



Annual Report of the
London Natural History Society

for the year ending
30th June 2007

Registered Charity 206228

Secretary:

J. A. Edgington
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Treasurer:

M.J. West
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Bankers:

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J.L. Meyer
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LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JULY 2006 – 30TH JUNE 2007

Governance and management

This was the first full year of operation of the new Rules, which came into force on December 6th 2005 and were printed in *The London Naturalist* **85** (2006). Members of Council, listed below, are the Trustees of the Society. Officers, and ten other members, are elected at the Society's Annual General Meeting. Three Sections (Botany, Ecology and Entomology, and Ornithology) and two Survey teams (Bookham Common and Hampstead Heath) manage their own affairs. Each is represented on Council by a member elected at the Section's AGM. Council meets quarterly, delegating much day-to-day business to the Administration and Finance Committee, whose current membership is also given. Details of the Appointed Officers of the Society, and of the Sectional and Survey officers, appear in the Programme which is published twice a year. All these posts are voluntary and unpaid. Members interested in helping the Society in any way, perhaps by standing for election to Council or Committees, by assisting Appointed Officers, or by volunteering for one of the necessary, and often very rewarding, tasks which arise from time to time, are encouraged to contact the Secretary.

Objectives

The Society aims to promote the conservation and study of natural history in the London area and to record the species and habitats found there. Its objects and activities should satisfy the "public benefit" test under the Charities Act 2006. The new Rules are intended to meet this requirement and Council will review their operation to ensure they do so.

Council actions

A review of policy on recording, mentioned last year, was completed, and Council approved the new Records Policy in April. It states the reasons for recording ("...for scientific and nature conservation reasons, for educational purposes, in the pursuit of knowledge, and for the enjoyment gained..."), notes that the relevant Section Committee appoints Recorders, and defines their duties and responsibilities. It acknowledges that while ownership of records remains with the individuals who made them, the Society may do as it thinks fit with records supplied to it. Records may, at the discretion of each Recorder, be supplied to the local records centre, Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), under the terms of an agreement between the Society and GiGL. Datasets that have been supplied in this way are those for vascular plants, fungi, dragonflies and damselflies; others are in hand. Recorders also have the opportunity to verify and validate records submitted to GiGL by other organisations and individuals. Council is greatly appreciative of the invaluable work its Recorders do for the Society and the wider natural history community.

In this context, last year's Report mentioned a number of card index files of pre-1988 bird records, now stored at the London Wildlife Trust. The task of transferring these to digital form for input to GiGL has been begun by David Allen; volunteers to assist him would be very welcome.

Council approved a revised Memorandum of Understanding with the London Biodiversity Partnership, of which the Society is a founder partner.

Following their removal from Imperial College in December, the Society's archives were deposited with the London Metropolitan Archives, where after conservation and cataloguing they will be available to members and the general public.

In December, the Society's Library was transferred from Imperial College to the Natural History Museum for temporary storage, pending discussions about the inclusion of the collection within Darwin Centre Phase 2 at the Museum where it would become a key resource for the UK Centre for Biodiversity. The Library, which remains the property of the Society, has been valued and insured. Linda Hewitt, our Librarian, continues to acquire material considered essential for maintaining the collection's continuity and completeness.

Dr Ian Menzies, Chairman of the Bookham Common Survey for many years and one of the Society's foremost entomologists, was appointed an Honorary Vice-President under Rule 5 (f). Colin Plant, entomologist and a Vice-President of the Society, received the British Naturalists' Association David Bellamy Award in 2007. Colin's monograph *The Moths of Hertfordshire* is to be published by the Hertfordshire Natural History Society, and after the end of the financial year Council approved a grant of £1,000 towards this project.

Nearly 50 years ago the Society produced a full-length 16mm cine film, "London's Birds", a copy of which is in the National Film Archive. Arrangements are in hand to transfer it to DVD, allowing this historic film to be seen by a new generation of naturalists.

The Society's origins can be traced to the founding of the Haggerston Entomological Society in June 1858. The anniversary will be marked by several events, intended to explore the Society's rôle in circumstances very different from those of mid-Victorian England, as well as to celebrate the achievements of the past 150 years. In June 2008 a selection of articles reprinted from the Society's journals will be published, with commentaries describing their historical context and current significance. The major event will be a one-day conference on "London's Natural History – past, present and future" at the Linnean Society on Saturday 11th October. The proceedings will be published in *The London Naturalist*. Other activities are planned for members and their families.

The Society submitted two applications for external support during the year: to the Esme Fairbairn Foundation (jointly with the Botanical Society of the British Isles), for funding an alien plant mapping scheme, and to Awards for All (Heritage Lottery Fund), to fund outreach activities in connection with the sesquicentenary. Unfortunately, neither was successful. The first may be re-submitted in a revised form while Council will consider what aspects of the second can be supported from the Society's resources.

Membership and communication

66 new members joined during the year. The membership currently stands at 942, compared with 951 at the same time last year and continuing the slow decline of recent years. This is a trend affecting all natural history societies, in Britain and abroad. Council heard a presentation by Professor Oliver Cheesman, Chairman of Invertebrate Link, on the subject of enthusing the young and recruiting our successors. This theme, closely related to the "public interest" issue mentioned above, will be addressed by Council in the coming year.

We regret to record the deaths of the following members (year of joining in brackets): Mike Dennis (1976), Brian Elson (1989), Michael Evans (1990), Mr M. Gladman (2006), Miss Helen Hartley (1986), John Hodge (2000), Geoffrey Taylor (1946), Dick Walker (1976), Jack Wimberley (1983).

Under its new manager, Marc Carlton, the Society's website <http://www.lnhs.org.uk> has been wholly re-structured and is now the primary source of information and updates on activities. One useful feature is the introduction of a facility allowing members and the general public to submit comments and questions. The members-only website

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/LNHS-members> has proved useful for internal communication and discussion. The bi-monthly *Newsletter*, now edited by Emma Hinton, is much appreciated. A membership list, the first for several years, was distributed with the *Newsletter* during the year. Copies are available from the Secretary.

Publications and journals

Last year's Report noted Council's concern over delays to the *London Bird Report* and plans for a double issue to remedy this. *LBR 67/68* for 2002 and 2003 was published during the year, the sequence of species accounts being re-ordered to accommodate nomenclatural changes. The Editor, Andrew Self, has included an impressive section of colour plates. *The London Naturalist 85* for 2005, edited as usual by Keith Hyatt, appeared early in 2007. At 264 pages it is the largest volume yet published, with eighteen substantial articles as well as obituaries and the usual book reviews and Society reports. Bibliographers should note that the printed publication date of both journals is 2006.

Publication of *The beetles of Bookham Common* has been delayed until 2008.

Catherine Schmitt handled sales of back numbers, and to non-members, as follows: *London Bird Report*, 33 copies; *The London Naturalist*, 45; occasional publications, 87.

Members' activities

The number of field meetings organised by the Sections – over a hundred, with Botany accounting for 22, Ecology & Entomology for 26 and Ornithology 53 – showed a small increase on last year. The Society participated in "London's Heathland Heritage" project and Council's representative, Mick Massie, ensured that a number of heathland sites were visited. Other meetings were organised jointly with Butterfly Conservation, Conchological Society, British Plant Gall Society and BSBI, and with local societies and Wildlife Trusts. Topics for Field Study days at Bookham Common included Spiders (Oliver Crundall) and Grasshoppers (Ian Menzies and Gavin Hawgood).

More than twenty indoor meetings were held, including the first of what is intended to be an annual series organised jointly with London and Middlesex Archaeological Society. The inaugural lecturer at the Museum of London was Dr Ian Tyers of Sheffield University whose subject, "Tree ring searches – environment and dating" was highly relevant to the story of London and the Thames.

Fuller accounts of Sectional activities will be published in *The London Naturalist*.

Members of Council (Trustees)

President: John Swindells

Treasurer: Mike West

Secretary: John Edgington

David Bevan

Mark Burgess

Rodney Burton

Keith Cavanagh

David Darrell-Lambert

Nicola Duckworth

Jan Hewlett

Keith Hyatt

Pippa Hyde

Mick Massie

Catherine Schmitt

Pat Sellar

Mark Spencer

Ian Swinney

Administration & Finance Committee

Chairman: Colin Bowlt

Secretary: Nicola Duckworth

Robin Blades

Mark Burgess

Jan Hewlett

Michael Wilsdon

The President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Society are members *ex officio*

LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2006/07

At the end of the financial year on 30 June 2007, the total net assets of the Society were £332,663 compared with £347,016 the previous year.

Income for the year totalled £37,253, compared with £36,465 in 2005/2006. Subscription income (including Gift Aid tax recovered) decreased from £20,152 in the previous year to £19,639 in 2006/2007. Sales of the Society's various publications generated £909, compared with £1,253 in the previous year. The Society's investment in the COIF Charities Deposit Fund generated interest of £15,706 (at an average rate of just over 4.9%).

Overall expenditure during the year was £50,616, compared with £31,978 in the previous year, due mainly to costs associated with the removal of the Society's Library from Imperial College, and writing of London Bird Report 2002-2003 in an attempt to reduce the backlog in production of this journal.

Reserves Policy

The Society's unrestricted general funds can be regarded as expendable endowment since they are invested to provide a regular source of income as well as capital growth, over time.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue to operate.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities.

M J West
Treasurer

9th October 2007

The London Natural History Society
Summarised accounts for the year ended
30th June 2007

These summarised accounts have been extracted from the Society's annual accounts for 2006/2007. They may not contain sufficient information to provide a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Society. For further information on the full accounts, the Independent Examination report on these accounts and the trustees' annual report should be consulted. Copies can be obtained from the Hon. Treasurer, M. J. West, 52 Trinity Road, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 7DD.

The full annual accounts were approved by the trustees on 9th October 2007 but have not yet been submitted to the Charity Commission.

Summarised statement of financial activities
For the year ended 30th June 2007

	Unrestricted Funds	
	2007	2006
	£	£
Incoming resources		
Incoming resources from generated funds:		
<i>Voluntary Income:</i>		
Subscriptions received from members	19,639	20,152
Donations and other income	526	850
<i>Investment Income:</i>		
Interest receivable	16,179	14,210
<i>Incoming resources from charitable activities:</i>		
Publications/ journals income	909	1,253
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total incoming resources	37,253	36,465
Resources expended:		
Charitable activities	46,131	27,546
Governance costs	5,475	4,432
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total resources expended	51,606	31,978
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net movement in Funds	(14,353)	4,487
Fund balance brought forward at 1st July 2006	347,016	342,529
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Fund balance carried forward at 30th June 2007	£332,663	£347,016
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
 Balance sheet as at 30th June 2007		
	2007	2006
Fixed Assets		
Tangible fixed assets	1,633	3,133
Net Current Assets (including cash deposits)	331,030	343,883
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total net Assets	£332,663	£347,016
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Represented by:		
Unrestricted Funds	£332,663	£347,016
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Independent Examiner's Statement to the Trustees

We have examined the summarised financial statements of the London Natural History Society.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Independent Examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with applicable law. My responsibility is to report to you my opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements of the Society.

Basis of Opinion

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charities Commissioners.

Opinion

In my opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2007.

J L Meyer
Queen Alexandra House
Bluecoats Avenue
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Herts
SG14 1PB

Date: 26th October 2007