls were a clever, active fowl full of game character as George never prescribed to the move towards the heavier fowl that we saw in that period of time.

He was very critical of the change at the time and his close association with Jack Trevethan over the years saw some healthy discussion on where the breed was heading.

In 1970, Owen started to keep fowls in his own right and of course chose Wheaten bantams acquiring early stock from Bill Mayer, a former patron of our club.

In 1975 he was introduced to the legendary Theo Gray and that was the forging of a wonderful friendship that led him to being given enormous support and help in establishing the line of Wheatens he still has to this day.

During those formative years George and Owen travelled extensively throughout the show scene in Qld and judged many shows together, visiting some of the great poultry yards of this country.

Looking back they were wonderful times.

Hours were spent in Theo's penning shed talking and listening as the rain fell – nearly every day of the year there – and running around Win Klepps place checking to see how many the snakes got the night before, looking in wonderment at the fabulous line up of game and soft feather breeds at Ian Benson's, and marvelling at the wonderful stud of Old English that Athol Pengilley had for many years.

Of course there were many others but one man was very special in the lives of the Glover family and that was the late Past President Doug Waugh, a real character and great friend to many of us. Boy they were great times in poultry generally.

Owen's involvement has been across several breeds and is a very respected breeder of Modern Game bantams, Langshan large and bantams, his core breeds which he always has kept, but has also enjoyed success with Australian Pit Game, Australian Game and Black Leghorn bantams in the past and currently is enjoying success with lines of large Columbian Wyandottes, Silver Laced Wyandotte bantams and Fawn and White Indian Runner waterfowl.

He advocates it is good to breed these different breeds to get a good understanding, breed them to a competitive standard and move onto something else.

That was done in Black leghorns and in a few short years he won Best in Show at the Ekka and then they were moved on. Similarly last year he achieved Reserve Champion Waterfowl at Ekka but the Indian Runners are staying for a while.

One of Owen's early judging appointments was doing the Hardfeather Bantams at Bangalow Club Show in 1977 with Theo in his hey day, eight in each class all like peas in a pod, surly old Theo his steward puffing on his pipe and a very young judge with you know what running down each leg.

What a baptism of fire, but it stood him in good stead for the future.

Owen went on to judge his first Royal Show at the age of 25 at the Ekka, Brisbane Royal, in 1986 and since then has done many Royals around the country several times including "Specials" at Sydney and Melbourne.

He has also judged several other prestigious events over the years including the 150th Anniversary Show of the Southern Tasmanian Poultry Club in 2000, the Year 2000 Victorian Championship Show in Melbourne, 2008 and 2012 Poultry Nationals at Canberra, Old English Game Club of Australia in 1993 in the company of Ivan Gillard and Reg Tutty.



MEMBERS PROFILES – cont-

Last year he had the privilege to judge at the OEG Club of Australia's 25th Anniversary Show at Wyong, the OEG Bantams at the New Zealand National in Palmerston North, and the wonderful Centenary Show for the All Game Club of South Australia.

In 1991 the family won 18 of the 23 major awards at Ekka, winning Grand Champion Fowl of show with a OEG Pile Hen, Reserve Champion Fowl of Show with an OEG Black Red L/L Bantam Cock, and Champion Softfeather Large and Reserve Champion Softfeather Bantam with Langshans.

To win the two pinnacle awards at a show against 2400 entries, both with Old English Game, and top it off with Champion Trio of show with Large Crele OEG, was a very special memory.

Sadly, George by this time was not in the best of health and passed away the following year after a long and illustrious career in not just Old English Game, but exhibition poultry generally.

As a boy Jonathan started to accompany his father to the shows and it was only natural that he would take up the flair for breeding and exhibiting poultry and, of course, the Old English Game have always been his favourite.

On a trip to Melbourne to judge, Owen sought a trio of Duckwing D/L bantams from Barry Bilton and to this day the line they have is still strongly based around the wonderful start that Barry gave Jonathan all those years ago.

Jonathan has enjoyed incredible success with them winning many times at major shows including Grand Champion Fowl of Show at Ekka in 2006 and Reserve Champion Fowl of show a few years later.

He is also currently breeding a line of Large Indian Game and loves their nature.

As a 14-year-old, Jonathan was asked to judge at the Alf Woods Testimonial Show which was a great honour and that forged a wonderful friendship with Alf and Barry who were there on the day.

This year Jon will be returning to judge at Essendon and no doubt these two old game cocks will have a guiding eye over him on the day.

Over the past 10 years, both Owen and Jonathan have judged extensively together around shows in Qld and northern NSW.

Whilst the family has won many major awards all over Qld, the Ekka is still pride of place and the one they have always strived for. For the Glover name to win in excess of 130 major awards, 9 Best in Shows, 11 Reserve in Shows, including the double on four occasions, is truly outstanding and one they are very proud of.

To see Owen work closely with his father in so many administrative roles including the local Caboolture Poultry Club, Langshan Club of Qld and State Association – the Feather Clubs Association of Qld – to judge in excess of 100 shows with his father all round Queensland and New South Wales for many years and to be privileged to share in those wonderful showing highlights already set out, is just wonderful.

To carry it on to the third generation with Jonathan and work on committees with him in club activities, to judge many shows with him and see Jonathan develop into a fine judge in his own



ABOVE: O & J Glover's light-legged Silver Duckwing bantam cock at the 2014 Ekka. **BELOW:** O & J Glover's Champion OEG Bantam, Ekka, 2009.



MEMBERS PROFILES – cont-

right and to share in the glory of winning at many of the leading shows in the state is most certainly the most moving part of the wonderful story of seeing the Glover family name in three generations hold pride of place in Qld poultry.

The family has been involved in our club for three generations now over the past 25 years and we look forward to seeing that name around for many years to come.

The family has been at Narangba now on their 7 acre establishment since 1978 and the former pens have recently been demolished and replaced with all new pens made from steel, three main rows of 18 large cockerel pens along with large rearing runs all under a lot of shade trees to cope with the hot humid summers.

The main bit of advice Owen always gives in his open way to fanciers is to keep things very simple in every way.

Breed the best to the best you will breed top quality fowls consistently that way.

Make a study of your fowls, understand the meaning of the standard and its intent, don't be hung up on one point and become a faddist.

In summary, success is brought about by those who are committed.

As they say, there are those that talk about it and others who do it, pretty simple one would think and yet so hard to achieve for many.

That was the best lesson George Glover passed onto his son Owen all those years ago, a lesson never forgotten.



*ABOVE: O & J Glover's Reserve
Champion OEG Bantam, Ekka, 2009.*

COUNTDOWN TO ROSEWOOD

Owen Glover

Well the Queenslanders are ready to go with the Annual Show at Rosewood now only a few months away.

There has been considerable interest shown up here and the word is that plenty will be coming out of the woodwork to support the first show to be held in Queensland for a few years.

Queenslanders will move heaven and earth to make the event successful.

That's exactly what the club wants, to have a great show and see anyone and everyone with Old English Game in the state to get right behind the show and to take on the cream of what the other states have to throw at us.

There are plenty of quality fowls in Central and North Queensland as well as down here in the SE corner, that I hope will make the vigil down, so don't come just for a look, anyone can do that, bring some fowls and test the mettle.

Martin Fullagher and the team are onto all the preparation of the pavilion, cooking duties and anything generally needed on show day.

Yours truly will be organising entries with some help, so we have a good team.

The town itself is only a few minutes out of Ipswich nestled in a very pleasant part of the West Moreton Region and you will have the opportunity to show at what we would all regard as the best Exhibition poultry facility in the country. The pavilion is only a few years old and the grounds are a real credit to the local Show Society and Council and within excess of 1200 purpose built pens all on rollers – there is no such thing as a bad pen, they are all top class.



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ROSEWOOD COUNTDOWN – cont-

With great administrative and catering facilities in the pavilion, it is the best of its kind in the country.

We have booked the Golf Club in Ipswich for our Saturday Night dinner and it looks to be a great venue at affordable prices.

Accommodation is best back in Ipswich where there are a million and one places to stay all within a few minutes drive of the golf club, just situated out of the city to the north.

Come and get right behind the show, we want to fill the pavilion and stage the biggest Old English Game Club Show ever held, and what a sight that would be, 1200-plus entries.

See you all there and if anyone has any questions, don't hesitate to email me on owenglover5@bigpond.com or give me a call.



ABOVE: Congratulations to Michael Hall and Melissa Rose-Bulke, who married on January 17 at St Pauls Lutheran Church in Hahndorf, South Australia. The bride arrived in a 1951 Rolls Royce owned by fellow fancier James Hawker. Around 130 guests attended including Malcolm Fuller, Anthony Klatt, Gavin Woods and Tom Bowden.