

# ABOUT WEXFORD BFCC



The town of Wexford has long associations with the sea, a strong maritime history where one can imagine returning sailors bringing back with them, exotic feathered friends. In an era before TV, radio, internet and all the other distractions we take for granted, such colourful and exotic creatures would have been made most welcome in any household. Old photographs of the town show almost every doorway along the narrow streets had a modest home made cage, made with wire from straightened bicycle spokes hanging outside, a goldfinch, linnets or lark, kept for their song and colour. There has always been a strong association with cage birds and racing pigeons in Wexford. With many fanciers over the years combining or alternating between one and the other.

A cage bird society was formed in the 1950's and an open show held most years. Native birds were very popular as were many breeds of canaries. Wexford was one of the first places where the Irish Fancy Canary was developed into a type bird from its roller ancestors. Birds were also kept in other towns in the county of Wexford and at various times, Cage Bird Societies were active in Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross.

Around 1985/1986 it was becoming apparent that the main focus of the Wexford Cage Bird Society was on Irish Fancy and Border Canaries, the members decided to hold a show catering solely for these two breeds. From 1987 onwards it was decided that a specialist All Border show be held and the name of the society changed from Wexford Cage Bird Society to County Wexford BFCC.

Among the founding members were Noel Hendrick, Nicky Nolan, Willie Rossiter, Denis Roche, Peter Conway, Dave Whitty and Jim Morris. The show held a successful annual open show every year in the Loretto Convent, using the excellent gym room, which had good lighting and space. The club kept going until falling show entries and declining funds saw the club finally fold in 2001.

It was on a ferry trip to the West Wales BFCC show in 2007 that a group of fanciers toyed with the idea of reforming the club. A meeting was held and there was sufficient interest to start again. This time we had all the former members back on board and some new ones like Colm and John Southern, and the Cork and Waterford men who had previously been members of the Southern BFCC which had just folded, Eamon Butler, Tom O'Donovan, John Fitzgerald and John Leahy. The club was founded on the wish to provide another All-Border event in the 26 counties, to peacefully co exist with the Irish BFCC and foster and encourage the keeping and breeding of the Border Canary in the South Eastern area.

It proved difficult in getting a suitable hall. The only hall we could find was the hall in the grounds of the Franciscan Friary, used by the Wexford Choral group. The first show was a success and for the second event the club improved the lighting which was poor for the first event. Since 2007 a show

has been held every year, entries have always reached or surpassed 300 and importantly the quality has been excellent, which is due in large part to the time of the year (the show is normally held the last week of November) and the fact that most fanciers are by then only putting out their better birds. Due to the proximity of Wexford to Rosslare Europort, we have also been attracting exhibitors from the UK and Wales and this is most welcome. Many visiting exhibitors like to stay and bring their wives for the weekend as Wexford town is a popular tourist and shopping town, with its ancient narrow streets exuding a special atmosphere.

The policy of the club has always been to engage the best judges and where possible from outside the 26 counties in order to give the exhibitors a fair and unbiased opinion and over the years many of these judges have become friends of the club and its members.

The breeding and exhibiting of Border Canaries, or for that matter any cage bird is a very rewarding and fulfilling pastime. In the challenging times in which we live it is ever more important that men and women have some form of "escape" from the hectic pace of modern life. True, caring for livestock is a commitment of time and effort, but it is a hobby that learns us many virtues and one that we can enjoy from the cradle to the grave.