

October 2016

The Exbury Egg Echo

A Stephen Turner, Burnley Wood Photographers and Super Slow Way publication

SUPERSLOWWAY

Thoughts on our Swans

By **Stephen Turner**,
Artist in residence at
Finsley Gate, Burnley

I counted five eggs in the nest, soon after arriving with my own large wooden egg at the former Finsley Gate Boatyard in a cold snowy April.

Derelict in terms of human habitation, a patch of crumbling concrete edged with a narrow band of self-seeded turf, has been home to a pair of much loved local swans for many years. Often photographed and more often fed by local people, they entertain and concern the many who look out for their welfare.

Dogs have fought with them and they have been taunted by children. As the in-situ Care Taker, I have been called upon a number of times to ward off the stone throwers and to keep a watchful eye on these stately residents that occasionally need more than the distant protection afforded by the Queen (even though she has been to this very place).

Often photographed and more often fed by local people, they entertain and concern the many who look out for their welfare.

Amongst their own avian kind, they have no peer and they lord it over the ducks and geese. A pair of geese were permitted to nest just ten feet from the Swan's own straggle pile of straw and plastic waste, but they had to be shown who was boss. One day I watched the cob saunter by and with barely a pause grab mother goose by the neck. He dragged her off her nest for around ten feet, then just nonchalantly continued on his way with barely a backward glance.

Heartbreak came when the pen broke her wing in a fight with a local dog. It got so infected that she had to be put down by the RSPCA and care for the two cygnets fell solely onto the male. He seems to have stuck to his task and raised the two young alone.

These, and many other moments, have been recorded through the photographic lens of many.

These are just a few.

Stephen Turner

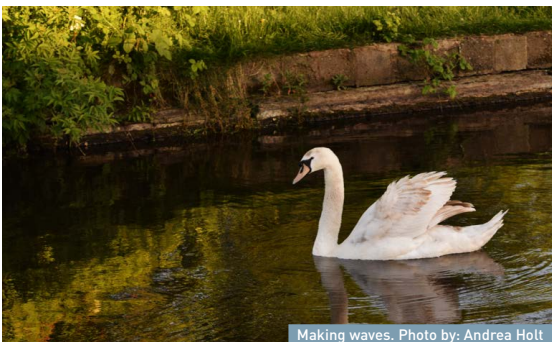
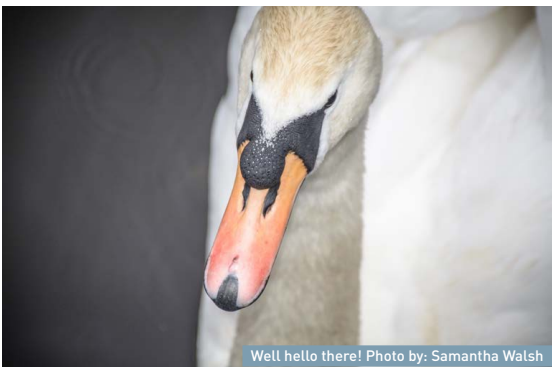
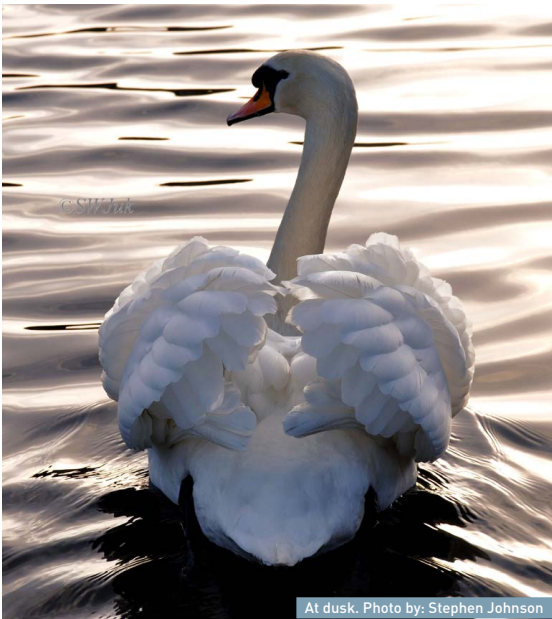


Morning has broken. Photo by: Stephen Johnson

Broken Wing

Our pen was taken away on June 24th 2016 by the RSPCA. Her wing bone was clearly snapped and infected after being attacked by a dog and there was nothing to be done to save her. Parenthood for two cygnets was about to fall on the male bird alone.

Just recently the Father has teamed with another Pen and they have been spotted swimming happily with the remaining two cygnets.





Serene. Photo by: Andrea Holt



Feathering the nest. Photo by: Samantha Walsh

A note from Canal and River Trust, owners of Finsley Gate Wharf and Super Slow Way's host organisation

Last year we launched a campaign as six million loaves of bread were thrown into our canals and rivers by well-intentioned people feeding the ducks and swans each year. The bread wasn't great for them or their habitats and so we asked you to swap the bread for healthy snacks and to exercise some portion control. Find out more about *Keeping Our Ducks Healthy* at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk



After days of feeding bread and crackers to the swans, we started to use swan food, which we found online. The swans loved it!



Fatal injury. Photo by: Stephen Turner



Reflections. Photo by: Simon Sweetman



The Finsley two. Photo by: Stephen Johnson

Ruth Shorrock, Producer on the Egg project for Super Slow Way said: "It has been such an honour to be able to witness the ongoing story of the swans on our waterways through the lens of the dedicated Burnley Wood Photographers. It is heart-warming to know that so many local residents have such love and care for them and it is reassuring that someone will always be keeping an eye on them when Stephen and the Egg move on. Happily enough, as our project comes to an end our keen swan observers have noticed that the widowed swan has been proudly swimming along with a new mate!"



Lonesome blues got me... Photo by: Stephen Johnson

Find out more

You can follow more stories from the Egg at Finsley Gate on Stephen's blog at www.eggman.site

The Exbury Egg at Finsley Gate, Burnley is the first stage of Stephen Turner's national tour Everything Comes from the Egg. In 2017 the Egg will move on to Trinity Buoy Wharf, London, reaching out to communities around the River Lee; the Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth, where the Exbury Egg will be located in Gunwharf Quays, and Jerwood Gallery, Hastings.

With thanks to:

**Andrea Holt
Stephen Johnson
Simon Sweetman
Stephen Turner
Samantha Walsh**

A special thanks goes to picture editor Samantha Walsh
www.samanthajaneimagemaking.com

SUPER SLOWWAY

