

## A GLOSSARY FOR GOOSE-NETTERS

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As a technique develops, a specialised jargon usually grows with it. Rocket-netting is no exception, and a list of some of the more printable terms used is given below. This, we hope, may interest some people, cause nostalgia to a few and even assist new recruits to the happy band of rocketeers who scurry around northern Britain in the autumn.

### Concerning the Apparatus

*Bags.* Curtain-like extensions to the net edges, designed to prevent geese from running out.

*C.A.* Catching Area; that over which the nets may be expected to fall, indicated by white feather markers but surprisingly difficult to judge from a distance and at an angle.

*Dog leads.* Long cords attached to the leading corners of the net. By a subtle formula these keep the sides of the net parallel.

*Dropper.* The connection between each rocket and the main electric wire running the length of the net. Particularly liable to be cut by spades or tripped over.

*Harnesses.* The strong wires attaching the rockets to the net. Tangle dreadfully.

*Hide.* The wheeled contraption in which the firing party suffers hunger, thirst and other physiological torments. Always due for replacement. Probably the largest Peter Scott painting in existence.

*Keeping cages.* Compartmented hessian constructions in which geese are restrained until marking of whole catch is complete. Shop girls titter when one orders the dozens of large safety-pins needed to fasten flaps.

*Pig's Ears.* The strengthened loops on the nets to which harnesses and rubbers are attached.

*Ramps.* Heavy iron contraptions up which the rockets slide on firing. To grease or not to grease is a frequent source of debate.

*Rubbers.* Thick elastic restrainers fastened to the trailing edge of the net to prevent the whole arrangement becoming airborne.

*Smalle trappe.* A sparrow trap carried by a Chaucerian member of the team—liable to be successful when the main operation fails. Objects other than passerines have been found in it.

*Spindle.* The rod on which the reels of netting are carried. Surprisingly difficult to thread.

*Upwind net.* The net which is fired downwind. And vice-versa.

### Concerning the Operations

*Cleaning.* The tiresome sequel to any catch in a stubble field. May involve as much as 25 man-hours and is the main reason for a large team. Calculated to arouse official hostility if carried out on a hotel lawn or seaside promenade.

*Decoys.* Representations of geese placed in the catching area to encourage the flocks to alight. May be stuffed and tatty or plastic and smooth. The latter have shown that wild geese do not appreciate modern art.

*Doddle.* A situation in which a record catch is anticipated; usually a prelude to disappointment.

*Flit.* Spontaneous but unhurried flight of geese from one field to another, usually the wrong one.

*Fort.* A locale in which the land owner or farmer is unco-operative. Rare. (Generalised from a place-name, as also Hollybush and Hurkledale.)

*Firing party.* Two or three persons gathered together in the hide by call of duty or sheer inexperience. One presses the firing button.

*Führer's final fling.* A usually rash or complicated move (surprisingly often successful) initiated by the Director prior to departing to the B.B.C. The rockets are recharged with surprising and unwonted celerity on these occasions.

*Gin Palace.* A four-star hotel used *faute de mieux* and as briefly as possible. Inhabitants seldom appreciate the privilege afforded them by the team's presence.

*Grandstand.* The sufficiently remote viewpoint at which all save the firing party assemble and await developments.

*Had-it field.* A stubble field which looks a suitable set but on which it transpires the geese have been feeding for some days and from which they are just about to remove themselves.

*Hollybush.* A situation in which it is known that many geese are feeding in the area but it is extremely difficult to locate them.

*Hurkledale.* A feeding place closer to the roost than the main feeding grounds. Seldom used except in foggy or windy weather when the team can wait on the main grounds indefinitely.

*Jammy set.* One in which all the omens are good.

*Mooned.* The state of enforced inactivity when the geese feed under clear moonlit skies and ignore the diurnal efforts of the team.

*Oojahcapivvy.* The technique of putting up geese not in the catching field in the hope that they will go there.

*Poppa.* A member of the team skilled in distinguishing male from female geese; preferably with muscular thumbs.

*Reservoir field.* A field holding a subsidiary flock of geese which may be oojahcapivvied to the set when the agonised cry 'more geese' is heard over the walkie-talkies.

*Safety measures.* Certain precautions enforced occasionally when the Director has visions of a Coroner's Court.

*Set.* (a) To lay the nets and rockets in position. (b) The completed arrangement of nets, rockets, etc. (c) The place chosen for (a).

*Twinkle.* The intricate manoeuvre whereby geese feeding in the right field but wrong place are encouraged to walk, or lift and settle, into the catching area. Now generally carried out by car and almost always by the Director.

*Up sticks.* Dismantling the set when patience has been exhausted and moving off to happier hunting grounds.

### Concerning the Pursued and the Pursuers

*Baby.* A juvenile goose.

*Club member.* A virile and obvious gander.

*Face-filling.* Surrendering to the needs of the inner man; considered a sign of effiteness by true devotees especially the Director.

*Fat four figures.* A goose flock exceeding 1000 by the most conservative estimate.

*Friendly native.* A farmer with a T.V. aerial. Also referred to as 'most affable' and 'most agreeable'.

*Führicle.* The Director's car.

*Glug.* Cherry brandy, a favourite beverage of some goose-catchers.

*Goodly goose or great geese.* A large flock of geese.

*Gull geese.* Seagulls excitedly hailed as a skein of geese by a newcomer (and even by old hands on occasions). Likewise crow-geese and plover-geese.

*Guylarks.* Passerines.

*Harry-hotters.* A cooked meal in contradistinction to the usual picnic fare. Especially yearned for by the face-fillers when it refers to breakfast. This is seldom achieved. The prefix 'Harry' tends to be used as an emphatic prefix to any word which goes with it euphonically and can be converted to end in '-ers'. Believed to be of Coastal Forces origin.

*Live Decoys.* A small group of geese which obligingly land in the C.A. (or remain there when the bulk of the flock flushes). Very superior to other decoys.

*Little Brown (low) bird.* A passerine (sometimes found in small trappes).

*Lol.* A 'character'.

*Marmalade goose.* A 'white' goose, actually very pale brown or grey (leucistic). When one is present in an area it is very difficult to get the Director to move on.

*Old friend.* A goose ringed in previous years and now recaptured. Joyful recognition one way only.

*Sellickiana.* Verbal or functional eccentricities, e.g., running over day's food with Land-Rover.

*Shootist.* One who pursues with a 12-bore. Sometimes helpful.

*Sparrow.* A very small baby.

*Swanning.* (a) Of geese, flying high and far as if moving to pastures new.  
(b) Of men, motoring fast and far as if looking for geese.

