

# **THE JUDGING OF BUDGERIGARS BY VIDEO LINK, IS THIS A WORLD FIRST?**

## **My First Judging Appointment in Pakistan 29<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

When first invited to judge a budgerigar show in Pakistan via a video link my reaction was “the technology is out there lets give it a shot, we are all trying to progress the fancy and perhaps this just might be a first step in achieving change and potentially growth in this wonderful hobby of ours.”

The mastermind of this project was Naveed Ijaz who had some wonderful contacts at the University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences (UVAS), the Pet Centre plus Digi Watch all of Lahore, Pakistan. These organisations and individuals were willing to take the project on as they believed in it. Their professionalism was world class.

Dr. Syed Saleem Ahmad, Manager of the Pet Centre, supervised the event and was ably assisted by his Pet Centre team.

The IT related activities were supervised by Muhammad Rizwan Saleem, Director of IT UVAS and he too was ably assisted by his team and in particular Imran Younas Chohan and Abrar Hussain.

Professor Dr Muhammad Nawaz, Vice-Chancellor of the UVAS was the chief guest for this inaugural event. It was an absolute pleasure to be able to have a conversation with the good Professor to thank him for supporting such an event and for allowing his facility to be utilised in what is believed to be a world first.

The above team was very supportive and offered the infrastructure and expertise to make the contact with me in Australia to be of a professional nature.

This is where I was in a bind initially. I did not have the knowledge to set up the required infrastructure at the Australian end. Fortunately the Mount Gambier Budgerigar Society has as its Vice President someone who is technically able to pull such things off in David Botha.

One condition with going ahead with the event from my perspective was that we must have at least ‘tested’ everything ‘live’ along with birds in a show cage to ensure that we could realistically proceed. This also meant lighting tests, camera focusing, distances required to view the bird and the ability to identify the features on the bird. This worked pretty well with my systems, but a little more grunt potentially would give a better result.

David Botha came to my home and Naveed Ijaz, (who was at the UVAS - Lahore) and I made contact via SKYPE. The video link programme was dispatched from Pakistan as an attachment, downloaded this end. David Botha and Abdul Wahab worked together with the software installation. Abdul works for Digi Watch ([www.DGWatch.com](http://www.DGWatch.com)), the company that supplied the cameras. Abdul Wahab and David Botha were particularly patient men in working through the issues to get the project to a stage that we could see that it could successfully proceed.

David organized to have different visuals on two laptops, one camera operating per laptop and we could assess from different angles or just use the one camera to zoom in.

This all worked well, the upload speed from Pakistan was good but the download speed in Mount Gambier needed a boost, the video was running between 0 and 14 FPS (Frames per second) and would be better to have more speed.

David spoke with management at Green Triangle Electronics in Mount Gambier, a very successful and

well known business that is involved in computing along with mobile phones, photocopiers – advanced technology I guess would be the best way to describe their business. This business offered us the use of their equipment thus David set up everything the day prior and did more testing with the team in Lahore to ensure that on the day all equipment should potentially work. He had set up a large Smart Board Screen along with my laptop to get exceptional visuals and was able to get download speed in Mount Gambier of 3600 enabling the videos to run between 0 – 31 FPS.

Preparation on the judging day in Australia commenced with David arriving at Green Triangle Electronics to test the equipment again. I arrived at around 1430hrs (GMT +10.5) being 5.5 hours ahead of Pakistan time (GMT +5 = 0900hrs) and went through some testing of equipment phases with David to ensure all was, as best as was possible, operational in Australia. The cameras commenced rolling in Pakistan to Australia at 1458hrs (South Australian time) to enable even more testing from both ends. We were able to observe the setting up of the staging at Lahore plus observed a rather unique Peacock that was enjoying entertaining those in Pakistan along with Jennie (my partner), David and I in Mount Gambier. There was cloud cover and wind in Lahore, and advice that the temperature was around 30 deg Celsius, all counting toward a humid day for the birds and fanciers alike.

I went to the link with the show schedule and had that sitting in the background to ensure that I was officiating on the correct varieties.

The Budgerigar Society of Pakistan (BSP) team for the day was:

Show Manager - Muhammad Awais, who did an excellent job with his team – he had made contact with me prior to the event to ensure that I was aware of what was required and to make sure that I was comfortable with everything – this was great for me to know that I was in good hands.

Assistant Judge - Moieen Ahmad, invaluable when making the final decisions. It was of great benefit to have such clarity in explanations for that final judgment.

President - Zafar Iqbal, you have a great group working with / for you.

Project Manager - Naveed Ijaz who was the driving force behind the project and certainly had plenty of support to ensure it worked.

Catering - Syed Fida Hassan, I believe everyone enjoyed the complementary food that his wife personally supervised to feed the 40 plus fanciers in attendance.

#### JUDGING COMMENCES:

The judging commenced at 1600hrs (South Australian time). The birds had been pre-assessed and in effect short listed by Moieen Ahmad in Pakistan. My role was to assess the remaining birds and place them as I saw them. Moieen removed any birds that were noticeably not competitive or for other legitimate reasons from the entered birds within a class. This hastened the process for me for which I am eternally grateful.

From here it became interesting. A phone call was made from Pakistan on a landline that I had on speaker; I observed the birds via the video link and had to take into account the camera delay vs. live talking. This took a little time to adjust, but once we did, all was smooth sailing.

Judging was completed by just prior to 2000 hrs (South Australian time)

A total of 108 birds were entered, 80 in the Baby classes and 28 in the Young bird classes, there were a total of 13 exhibitors who entered birds.

The quality of the birds varied as they would at most shows, but overall some wonderful birds – congratulations to the Pakistan fancy. There were birds that dropped tails during judging and others that were close to doing so, but generally the condition of the birds looked sound.

The stand out bird was the Dark Green Normal 'Barhead' in the Baby section, although missing a flight or two was a quality baby and went on to be judged as Great Grand Champion in Show - this bird was followed by a very powerful budgerigar shown in the Spangle Class, a Dominant Pied Light Green Spangle that was, as a budgerigar, well ahead of any of the others that had the Spangle variety. The closest Spangle to this one had two rings, a 2008 ring as well as a 2009 ring, where as the show schedule stated only 2009 rung birds to be entered, a legitimate mistake, but the rules are there thus the bird sadly was not able to compete. Third best in the Baby Section was a Dominant Pied Light Green.

Three birds that challenged for Best Young Cock in Show were placed as follows, a Violet Normal in beautiful condition, an Opaline Grey Green that had a little flecking and a Grey Green that appeared to have not completed its first moult and the spots were not down.

In the Hens class, three birds that competed against each other for best hen were placed as follows Normal Grey Green Hen, Opaline Sky Hen and then a Normal Grey Hen, all very useful budgerigars.

#### THE FINAL RESULT:

Great Grand Champion in Show a Normal Dark Green exhibited by Naveed Ijaz

Grand Champion – Best Baby in Show the Normal Dark Green exhibited by Naveed Ijaz

Grand Champion – Best Young in Show a Normal Violet Cock exhibited by Naveed Ijaz

Grand Champion – Best Young Opposite Sex in Show a Normal Grey Hen exhibited by Ahmed & Ali Sahi

#### JUDGING PROCESS:

It was important to have each cage in focus and from head to toe for at least 15 to 20 seconds; this at least gave me the opportunity to fully appraise each bird and gave each bird the ability to exhibit their qualities. With a couple of birds much longer periods of time were required to again give the bird the opportunity to show its qualities. Both ends of the judging 'link' need to be patient (and they were) thus assisting in the success of the event.

Anyone partaking in such a judging process in the future needs to be aware that there is a time lag and once 'adjusted' to that timing, all works well and that there is also that need to have the camera remain with each bird for a minimum period of time of around 20 seconds to give a realistic assessment of the bird.

Awais put coloured dots on the cages once a class was completed thus making the process run smoothly.

Place cards and Rosettes were removed from the cages until the judging was completed to enable a greater visual of the birds and to not show who the owners might be.

#### WHAT IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE MADE FOR FUTURE EVENTS?

Ensure that the schedule explains the difference between a baby or 'bar-head' and a young bird and note that it might mean that some birds are too old for one section and too young for the other. A baby that has pin feathers is not able to be shown as a 'bar-head' nor can it be shown as a young bird.

Ensure that a young bird is described as one that has completed its first moult and 'should not' have any immature feathers and should have its spots down, if the variety permits.

I would encourage that the judging of the Baby Classes against the Young Bird classes for best in colour or major awards not occur. If adopted, this would mean that future events have a Champion Young Bird and Champion Young Opposite Sex Bird and also Champion Baby Bird and that is it.

#### THE FUTURE:

As an event, this was innovative, exiting, rewarding and has the ability to be improved and to go even further. We need to embrace technology for the good of the fancy and I congratulate those that nurtured this to fruition.

Without the support of the University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences Lahore, Pakistan and Professor Dr Muhammad Nawaz, Vice-Chancellor and his team and Green Triangle Electronics of Mount Gambier and in particular David Botha this event would not have been the success that it was.

I was blessed to be asked to participate in this initiative and hopefully the Pakistan fancy has started the next phase for the world bird fancy that will enable budgerigars and other species to be judged from afar with little expense.

It is a huge expense to invite a WBO Certified judge to officiate in Pakistan, which they will continue to do for WBO rosette based shows as of now.

They were having baby and young bird shows judged by local judges but as they are in learning curve, it might be better, as we experienced with this show, to have help from a WBO judge during the show by using technology which is less expensive than the cost of travel.

The BSP has previously used three WBO judges in Pakistan in Ghalib Al-Nasser of the United Kingdom, Gerd Bliecher of Germany and Robert Maurice of the United Kingdom for their Grand Bird Show. The BSP are fortunate and pleased that Gerd Bliecher will judge this show again on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

To add further interest to the day of judging, the video link travelled to Karachi City, some 1100kms away from Lahore. This gave the BSP members in this area the opportunity to view the judging process and see what birds were on display.

This was another innovative way to make the world of technology work for the improvement of the fancy in areas that might be remote from the event and to encourage others into the hobby. The BSP's National Council is considering putting future shows live to enable any individual using streaming servers to view the show in browser at their screen (if resources are available at that time).

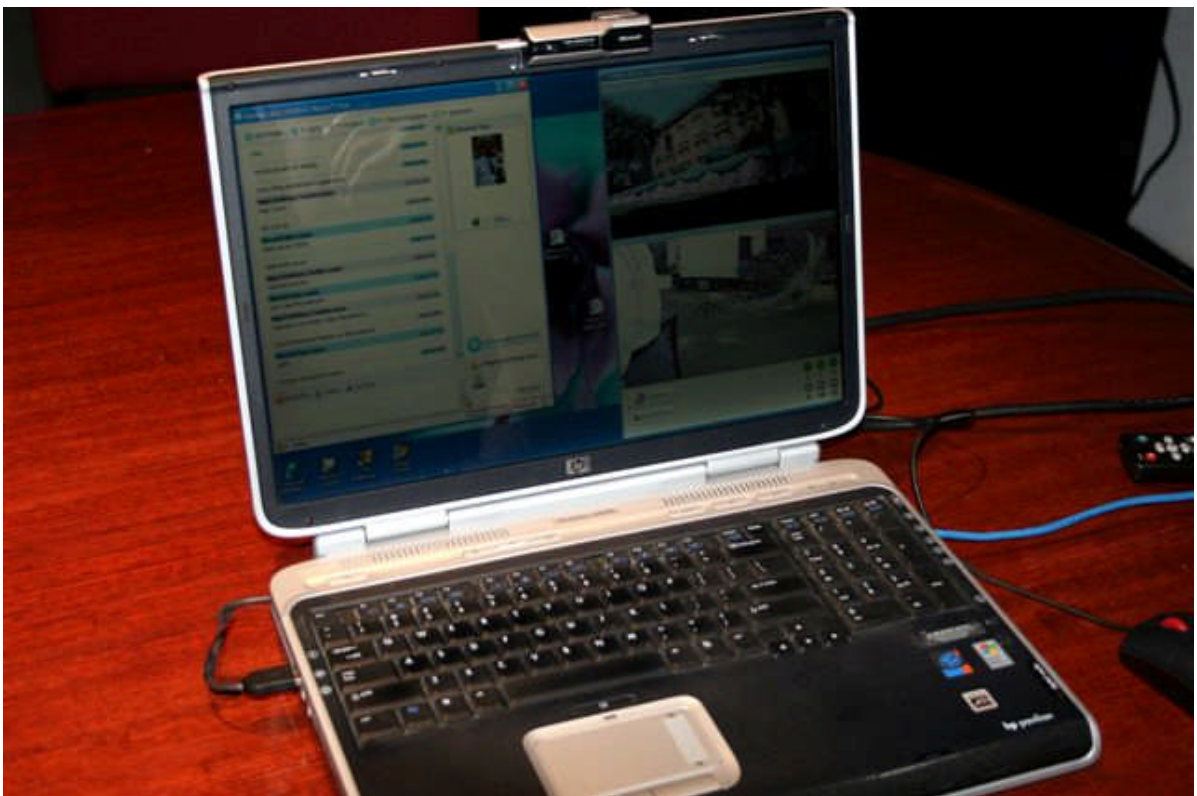
Maybe we in Australia or elsewhere in the world could consider what the BSP are doing to encourage the fancy to grow?

Congratulations again to the BSP for showing the way by using readily available technology to promote the fancy world wide

Nigel Tonkin  
Mount Gambier  
Australia



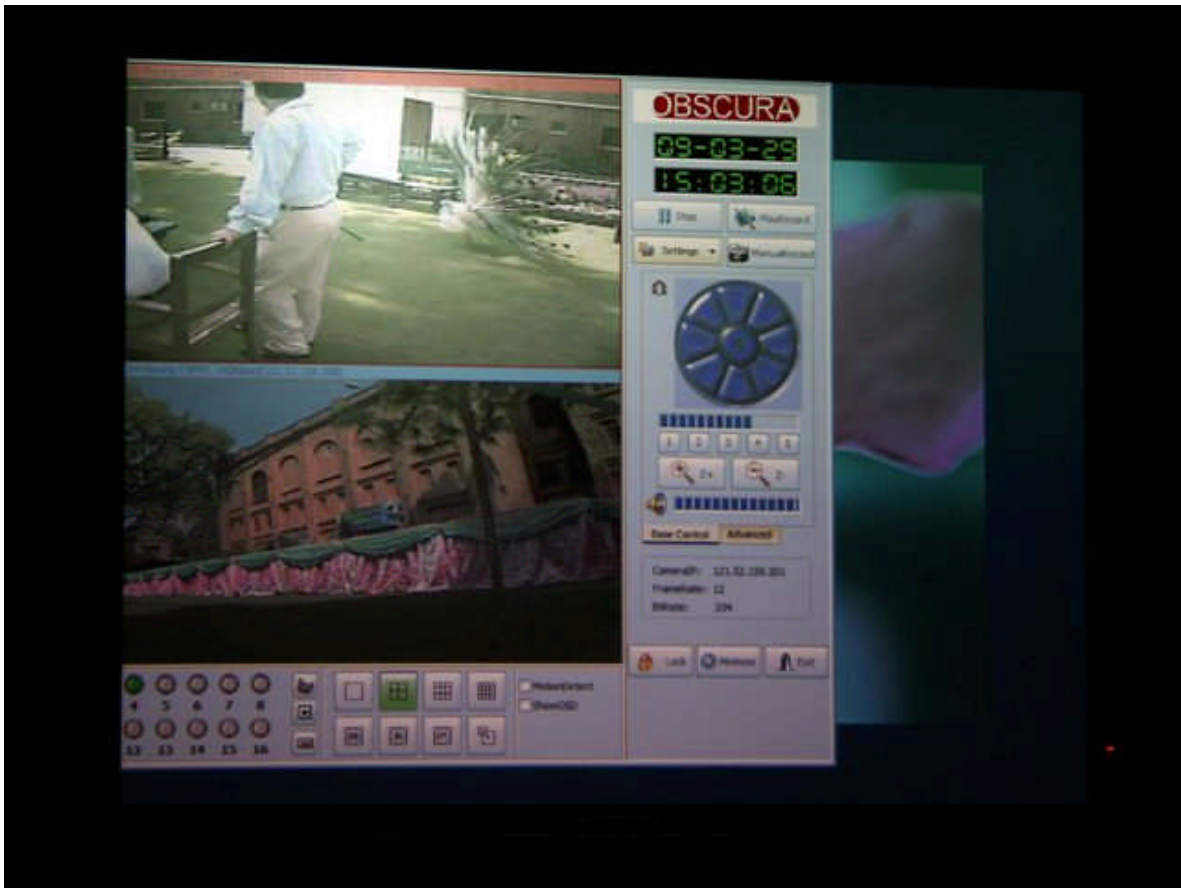
David Botha and Nigel Tonkin



Computer view in Oz



Screen in Oz



Pictures on the Big Screen



Professor Dr Muhammad Nawaz



Naveed with all systems go



Camera at cage



Best UBC (a)



Best UBC (b)



Best UBC (c)



Best Young Bird BSP



Naveed receiving Painting