



## *The Avicultural Society of New South Wales Inc. (ASNSW)*

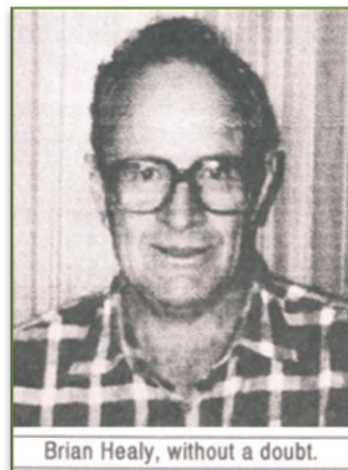
*(Founded in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)*

### **Profile: Brian Healy**

*(ASNSW The Avicultural Review - Volume 15 No. 3 April/May 1993)*

Brian Healy was always going to be a vet. Born at Pennant Hills in 1934, his family spent 10 years at Cowra and a couple of years at Coonabarabran. His father was a keen bird man, with numerous aviaries of Finches, Parrots and even Peking Robins. As a boy Brian was a natural naturalist, continually bringing home lizards, snakes and any small animals he could find. He even had his own rabbit warren made from empty drums dug into the backyard. But his mother threw a tantrum when the snake population reached epidemic proportions.

He was packed off to boarding school at St Gregory's. In 1952 he was dux of the college with his Leaving Certificate. He also topped the State in Biology and was 3rd in Agriculture. Onto University to do a five year vet course. From the 65 that started, only five graduated in the five year period. He boarded and lived frugally during his university days.



Brian Healy, without a doubt.

After securing a position with the Department of Agriculture, he was a Field Officer at Cootamundra. In 1960 he went to Wagga Wagga where he lectured at the Wagga Agricultural College for four years on Animal Genetics, Husbandry and Vet Science.

Promoted to District Veterinary Officer he moved to Orange to take charge of 120 vets, rangers, inspectors and office staff. Cattle were the main target, but they covered all species of domestic animals and poultry for disease diagnosis and eradication.

While at Wagga, Brian had built some aviaries, but it was at Orange that his interest and affection for birds really blossomed.

He had an extensive backyard full of aviaries and built up a very large collection of almost 3,000 birds, predominantly finches. During this time his knowledge of birds, aviary breeding and bird diseases grew rapidly.

In 1980 he was promoted to Assistant Principal Vet Officer at head office in Sydney. He developed a special talent for writing and drafting legislation for the various Acts in agriculture. He was very highly regarded by the Minister of Agriculture for his understanding and knowledge of contentious issues. He was Inspector for the Vet Surgeons Board and Vet Hospital standards. He became an expert on Artificial Breeding and exotic poultry and bird diseases.

He moved his aviaries to his Sydney home where he joined several aviculture clubs where his expertise and words of wisdom were very welcome. When installing his aviaries the local Council insisted that he must pick up the finch droppings daily!

Brian continued to become highly experienced in all areas and was often called in by the Minister to assist with Farmer Delegations and other group meetings. He became department spokesman on Animal Welfare, a member of the Animal Welfare Advisory Council, represented NSW on the National Standing Committee which advised National Ministers and Committees as an advisory body to the Australian Agricultural Council and Animal Welfare.



Brian with his favourite Cockateil.

After 38 years of dedicated service he had to think seriously about retiring after a heart attack in late 1989. Recovery was slow and painful. After losing his father and the head office of the Department of Agriculture moved from Sydney to Orange, he retired early in 1992.

In 1988 he joined the Associated Birdkeepers and Traders (the ABT), prompted by the work they were doing and the ideals and aims this association could do for aviculturists. Within a year he was appointed Secretary; and within another year took on the job of Treasurer, Editor, Membership Secretary and Delegate. He bought a computer and became adept at operating it. He began to work harder and longer for the cause of aviculture, combining his expertise and entree to relevant Government Departments and the National Parks and Wildlife Services. His commitment to aviculture and the ABT is now total and he works at it at the rate of almost an eight day week. The ABT is the recognised voice for aviculture with all the various authorities. He would like more support from clubs and aviculturists to operate the various functions of the ABT.

We asked Brian, "*Why do you do it?*" He replied, "*Because of my life experience and knowledge of birds and people in birds, plus government and community attitudes, makes me realise change will happen. Unless we are part of developing these changes we are just going to be told what we have to do by somebody who doesn't know what he is about.*"

The Aviculture Federation of Australia (AFA) fell into something of a hole after the Queensland Secretariat completed their two years of duty. A vacancy was created which apparently nobody wanted to fill.

Along came Barbara Devnie and Brian Healy and met the problem head-on and decided to give it a go. The AFA is vitally necessary. The Commonwealth Government will only talk to a cooperating national body.

Brian Healy is the new Secretary of AFA and is determined to make it work. There are major problems of course. Lack of money, interstate rivalry, apathy, communication, all have to be overcome somehow. Change will happen whether we like it or not whether we are part of it or not. There is a tremendous lot of work to be done.

Brian says the aviculture industry will never have a better opportunity while Barbara Devnie is president to get itself into shape.

### **Brian Healy.**

*We salute you for the powerhouse work you are doing for us at the ABT.*

*We salute you as a fellow aviculturist.*

*We salute you as a man of integrity and decency.*

**Please, please, keep up the good work.**

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