

Other sections have also secured co-operation among their members ; the Entomologists have had records from 322, whilst a Grey Squirrel report was based on the work of 131 observers. Even the more specialized work of the Geologists on Temporary Sections secured the support of 17 recorders. Again, among the Ornithologists, nearly 150 have joined in the Ornithological Section's bird-ringing schemes and up to and including 1957 had ringed almost 47,000 birds of over 150 species and secured many recoveries of great interest. The rising importance of the Society's ringing station at Beddington Sewage Farm is illustrated by their 1956 ringing total of 3,666 birds of 57 species.

In 1936, the increasing interest in ecology caused the formation of an Ecological Section under the chairmanship of R. W. Robbins. The surveys organized by the section at Limpsfield Common, Bookham Common, Cripplegate bombed site and at Coulsdon secured the co-operation in the field of many specialists. Before bombing stopped attendance at Limpsfield Common, over one hundred had joined in the work and a dozen published the results of studies made there. At Bookham Common, the numbers have been much larger ; even in 1945 over 50 visitors were present. The 31 authors of papers forming the annual survey reports for the Bookham Survey are based on the observations of many observers and Dr. G. Beven has recorded that 35 assisted him in his more recent bird studies there. The value of the papers has secured grants for publication from the Royal Society.

The Entomologists have been able to publish summaries of the status of certain orders of insects known to occur in the London Area. But the large number of species involved will prevent a rapid survey of all the London insect fauna.

During the period the sections have maintained a regular and varied programme of lectures and field excursions catering for both the expert and the beginner. Visitors have approved and have become members. But outside events have also influenced the growth of the Society.

Archaeology of the early twentieth century was based in most local societies on visits to churches and old buildings. With the influence of television and the excavations for new buildings, a trend has become evident towards more active field-work.

Botany has been favoured with a steady flow of illustrated books and progress in taxonomy. In schools, the emphasis has been on function and ecology with less attention being paid to the family characteristics by teachers who were more experienced in field work than those of the previous century. In addition, we have been fortunate in numbering amongst our sectional officials several of the leading botanists in the country, who also serve as officials in the Botanical Society of the British Isles. They have raised our standard of recording considerably.

Ecology has become a normal subject of study in many schools. It has also appealed to the many visitors to the various Field Study Centres.

Entomology has been aided by the need for increasing the number of specialists for work on pests during the wars, and by the consequent expansion in education for the greater number of posts abroad. The Royal Entomological Society, with an increasing world-wide membership, has grown greatly in usefulness during the period. Our Society has been fortunate in having had members who have become officials and Council members of the senior society. In fact the membership of so many

national and local societies by our own members has kept this Society well informed as to the present trends in the science.

The Ornithologists have particularly benefited by the programmes of the B.B.C. on radio and television. They have also gained several interesting sheets of water—the new reservoirs—the haunts of waders when under construction, of ducks and gulls when completed.

The Geologists have had opportunities for study created by the building boom after the wars. Excavations for building materials and on the building sites themselves have enabled original studies to be undertaken in and around the centre of London.

The Ramblers, at first concentrating on the field paths in our Area, have widened their interests, visiting famous houses, museums and factories that use natural resources.

The restrictions in travel during the thirty years imposed by war conditions and by transport strikes have been overcome, but they hindered the carrying out of the programmes. Plans have had to be revised as fares rose, but the Ramblers' excursion trains and the use of more motor coaches have enabled the sections to combine long trips with local visits. At Hounslow, the formation of a South West Middlesex Group has given those living in the neighbourhood the opportunity to organize lectures and excursions without having to spare time and money to join in the main society's functions.

The war of 1939-1945 possibly had the greatest effect on the Society's growth. L. G. Payne dealt with some of the life of the Society during the six years so vital to this island. With him I helped to move the library from the corridor at Keppel Street at the very hour when war was declared. Dr. A. Landsborough Thomson joined us in the corridor at that moment with a couple of his staff. Payne and I shared with other members another Sunday, during the early days of the war when our little British Expeditionary Force was retreating to the Channel. We stood on the ridge of the heath overlooking Oxshott station, listening to the thud of the guns thundering all day, thinking of D. A. T. Morgan and others of our members whom we believed to be in the midst of the shelling. Behind us and over us came a group of mixed aircraft setting forth for rescue work—Dunkirk Sunday. At first, the absence of the younger members was felt most, but when the bombing of London commenced, both field and indoor meetings were cancelled because of the blackout conditions. But we decided to hold a few meetings as soon as possible and at these we became closer knit, exchanging tales of the bomb damage to our homes or places of work and on travel conditions. The enjoyment of the few hours together in the field, or at the meetings which those of us in the Services were able to share with L. G. Payne, J. B. Foster, R. S. R. Fitter and others who were keeping the Society going, gave promise of a strong revival in due time.

In those years the surveys of the ecologists became the backbone of the outdoor programme for they brought the members of the various sections together. In those years also, the all-round naturalists commenced their planning for the days of peace. The wartime loss of several favourite haunts of our members encouraged the consideration of nature reserves and of conservation generally. C. P. Castell commenced his valuable studies preparing the reports for the Government. His work, so admirably supported by Miss C. E. Longfield, was helped by many members and has saved several areas from obliteration by building.

R. S. R. Fitter was writing his *London's Natural History* which when published in 1945 brought us many new members, a recruitment service he has continued with his later books and lectures.

But plans were also made by the Servicemen, and as they returned they took over tasks with a keenness and ability greater for their war experiences. Enthusiasm was catching and the rapid growth in the Society commenced. By 1949 we had passed the 1,000 mark. The projected Birds of London book was under way. The Baron de Worms produced a *List of Butterflies of the London Area*, fifty years after L. B. Prout and Dr. F. J. Buckell had published one for the City of London Society, then using an area with a radius of only 10 miles from the centre.

In 1950, a new list of plants was begun and an exhibition, the first since 1939, was held at the British Museum (Natural History). In the *London Naturalist* for the year, P. W. E. Currie wrote an editorial, probably the best we have ever had, full of suggestions for increasing the value of the journal and of the co-operative work of our members.

The following year, there came the move to the Linnean Society's rooms and by the next year the increasing interest in insects and mammals had emphasized the need for continuing the *London Naturalist* at 200 pages or so. It brought about an increase in subscriptions but no decrease in membership.

In 1953, the closer working with the University of London led to a series of lectures being arranged on our behalf. Dealing with subjects selected by the Council of the Society and often by lecturers proposed by the Society, the University since then has provided a number of lecture series of high standard and related to the amateur work that our members have been able to tackle.

In the remaining years we have seen the completion of the summaries on the status of our birds, plants and moths. New local surveys have been started. The study of mammals has increased. During the past thirty years we have seen a growing interest in conservation and ecology. Castell's reports on conservation in the Area and J. H. G. Peterken's and Dr. F. Rose's papers on the habitats in the London Area have shown the variety of opportunity for studies still available to those who live or work in London. During these thirty years we have seen beginners join the Society, gain tuition and encouragement, and emerge as leaders of the nation's naturalists, the writers and lecturers whose names are known throughout Britain; and many have achieved world-wide recognition. Our Honorary Presidents—Lord Grey, Professor Gowland Hopkins, Professor Major Greenwood and particularly Professor H. Munro Fox, have encouraged and helped the Society.

We have come a long way from the two small groups of collectors of lepidoptera, the working men of Haggerston and the schoolboys of Clapton. Our future as a local natural history society, probably the largest local natural history society in the world, is assured. The Society's adaptability has been proven time and time again. Its usefulness will depend on the co-operation of its members and the encouragement given to them. The fauna and flora of London and its countryside is forever changing, and constantly needs preserving from spoliation. Of the hundreds of its insects that affect the lives of the plants and form the food of the birds little is known of their life histories, so that the scope for further discoveries remains open. In our area we have the encouragement of London University, the facilities of Kew, South Kensington and the other

research establishments, the best of the science libraries and the homes of the national scientific societies : an excellent habitat for a natural history society.

In the years to come, the Society's role in the education of new naturalists will continue at lectures, discussions and in the field. The flora and fauna will be studied more intensively. May the Society long continue to enable Londoners to enjoy the beauty of the living countryside, and to encourage the growth of their friendships made as they observe and study the plants and animals sharing the open spaces in and around the City and County of London.

The Presidents of the London Natural History Society

1914	L. B. PROUT, F.E.S. (dec.)	1934-6	J. E. S. DALLAS (dec.)
1915-19	E. A. COCKAYNE, M.A., D.M., F.R.C.P., F.R.E.S. (dec.)	1937-8	C. L. COLLENETTE, F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.
1920	R. W. ROBBINS (dec.)	1939-45	J. B. FOSTER, B.A.
1921-4	E. B. BISHOP (dec.)	1946-8	L. G. PAYNE, F.Z.S. (dec.)
1925-7	S. AUSTIN, F.Z.S. (dec.)	1949-51	L. PARMENTER, F.R.E.S.
1928-9	W. E. GLEGG, F.Z.S. M.B.O.U. (dec.)	1952-4	J. H. G. PETERKEN, F.L.S.
1930-1	L. J. TREMAYNE, F.Z.S.	1955-6	R. C. HOMES, M.B.O.U.
1932-3	Miss C. E. LONGFIELD, F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.	1957-	C. P. CASTELL, B.Sc., F.G.S.

General Secretaries

The office was created in 1919.

1919-1925	W. E. GLEGG, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. (dec.)
1926-1928	J. P. HARDIMAN, C.B.E., B.A. (dec.)
1929-1945	A. B. HORNBLOWER (dec.)
1945-1955	H. A. TOOMBS
1956-	Mrs. L. M. P. SMALL



Photo by Joan Small

PLATE 1

“The Brownlow Arms.”
Headquarters from 1859 to 1887.