***EVERY BREEDER NEEDS TO BE A JUDGE***

**Courtesy Budgie News. March/April 1963**

**ABILITY TO ASSESS  INVALUABLE WHEN BUYING NEW STOCK**

To a large extent every breeder must be a judge of birds in order to know what to buy, which birds to pair together and the best stock to retain. Like everything else, the ability to judge birds comes with experience. Gradually, and imperceptibly a beginner will find the image of the ideal bird being imprinted in his mind and forming a yardstick against which any bird can be compared.

But to achieve this faculty he must, like a cricketer, "get his eye in'. For this real practical experience is essential you must see birds, and you must know what you are looking at.

A textbook can enumerate the points of a show specimen, but to recognize these points when you see them is a different matter. This is where the local societies give sterling service. Membership of the local club will, for a start, introduce the beginner to all the local fanciers who will be only too pleased to show him their birds and explain their various points of merit. This will give the newcomer some idea of exhibition stock and he is bound to gather a good store of knowledge about the characteristics which go to make a good bird.

**SHOW BUSINESS**

Then there are the table shows and nest feather shows which most societies stage, which take the novice into the first stage of the show business. These small shows are usually light hearted affairs put on to stimulate interest among the members and provide fanciers with an opportunity to give their birds a trial run. It is at these events that the beginner can best try his birds. In the intimate and friendly atmosphere of such shows he will find plenty of fanciers with whom he is already acquainted to have a look at his birds and explain to him precisely how they compare with other exhibits. Once a little experience is gained at the smaller shows the desire will soon come to venture into the field of the open fixtures. At the larger shows, where more birds are in competition, the degree of difference between each is usually less pronounced and the art of judging will be more clearly demonstrated.

At first the beginner may not quite understand why certain birds have scored over the others, but he should never return home a puzzled man. If he will but seek out the judge and ask him for his advice on the matter he is almost sure to be treated to a comprehensive impromptu lecture on the finer points of judging. Under this expert tuition he will soon begin to see those little characteristics, the sum total of which clearly makes one bird a more perfect specimen than the next. From a half-hour tour of the show with a good judge, the beginner will learn more than if he read every book on the subject and wandered round the hall for a week on his own.

**PERSONAL ADVANTAGES**

So far in this article I have tried to explain the precise personal advantages a beginner will gain by joining his local society, but there is another important, though less obvious reason why he should do so. Except for the National Exhibition, and a few shows staged by specialist societies, nearly all shows up and down the country are promoted by small clubs. If these societies fail through lack of local support then bird shows in our home towns will be a thing of the past. This will bring about a decline in our present high standard of exhibition stock. Another factor also not to be ignored is that with the end of exhibitions the majority of the general public will never see the wonderful spectacle of an amassed array of high quality birds which, in turn, will mean that fewer people will be attracted to the hobby. If this should happen it would be a big setback to the fancy.

**LEFT TO THE FEW**

Many beginners and even some experienced fanciers, are all too happy to leave the local club to a few, but for a society to be successful, it is essential that every breeder in the area should give it his utmost support.
Whatever your trade or profession, there is a niche for you in every society. Especially at the times of a club show it is up to all fanciers to rally round. A man used to office work is an invaluable assistant to the secretary at this time, while carpenters, electricians and decorators can employ their skill to the full in arranging the show.