



Harrowing Times

NOVEMBER—DECEMBER 2013
It's the Christmas Edition—Oh yes it is!



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Sunny apple pressing day and the BBQ is warming up

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS WERE DUE
1st October - Last copy if subs not paid!

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THE DEMISE OF CAPTAIN BERTORELLI

By Richard Barr

Captain Bertorelli is (or was) the most terrifying cockerel it has ever been my lot to be intimidated by. Some years ago we acquired a small flock of hens. Almost immediately two of them were taken by our not-so-friendly neighbourhood fox. Our response was to acquire Captain Bertorelli (so named after the character in 'Allo 'Allo).

After that, no fox dared to come within a hundred metres of the hen's run. The problem was that he had the same effect on humans, or more particularly – me. Whenever he saw me he would fix me with his evil eye and charge, at the last minute gouging his talons into my leg. In the end I was so traumatised that I needed counselling (but did not get it). My wife Kirsten was unsympathetic: "He never does that to me" she said.



Whenever I fed the hens I armed myself with a water pistol or hose to dampen his aggression, but often would get tangled in the wire netting to the run – and then he was merciless.

Then one day we found him lying on the ground unable to get up. At that point my mother (who was brought up on a farm in western Nebraska) would have wrung his neck and he would have been served up as a stew, but she is no longer around and Kirsten (who has more compassion than is good for her), took him under her wing (so to speak) and started to lavish care on him.



Captain Bertorelli was brought into the house and pampered with delicious food. Vets throughout Norfolk were consulted, but there seemed no consensus as to what his problem was. I did put my little foot down and hold out against driving him half way across Norfolk for an expensive consultation.

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In the meantime our cats regarded this intruder with alarm. Day by day, the Captain responded to the life of luxury. Slowly he started back on his feet, but kept falling over on his beak. Every day Kirsten gave him physiotherapy, and every day he became more mobile, until at last he was allowed outside again for a brief period every day. Initially he had little control and would disappear into the undergrowth, so we brought in the sheep's hurdles. Kirsten would sit with him while he took his exercise. She also brought in his favourite hen for company.

And.... Damn it. He made a recovery. He is now back with his harem, walking a little stiffly, but still on his feet. So far he has refrained from attacking me but I am sure it will be only a matter of time. All the same, I am hoping that if I look pathetic enough, I might get some of the same food as he had.

