

## FROM OUR ROVING REPORTER, MATT RUSSELL

On the way home from work I dropped in to see Jack, who is almost certainly our member with the longest term of membership, as he joined the society just after returning from the second world war. He first got in to birds when he was a child and then got more serious about it when he returned from the war. He started with Bourkes and the collection grew from there. He still has one of the aviaries he had as a child, which he moved from his parents' home to his present house in the 1950s, it is now used as a holding cage.



JACK

Upon seeing Jack's record books and chatting to him I came to realise that he has kept over 40 different species, managing to breed all but one of these. Not being one to give up, Jack is still trying to breed the species.

Some of the birds he has kept in the past include:-

Parrots: Hooded, Golden-shouldered, Elegants, Regents, Mulgas, Turqs., Blue-wings, Superbs, Princess and Rock Parrot.

Rosellas: Northern, Adelaide, Eastern and Western.

Finches: Masked, Long-tail, Pictorellas, Stars, Emblemias, Double-bars, Cubans and Yellowhammers.

Plovers: Masked and Banded.

Pigeons: Green-wing, Bush Bronze-wing, Flock and Spinifex.

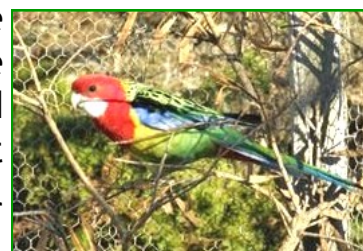
Quail: Black-breasted and Little Button Quail.

Nowadays his collection is made up of Golden-shouldered Parrots, Hooded Parrots, Eastern Rosellas, Blue-wings, Scarlets, Bourkes and a good number of Cuban Finches. He keeps these birds mostly for their ease of keeping.



CUBAN FINCH  
*Tiaris canorus*

He would not mind getting some Rock Parrots again and maybe even some Purple-crowned Lorikeets but as they might increase the workload, he will stick with what he has for now.



EASTERN ROSELLA  
*Platycercus eximius*

Over all the years he has bred birds the ones he has enjoyed keeping the most have been those he has had the most success with. These being Yellow-rumps, Diggles, Northern Rosella and the Hooded Parrot. He has had trouble with Button Quail but has managed to breed a lot of them.

To control rodents he runs chickens between his fence and the back of his aviaries, this also helps to keep the weeds down and provides he and his wife with fresh eggs. One of the things I most liked about his set up is that there is no wasted space. If it's not an aviary, or chicken yard, there is Silver Beet growing. This is grown almost everywhere and helps keep down the cost of feeding his birds, plus there is always some available even when it is out of season in the shops. (Also when cooked up with a bit of cheese it's not a bad side dish if you ask me.) The Silver Beet is a regular part of the diet Jack feeds his birds. To reduce his work load he feeds a seed mix in hoppers large enough to see his birds through a week. Jack likes to provide his parrots with fresh branches; this gives them something to chew on and keeps them busy.



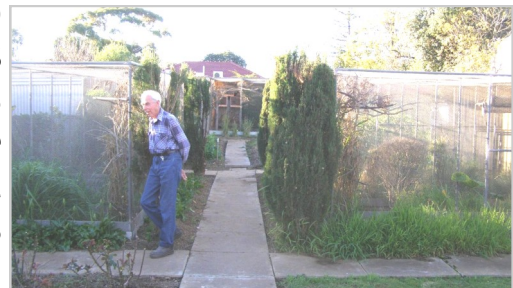
NO WASTED SPACE HERE. IF IT'S NOT AN AVIARY...GREEN FOOD IS GROWN

Jack has a simple but effective way of separating his birds without parting them. In a number of his larger aviaries, he keeps large breeding cabinets, these housed some of his Cubans when I was there. People like Jack are really the backbone of our hobby. The work he has done in his aviaries is, I feel, closer to conservation than bird-breeding, as he has kept the gene pool of a lot of his birds going for over forty years. If you keep some of the species Jack has kept, it would not surprise me if they are descendants of birds he has bred.



Jack, I would like to thank you for letting me see your aviaries, and allowing me to share your experience with other members. Keep up the great work you have been doing.

If you would like me to tell your avicultural story, please call me on 0422660955, or e-mail me at: [tara\\_matt@hotmail.com](mailto:tara_matt@hotmail.com). Complete confidentiality as to your identity and whereabouts is guaranteed.



AN OVERALL VIEW OF THE AVIARIES