

## GEOFFREY ALAN POLLARD



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James Pollard, Nicholas Pollard, S. Kent Carnie, North American Falconers Association

**Renowned British falconer Geoffrey Pollard passed away at his home, "Endlands," outside London on the morning of Sunday, 15 October, 2006.**

With his good friends Stephen Frank and Roger Upton, this threesome has long been recognized as leading the revitalization of game hawking in the U.K. following World War II. Geoffrey's long-term (since 1965) honorary membership in NAFA recognized the fact that he also played a significant role in the development of the sport in North America —inspiration! Geoffrey was, from the early 1960's, an icon to those who were trying to see falconry on this continent go from a having to a hunting sport. Here was a falconer actually doing what those in this country wished to emulate; not only doing it but doing it to perfection.

In Geoffrey Pollard we found the consummate falconer, a man much admired, emulated, even envied by his peers. Though he had an interest in guns and, in university, in boxing, anything outside falconry was peripheral for him. First trained as a barrister and later as a successful solicitor, his legal career was simply a means to an end—to enable him to hawk at a standard that he felt appropriate: the best!

A "hard-core long-winger," a term that brought chuckles when I used it to describe him at his funeral, even that Americanism hardly does justice to his commitment to the sport. He had spent almost twenty seasons -- every season -- devoted solely to pursuit of red grouse by the time I first carried his cadge in 1967. And he continued to so spend every season since. He prized passage peregrines obtained post-season from the Middle East, flying first over setters and then, when he could no longer find his beloved Humphrey Laverack Llewellins, English pointers on the moors of northern Scotland. Early on I came to believe that with his single-minded commitment, should he break a leg while

one of his dogs was on point, he would fly the point before worrying about the leg. I never saw him break a leg but, bitten by an adder on the moor, his reaction was as I had suspected. An ambulance was awaiting him at the end of the tarmac, after he flew the point.

At his memorial service, I surprised some, describing Geoffrey as only half the falconer we all considered him. Surprised that is until we consider the whole Pollard team. It is doubtful if Geoffrey could ever have achieved all that he did in our sport without the constant support and assistance of his wife Diana (who predeceased Geoffrey by 10 months) and of their two sons Nicholas and James. Diana spent their honeymoon at a French falconers meeting and by the time I met them, she and the boys had never had another "holiday" (vacation) except carrying a cadge or on the end of the leash of a setter, pointer, or pair of flushing spaniels. That pattern continued throughout all their lives together. Diana served us lunch in the mews everyday, spent all afternoon totally engaged in the sport on the hill, then hurried home and while we had a beer or cider putting up the hawks, cooked delicious suppers, closed to the gratitude of all with her famed LMP (lemon meringue pie).

I like to remember Geoffrey as when we flew the last eight days of the 1969 season. With five peregrines on the cadge, in those eight days the team killed forty red grouse. Geoffrey -- with Diana -- set a new mark: not just with significant bags but in the level of passion and dedication -- a total devotion -- shown to our sport. With his passing, British falconry, American falconry, and indeed all the world's falconry, lost a great FALCONER.



*Consummate falconer, admired, emulated and an inspiration for the significant role in developing the sport in North America, Geoffrey is missed by all.*



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