

The British, are on their way to becoming an average Budgie breeding Nation.!

England is quite rightly called the motherland of the Exhibition Budgerigar. Throughout the world, one has to aim and organise their standard to that which the British model is based on. There, the Best Show Budgerigars in the the world have been bred.

The club show of the Budgerigar Society (BS) is held to date under the heading Budgerigar World Show. When I myself got into the hobby in the early eighties, there was a run on Budgerigars from England, which was fully underway at that stage.

Those who wanted to mix it with the best and stay at the forefront, came to England to buy, or he stuck to breeders who maintained close links with British breeders

But times are changing.

Today British Budgerigars are not in worldwide demand.

It is now openly stated in the English Budgerigar press:

Gwyn Evans who has for many years been the editor of British magazine BW and , who is well-connected in the British Budgerigar scene , stated in one of his monthly columns which I had recently read :

" For over 15 or 20 years British breeders Exported (per year), hundreds of Budgies, much more than any other race in the world." People literally raced into it !.

Today, the demand is limited to a very few interested parties. One hears only of a very few sales. On the other hand, every year hundreds of exhibits, are, imported birds from different parts of the globe. What reasons may well have played a role in bringing about such a situation.

The former Dominance of the British

Why, over decades, have the best birds in the world been drawn from England?, I have had this explained to me a long time ago, and it is this, that the British have just always had a particular weakness for the small animals.!

Many breeders are from families where there were already the father and grandfather expert in a particular area. e.g. dogs ,Birds, horses and so on.

They have a moderately well-organized association structure, and they love the sport and competition at shows. Today, however, I have a somewhat different opinion. Without exception the English breeders of past years cannot be denied anything,

I believe that global dominance is not usually connected with people. It was simply the result of the prevailing conditions.!!

I think two reasons are responsible.!! Firstly, the large number of breeders and second, a significant time advantage.

The Post-war period witnessed a huge boom in Budgerigar Breeding on the island of Britan .

In the Mid-fifties, the BS had about 21.000 members. There were numerous associations and a corresponding number of Exhibitions. Although the number of breeders from the sixties was steady at first, but then slowly but steadily they declined, but there was always a significant demand for domestic UK show birds.

In fact, in all the other countries, the interest in Budgerigars as an exhibition form developed later. At the outset it included, as compared to England only a very small number of people.!

For Germany very small groups had to be developed over the years and a lot of perseverance was needed. The fragmentation of the German breeders, with all its conflicts, can be attributed to several organizations, until the beginning of the seventies.

Without wanting to seem disrespectful, from today's perspective the work done before the war, i.e. development work on the show budgerigar was certainly important but not very spectacular.

Because we need only just look at pictures of the then heads of the birds. Significant changes in the direction of today's "Show Bird" only occurred with the first plumage mutation in the fifties, with long Flights!.

Now this took the Show Budgerigar breeding right up speed. In England the Budgie could be raised under the most favorable conditions, and over time, a number of elite breeders developed birds, all of which meet certain consistent characteristics.

These people understood how to cultivate their craft. They possessed the necessary business acumen and were able to produce year after year, large numbers, in the region of

500 to 600 birds or more. And the market was in place to sell a sufficient number of them. What's more is, some of the breeders could afford to deliver quality birds targeted only to certain groups of customers, and so many simply refuse purchase requests, despite the high bids. That was primarily not to leave the advantage to others. Due to this restriction, one had to be part of an exclusive circle of super champions, where you got access to valuable birds for out crossing. Just like with us today on the continent. The average quality of the top breeds is that high. They focused on a few color varieties. The Focus was for the most part on the normal bird. If such a leading breeder produced a valuable bird, they had more than likely more good average birds. It was also a bonus for them every year, evident from the number of super birds on the show bench. This worried many other breeders of birds, also in the "shop window", who were looking at full classes with barely any decrease in quality over the whole class.

It is not surprising then that all the major Exhibitions have been dominated by birds from the "Top Breeders". These shows attracted over time, more and more wealthy buyers from abroad. They knew exactly whom they were and which shows the top breeders were at. It was a real money spinner.

The old guard a thing of the past:

For several years, the British show scene, has presented its self to the observer with a different Budgerigar Image. Of course the British will continue to produce super-birds, but the full classes, with consistently high quality that one looks for at the club show? is mostly in vain. The existing top breeders respond to falling demand and produce much smaller quantities. One cannot speak any more of a real dominance of these breeders at the larger exhibitions. The sporting attitude of the people, "my friend at the exhibition", has remained. But it is much less than in the past

What names now fall off the tongue,?? Can you name some of the current top breeders from England, maybe apart from Freakley and Ainley.? Who, In this country they are probably the only outsiders known.

The world famous names from the sixties or seventies, like Bryan, Omerod, Sadler, Moffat, Moss, Finey, Kirby-Mason, Smith and Wainright, Amos and Thumwood, Jenkins, Lane, have long been, a thing of the past.?

Except for Mrs. Moss have all stopped on grounds of age. Most are now deceased. But what about the next generation, who had her show record in the eighties and nineties? These included breeders such as Piltington, Hallam, Byles, Sigston, Topliss, Attwood or last Silva.

With them and some others more obvious reasons must have existed , why they have either stopped completely or significantly reduced their stock.

Loss of members, falling demand.

Ultimately, it remains speculation, of course. But I think there are several grounds that have contributed to the situation that England now seems more and more a country with just average Show Budgies.

One of them may be, the diminished record number of Budgerigar Breeders. The B.S. still has about 3.000 members. not counted are the people who belong to only one national association and then affiliate for their rings. If this number is compared with other countries it continues to appear large, but the domestic demand for breeding stock still declines.

For the top breeders, there is no reason to produce large quantities. As a consequence, this also reduces the number of super birds, many of which have "Select" buyers. The foreign export market is almost completely broken away. Bird Sales outside Europe (North, South America, Africa) in the recent past, have practically been brought to a standstill. by restrictions due to avian influenza.

Golden Circle:

The Guild of the Top Breeders in Britain has had great lessons to learn from the exodus of birds the early nineties. The occasion was the Australian import ban which was repealed for three years for Budgerigars. For the local breeders this opened for a short time, the possibility of purchasing breeding birds from England and the European continent.

Of course, not everywhere or everyone was ordered from, but only exclusively those with "certain addresses". The whole thing was about Australian buyers, who commissioned it accordingly. These undertook to travel to Europe and visited the relevant breeders.

Birds were not immediately purchased. Instead, they gave orders for the young birds had to be then bred to that order. Then about Six quotas, that's a total of about 3.000 birds went to Australia. There were calls of "whopping great prices", although buyers would only see their birds after leaving the quarantine station in Australia for the first time. We hear a lot of very average Birds which were paid for and were the seller still made good money. What had expired, was basically anything but fair trade. But it was a profitable business for at least one side. I can very well imagine that one or two of the breeders in England had sold out there. Maybe even deliberately

In Fashion:

The main reason why British breeds are falling behind, but it could very likely a different one, is if you look at the typical English bird that has come over the years, it is a little out of fashion. On the continent however it is well known that a type emerged in the eighties, a new showy, very attractive bird that inspires the whole world, including the (most) British.!

It drew one utterance by Fred Wright in the "Budgerigar World" last year, "In the last 15 years, far more birds have been imported from Germany than the other way around". Accordingly we often hear that we have to go to Germany to "find quality birds to buy " For years, one can find in the English Press, Breeders ads, which advertised the fact that only "Mannes birds" are used in the stud, these adds are alongside others who feel it necessary to point out that they only use British bloodlines.

Sources: Fred Wright: Its time to stop exporting and concentrate on the UK fancy
BW December 2008.

