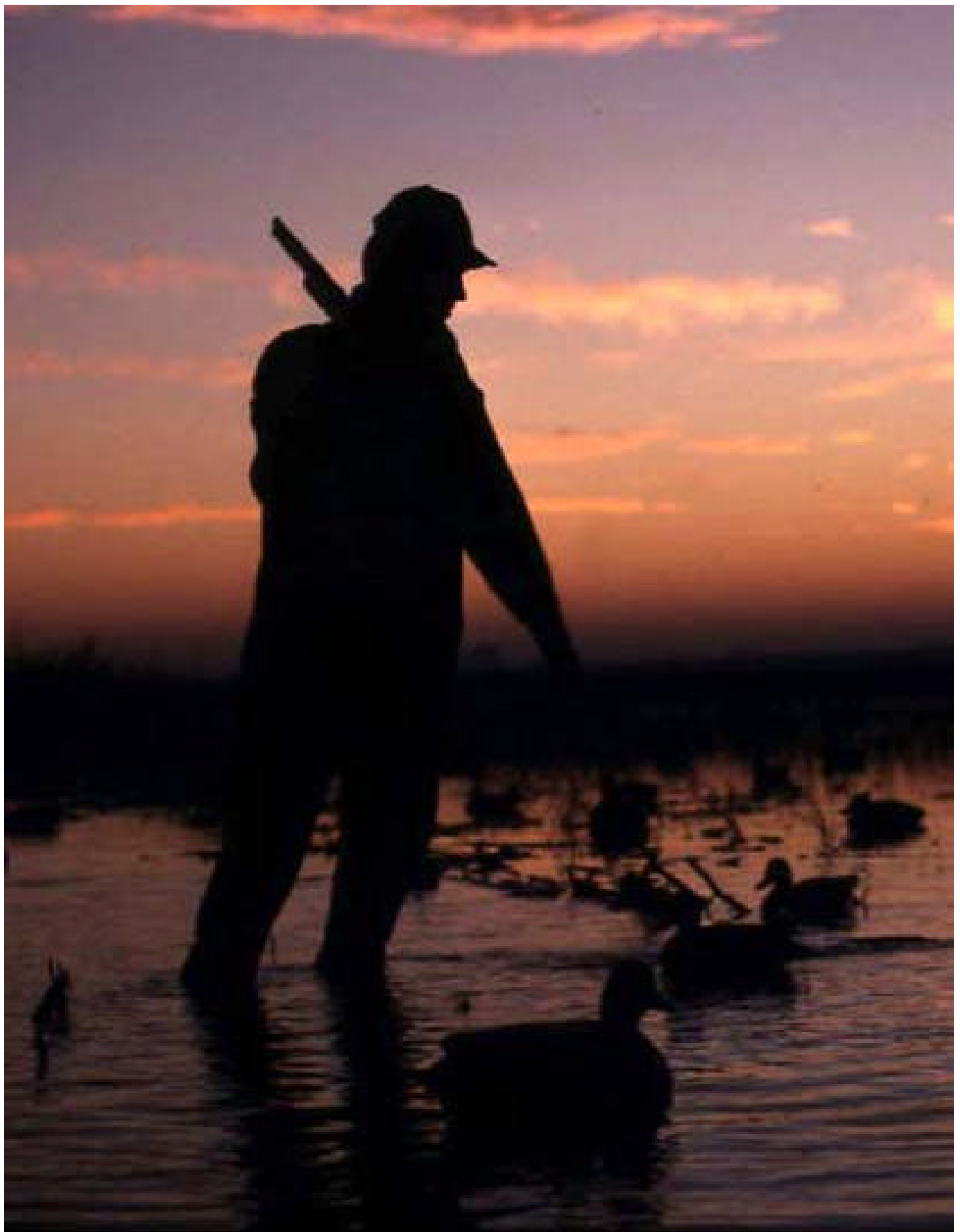


# The South Coast 'Fowler

*A Magazine for the South Coast Wildfowler*

*Issue No. 1 Spring 2001*



### In the Magazine :-

News From the Mill  
The BASC Council Elections  
A Morning in the Punt  
Changing Thymes ?  
Know Your Quarry  
An Image from the Past

### *Editorial*

**W**elcome to the first (and quite possibly the last) issue of The South Coast 'Fowler. The aim of the magazine is to keep you abreast of the issues that affect your sport and, to hopefully entertain you into the bargain.

The last season is well behind us now, as are the AGMs of the various clubs, so perhaps this would be a good time to sit back and take stock of where wildfowling in our area is going, especially in the near future.

There is currently a whole raft of legislation being formulated, which could have far-reaching effects on wildfowling generally, and sport on the south coast in particular. The club committees are doing their level best to deal with this, with assistance from BASC at the national level, but inevitably they are struggling because of regular club commitments and a lack of expertise on the committees.

Certainly in the Langstone club more and more committee time and effort will have to be devoted to keeping abreast of the paperwork which is now being pushed in the direction of the wildfowling clubs. It is becoming a problem to simply keep aware of what may have far reaching consequences for the sport in the future. I'm afraid we ignore all this stuff at our peril.

If you think that you can assist your committee in any way then please don't hesitate to contact them, I'm sure they would be grateful. Go on don't be shy! Pick up the phone and do your bit for your sport, or else it may not be there in the future.

**Clive Elliston**

### What's Your Dog Fit For ?



**T**his picture depicts the conclusion of a good retrieve, but dog work like this doesn't come about by accident. Don't forget to keep your faithful hound's training up to scratch during the close season, especially if you expect good results come September.

Unlike your gun, you can't just forget about the old pooch until the season comes around again. A little training now and again will help to stop the standards from slipping; it will also help to ensure that a degree of fitness is retained. You can't expect good results at the start of the season if your old mutt has become a couch potato during the summer.

It might even be worth thinking about a change of diet, perhaps to a food with a reduced protein content, this can also help to keep the waistline down to a reasonable level, the dog's that is, it will do nothing for yours. A few less pints may well be the answer to your problems!





## News From the Mill

A recent re-organisation at Marford Mill has resulted in us losing our permanent regional office, and with it our Regional Officer in the southeast. This may be viewed by some as a backward step by the BASC hierarchy, but we'll have to wait and see on that one. In the meantime we are back under the guiding hand of John Dryden down at Smokey Bottom in Somerset.

We also have at our disposal the services of a new man, David Knowles, who will be working closely with John but based in our immediate area.

David recently attended a LADWACA committee meeting to introduce himself and offer his services, should we need them. So don't hesitate to contact him if you need advice or assistance, after all we are paying his wages.

Here are his contact details.....

Phone : 01798 865165 Fax : 01798 865065

Mobile : 077 3312 3333

e-mail : [davidk@basc.demon.co.uk](mailto:davidk@basc.demon.co.uk)

## Conservation Conversation

What on earth is this you may well ask; in fact it's a new initiative from the boys and girls at the Mill. They are now issuing an electronic newsletter by e-mail. It is intended to keep the membership informed on what the conservation team are up to.

It lists, in diary form, what's going on and where, in fact it shows exactly how they are trying to service our needs. So, if anyone out there would like a copy so they can see for themselves, then let me know.

**Clive Elliston**

## Are You Online Yet ?

*Yes the Internet! Now you may be wondering what the hell this has to do with wildfowling. Well, you may be pleasantly surprised once you start surfing the World Wide Web. There is a whole galaxy of information out there waiting to be tapped. The hardest bit is sifting out the dross and finding the stuff that's of interest to wildfowlers.*

*For example, all the powder manufacturers have web sites, so there's plenty of data out there for you home-loading buffs.*

*To start you off here are the addresses of a few useful web sites.*

[www.chwa.org](http://www.chwa.org)

CHWA web site

[www.basc.org.uk](http://www.basc.org.uk)

BASC web site

[www.ducks.org](http://www.ducks.org)

Ducks Unlimited

[www.alliantpowder.com](http://www.alliantpowder.com)

Reloading Data

[www.hodgdon.com](http://www.hodgdon.com)

Reloading Data

[www.game-conservancy.org.uk](http://www.game-conservancy.org.uk)

Several wildfowling clubs have their own web sites, most of which can be accessed from [www.wildfowling.com](http://www.wildfowling.com) which also has links to other useful sites.

## Vale Pigeon Equipment

Manufacturers of quality products including ;-

Hide Poles – Floaters  
Landers - Lofting Poles  
Hide Pole Bags

**Contact 01386 561241**

Vale also manufactures short telescopic hide poles especially designed for wildfowlers.

[www.tmbdesigns.clara.net](http://www.tmbdesigns.clara.net)



## BASC Council Elections

**D**uring the coming weeks all wildfowlers will be receiving the latest issue of the BASC magazine, and with it will be a voting nomination form. You know, the form printed in green, that you normally chuck straight in the bin along with the draw tickets!

This form lists the candidates willing to stand for election to Council, and assist in the running of BASC. To most of you, I'm sure, this is pretty boring stuff, but please read on if you value your sport.

The individuals that you elect are there to represent your interests on the BASC Council. Without wishing to be in any way divisive, it must be realised that other sections of the shooting community have different priorities to those of wildfowlers, indeed they may have another agenda altogether.

I'm urging all wildfowlers to vote this year, even if they have never bothered before. We have four blokes standing for election now who really do have the interests of wildfowlers at heart, and who will do their utmost to ensure that our needs are kept at the forefront of BASC's thinking. Who are these paragons I hear you ask?

**Lee Freeston** needs little introduction; he is Chairman of CHWA, and a member of the BASC Wildfowling Liaison Committee, where he has already been representing wildfowlers interests for some time now.

Lee is a keen and experienced wildfowler as well as being an enthusiastic punt-gunner. He belongs to at least five wildfowling clubs, two of which are in Scotland, where he makes regular trips every winter. He is also a knowledgeable home-loader, and has developed some devastating non-toxic loads, especially for the 10 bore.

It must also be remembered that it was largely due to Lee's initiative that CHWA managed to purchase nearly seventy acres of salt marsh in Chichester Harbour, thereby becoming landowners in their own right.

The next candidate of note is **Simon Breasley**. Some of you may already have had dealings with Simon during his time spent at BASC, when he headed-up the Conservation and Land Management team.

Since leaving BASC, Simon has set up his own business, Thyme Consultants Ltd. He is now putting his experience from both BASC and Scottish Natural Heritage, his previous employers, to good use by offering an independent consultancy service to wildfowling clubs.

Many clubs simply don't have the time and expertise to deal comprehensively with the tangle of legislation resulting from SPAs, SSSIs and Ramsar designations, let alone Regulation 33 and the

proposals currently emanating from Europe. Simon has both the knowledge and the ability to guide clubs through this maze of bureaucracy with a minimum of heartache and hassle.

**David Frost** is another candidate standing for election to council whose wildfowling interests are well to the fore, he is a long-standing member of CHWA and has in the past done much to promote the image of the association. David is firmly against further restrictions on firearms ownership, and views opposing any future unwarranted legislation as a priority.

David also believes that more youngsters should be encouraged to participate in field sports, without whom the future would be bleak indeed. If David were elected his experience of working in the media would be put to good use in promoting the image and cause of wildfowlers and BASC; so here's another guy to vote for!

Last, but not least, is **John Graham**, who is standing for re-election. The current chairman of the Dee Wildfowlers' and Wetland Management Club; he is also chairman of the North Wales Joint Council of Wildfowling Clubs, a member of the BASC Wildfowling Liaison Committee, and a member of both the BASC Research Advisory Committee and BASC Land Management Advisory Committee, it's amazing what you can find time for when you retire early!

John was also responsible for originating the Percival Report, which is an independent in-depth study of wildfowling on the Dee Estuary that proves that wildfowling is a sustainable activity. This is a benchmark report and is of significant importance to all wildfowlers, with ramifications far beyond the shores of the Dee. John has also been instrumental in producing several other forms of scientific data that may become the standard when reviewing wildfowling consents and sustainability.

Lee, Simon, David and John have much valuable expertise to offer the BASC membership, especially wildfowlers, and I can do no more than to urge you to vote for these four characters, even if you don't vote for anyone else. Remember that BASC started life as an association for wildfowlers, lets try and keep our interests well to the fore.

This is one thing you can do towards safeguarding the future of your sport and it wont even cost you a penny, because the ballot form is postage paid, which should please all you tight-wads out there!

**Use your vote wisely and effectively!**



## A Morning in the Punt

*I*t was pitch black, and very early, as we began launching the punt. Then we noticed several cars pulling into the car park, always suspicious at this hour of the day. I told Nick that I would quickly check up on what was happening.

No problems, it was the local angling club arriving early for a competition, with our minds at ease we continued with the launch. We had little time to lose, with the best part of four miles to row before we could expect to begin punting in earnest.

Nick and I have punted together often during the last few years, and we have a practised routine where I push the punt and he sees to firing the gun. The system works well, and this is how we intended to operate today.

After we had been out for a couple of hours we spotted what Nick thought was a small raft of Brent geese. Although with dawn barely having begun to break, and the birds being about five hundred yards away, we were unsure. I was secretly hoping that they would turn out to be mallard, but even through the binoculars neither of us could be sure.

We decided to begin stalking, just in case. Things were going well, until we went aground on a shingle bank. Nick took advantage of this to glass the birds again, and was delighted to announce that they were definitely mallard, about twenty of them. But we could do nothing until the tide had flooded enough to lift us over the shingle bar; this is the frustrating part of punt-gunning.

The wait seemed like an eternity, but eventually, with a big push, we were off again. Then I started to loose the bottom with the setting pole, as we crossed a flooded channel. I switched quickly to the sculling oar; you need to master more than one technique in these southern harbours. Shortly I had to revert to the setting pole again as we began crossing the mudflats once more.

We were closing down our quarry all the time now, but we still had some yards to go. I nudged Nick and he eased back the hammer on the old muzzle-loader, made about a hundred and fifty years ago just along coast. Now the gun was cocked we could feel our hearts pounding on the floorboards of the punt.

Would they sit tight for just a few more seconds? This is often the critical point in the stalk; it only takes one bird to be slightly more nervous, or more aware, than the rest, and then all the effort would have been wasted.

We were almost there, when, suddenly, with a slight rasping sound the forward momentum slowed, we were almost aground! Then the big gun roared, and we were peering through the huge cloud of black-powder smoke. With little time to think Nick grabbed for the cripple-stopper, whilst I made for the birds laid on the water.

Now, the excitement over, we congratulated ourselves on a solid shot, nine mallard. Then we carefully stowed the gear away, and settled down for a well-earned coffee and a smoke.

After finishing our short break we decided to reload, just in case we came across the chance of another shot on the way back. It is quite a task to reload the big gun whilst afloat, but we have devised a routine that works for us.

Once the gun was loaded we decided to put the sail up, sometimes it's nice that the prevailing wind is southwesterly. We hoped to make it most of the way back to the slipway before needing to get the oars out again.

We had not been heading back long when Nick spotted a small bunch of wigeon in the distance. We quickly discussed the possibility of trying for them, but as it had been light for sometime now we thought we would leave them undisturbed, perhaps for another day. As it was we were both content with the morning's sport so far anyway.

There had been a remarkable sunrise during the stalk, and we were both sorry that we did not have a camera with us. It would have been lovely to have a photograph to remind us of that morning's sport in the punt.



**Allen Musselwhite**



## Changing Thymes ?

**T**hyme Consultants Ltd. is the brainchild of Simon Breasley, formerly head of Conservation and Land Management with BASC. The company is now able to offer a variety of services to wildfowling clubs around the country.

Some may argue that these services should be provided by BASC, but their role is perhaps more of a strategic one, with clubs, backed by professional advice, getting on and managing their own patch. BASC has neither the time nor the manpower to provide the in-depth service to all that the current legislative climate demands.

Simon's company also offers a "Retainer Package" for wildfowling clubs, which offers the following benefits :-

Contact point for statutory authorities regarding club Business.

Telephone / e-mail advisory service for minor issues and general advice.

Quarterly newsletter (**Thyme & Tide**) and regular updates and advice regarding current issues.

General overview and advice regarding club forward planning and strategy (e.g. land / rights / finance)

A guaranteed service arrangement for additional contract requirements – availability, promptness of response, quality assurance and cost framework.

Availability for representation of club interests at meetings with statutory authorities.

To focus on just one piece of new legislation for a moment – CROW Act 200 – how many clubs are fully aware of the ramifications of this new act? Few I would guess, yet, as with all legislation, ignorance is no defence. In the first issue of the company newsletter, **Thyme & Tide**, Simon highlights some of the points that could impact on wildfowling and their clubs.

A new procedure for notices and consents.

A clause to stop "time-out" (default) consents.

A power of compulsory purchase for English Nature (EN) – this includes crown land.

A power to create by-laws to protect SSSIs for EN.

The ability for EN to time limit consents, subject to conditions.

The ability for EN to review, revoke or modify all existing consents.

**Without exception, all wildfowling on SSSIs in England now requires a written consent from EN.**

This example demonstrates just how much we need to keep up to speed with new legislation in order to protect our sport. If you feel that your club could benefit from this level of expertise then don't hesitate to contact Simon at Thyme Consultants Ltd, Bardrishaig, Isle of Luing, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4TX Phone / Fax 01852 314102 e-mail : [Thyme-Consultants@barclays.net](mailto:Thyme-Consultants@barclays.net)



**THYME  
Consultants**

### *Services Offered by the Company*

**Land Agency      Management Planning      Project Management and Coordination**

Habitat Management and species advice including habitat creation and restoration projects

**Guiding and developing grant and lottery applications for land purchase and other projects**

Positioning with landlords and other organisations regarding new and existing rights and privileges

**Negotiation of purchases, leases or licences of land and sporting rights**

Scientific and technical support including report critique, survey and monitoring advice

**Countryside law legislation and regulation and the implications of statutory land designations**



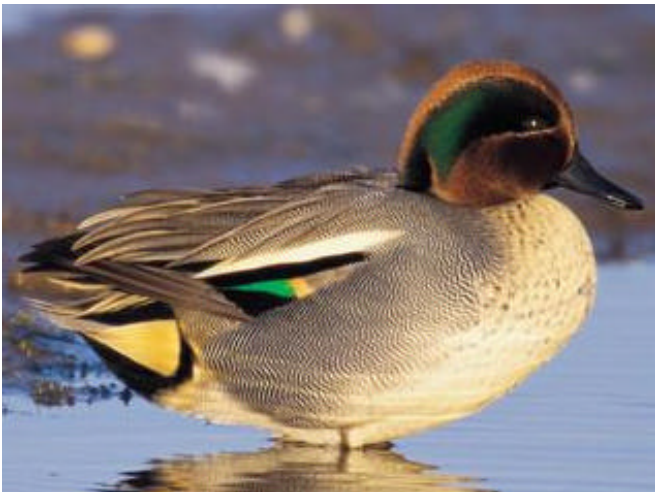
## Know Your Quarry

*E*very wildfowler, from the beginner upwards, knows this duck, don't they? Of course they do, it's a cock teal, or *Anas crecca* if you want the Latin name.

This small duck is a popular quarry species with wildfowlers on the south coast, indeed across the country. It breeds in this country, but autumn sees a regular influx from abroad to augment the resident population.

If, when you are on the marsh, a duck zips past in the dark at head height, and doesn't even give you the opportunity to raise your gun before it disappears, then this is more than likely to be the culprit. Teal frequently fly low and fast, but they are equally adept at "springing" vertically into the air. Their variety of aerial manoeuvres ensures that they are a popular and sporting quarry, and a satisfying one to put in the bag.

If you manage to actually hit one of the little buggers then you can look forward to enjoying them just as much on the plate, for they make excellent eating, but you will need at least one per person!



### Fowler's Tip

*If you intend to sit down when shooting on the marsh, then take something waterproof to sit on. A case of 'fowlers bum is not very pleasant, or so I'm told!*

## Use Them or Lose Them !

*W*hen you purchase a new gun, or a 'fowling coat, where do you shop? Do you part with your cash at a country show, or the Game Fair? Do you seek a bargain from one of the mail-order outlets? Or do you support your local gun shop?

Sadly there are few gun shops in the area these days, I can think of Chichester, Portsmouth, Winchester, Botley, and Ringwood. Yet only a few years ago you could have added West End, Totton, Fareham, Gosport and Brockenhurst to that list, but I'm afraid they've gone for good now. The last gun shop in Southampton city centre closed down in the mid eighties.

The recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease will be hitting these guys hard because of the reduced shooting opportunities available. If folk aren't visiting to buy cartridges then they won't be making impulse buys either, and with few clay grounds open I doubt if even the clay boys will be swapping their guns as frequently as they usually do either.

Personally I don't fancy having to drive miles to find a gun shop, so I'll be shopping locally from now on, and doing my bit to retain our surviving gun shops as long as possible.



### Test Your 'Fowling Knowledge

1. Stanley Duncan founded BASC, which other Association did he help found?
2. Which sub-species of goose was first identified by Peter Scott & Michael Bratby?
3. The *Spartina* that now colonises many mud flats is a hybrid, but where did it originate?
4. Who or what is Irish Tom?
5. What is traditionally used as wadding in a punt-gun?



## In Image from the Past



## About the Magazine

*The views expressed in this magazine don't reflect the views of any wildfowling association or club, they are simply the way I see things at the time of writing. Naturally any articles attributed to a particular contributor will necessarily reflect their views and opinions, which may well differ from mine if I know anything about wildfowling, because they do seem to be such a self-opinionated bunch of buggers.*

*If any individual, or association, wishes to have any material published in the magazine then my contact details are listed below. Of course the decision to print, or edit, submitted material rests entirely with me; although I would like to see this become an open forum for a frank exchange of ideas and opinions from among the local 'fowling community.*

*For numerous reasons I believe that local wildfowling associations will be working together far more closely in the future than they have in the past. I hope the magazine will help to facilitate closer contacts between the clubs, and their constituent members.*

*I hope to publish the magazine four times a year, with the next issue being shortly before the start of the coming season. If you wish to contribute anything then please try to get it to me as early as possible. Please feel free to contribute articles, letters, photos and items of news; in fact anything that you think may be of interest to other wildfowling in the area.*

*If you have any comments on the magazine or its content, then let me know, good or bad, I'm open to constructive criticism!*

*Please send all communications to the following e-mail address : [southcoastfowler@usa.net](mailto:southcoastfowler@usa.net)*

*Further copies of this magazine may be downloaded from the*

*Chichester Harbour Wildfowling Association web site [www.chwa.org](http://www.chwa.org)*

*This magazine is produced in PDF format – you will need Acrobat Reader to view it.*

*Acrobat Reader may be downloaded free of charge from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)*

