
Murder in the Eyrie: a behavioural study of a native species

1950s Golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* photographs by Charles Eric Palmar

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My father Charles Eric Palmar was the Curator of Natural History in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow from 1949 till 1984.

Although his speciality was ornithology, he was an all-round naturalist, being a member of the Scottish Ornithologists Club, the RSPB and the Glasgow Natural History Society.

He travelled all round Scotland from 1947 to 1986, taking many black and white negatives and white negatives and colour slides, 16mm cine films and sound recordings, mainly of natural history subjects.

By careful study from a distance, note-taking and patient field-craft, he managed to get quite close to many of his subjects, without frightening them. He would never disturb a bird at the nest in such a way that it deserted.

He would build a hide, sometimes on the most precarious of cliff ledges, over a period of a few weeks, camouflaging and raising the height of the hide and moving it closer to the nest in a very gradual process. As a result, he obtained images which now need a schedule 1 licence, or could only be emulated by using modern long lenses. Nearly all his comprehensive and high quality collection has been painstakingly catalogued manually over a period of many years.



Photo 1. The pair of golden eagles at the nest, with a downy youngster also visible



Photo 2. The older chick attacks the younger



Photo 3. Remains of the dead chick below the Eyrie



Photo 4. The surviving chick at 2½ to 3 weeks



Photo 5. The surviving chick at 7 weeks, now growing its flight feathers