

## **What It Is Like To Be A New Club Rep On The Hawk Board**

My background in relation to the keeping of raptors spans about twenty years. The 'Hawk Board' was a creature that I was aware of without really understanding and didn't seem to massively affect the flying of my hawk in the north of England.

This was until I was asked to attend a Hawk Board meeting on behalf of the hawking club that I am a member of. Without ever having seen, let alone, read the minutes of previous meetings I was a little unsure of what to expect or what would be expected of me. So with no more planning than taking a notepad I decided to 'wing it'.

Fortunately after introductions it was straight into the business of the meeting. The level and scope of the discussions about issues surrounding raptor keeping and falconry was extensive and I realised that there was more to 'it' than my comparative little world. I also realised how many of the subjects forming the agenda could impact on my deep interest in my 'way of life'. After that first meeting my thoughts were spinning with everything that had been discussed.

The effort and involvement of the others at the meeting was apparent. I had not entered into a secret society, but was welcomed into a group that were dedicated and determined to defend the position of falconers and raptor keepers across the country. Without that group to represent and protect us I believe that we would not be able to continue to practise our interest in birds of prey.

My hope is that I can continue to be part of this group, representing the other members of my club and falconry acquaintances and to reassure those who ask 'What do the Hawk Board actually do?' My response now is 'more than you probably know'. That becomes the starting point for further discussion, which I am happy to be part of.