

LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Registered Charity 206228

Report of the Society for the year ending 30 June 2017

Objects

The objects of the Society are the study and recording of natural history, archaeology and other kindred subjects, especially within twenty miles of St Paul's Cathedral, the promotion of scientific investigations, the appreciation and conservation of the natural environment and the publication in the Society's journals of scientific and educational papers. Activities and achievements in respect of these objectives are described below.

Governance: Council, Committees and Sections

A Council of Trustees, comprising the officers (President, Treasurer, Secretary), up to ten representatives of the members at large and one representative of each of the Society's Sections (currently five) governs the society. During the year Sarah Barnes represented the Ecology & Entomology section, Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne the London Bird Club section and David Bevan the Botany section. Stuart Cole remained as representative for the Bookham Common Survey. The post of Hampstead Heath Survey representative remained unfilled in this year, although good progress reinvigorating that survey itself is being made.

No President was appointed at the 2015 or 2016 AGMs and the society has operated with this post unfilled for the whole of the year.

Rule 4(c), limiting a continuous period of elected membership to five years, came into force in December 2005 and was first implemented at the AGM in 2010. Under this rule Catherine Schmitt, David Bevan, Sarah Barnes and Stuart Cole are obliged to stand down from council at the 2017 AGM.

The Administration and Finance Committee, chaired by Michael Wilsdon, dealt with much delegated business.

Membership

86 new members joined during the year, compared with 120 last year. The number of individual members currently stands at 906, compared with 921 at the same time last year, and 874 the previous year.

Although membership is down slightly it remains relatively steady which is encouraging after a few years where we have had concerns about a potential long term declining trend.. Council continues to explore ideas for encouraging and increasing our membership. However as previously commented in these reports

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membership and recruitment is not a matter for Council alone. We need members to tell us what they want from the society, what we should do more of and what would encourage people they know to join. Members who know people interested in natural history who are not LNHS members are encouraged to convince them to join us; to point out the obvious as in previous years if every member recruited just one other person we would double our membership.

Remember that the Society is not just for experts – field meetings are planned with beginners in mind, and newcomers are always encouraged to play an active part in the Society's affairs. If you know someone who is unsure whether to join invite them along to one of the field or indoor meetings.

We have been notified of and record with regret the deaths of the following members during the year to 30 June (date of joining in brackets): Professor Harry Bradford (1986), Mr Ken Hill (1984), Mr Jack Laundon (1953), Mr Tim Neal (1964), Mrs Henrietta Phipps (1975), Mr Leslie Rodgers (1972), Miss Hilda Rutland (1961), Miss Mary Seaton (1978), Mr Ron Todd (1978), Mr Peter Walding (1984), Mr David Wills (1982), and Mrs Elinor Wiltshire (1988)

Finances

The annual financial report accompanies this annual report. The society continues to receive a significant amount of income as a result of members who pay under the gift aid scheme, and members are thanked for doing so. Any members who pay sufficient tax to be eligible for the gift aid scheme but currently not signed up to it are encouraged to consider doing so.

Activities

The Botany Section continued to focus on field work for the Flora of London Project aiming to produce a new flora of the London area to replace Rodney Burton's 1983 Flora of the London Area. The Flora remains a high profile and important society project, members are strongly encouraged to join our recording meetings or submit their own records.

The Ecology and Entomology section continued its well attended programme of field and indoor meetings covering a diverse range of taxa and developing a group of regular attendees as well as more occasional joiners. Catherine Schmitt again represented the LNHS at the annual exhibition of the British Entomological and Natural History Society. During the year work for the new Butterflies of the London Area has continued with support from GIGL the London records centre.

Under the brand of the London Bird Club the Society has continued to run a series of field meetings showing the diversity of bird life that the LNHS area has to offer. Indoor

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meetings have continued to prove popular at their new location of Burgh House in Hampstead.

The London Bird Atlas was finalised and has gone into print under the joint publishing arrangement with John Beaufoy Publishing. The book will be available from book sellers from the end of November 2017 (so strictly outside the period covered by this report). Thanks to the advertising support from 13 companies all of the costs have been covered and the publication is in profit.

The Society added to its presence on social media by setting up a group on the Meet Up platform to promote out meetings and field trips. This has proved successful in attracting new people to LNHS events.

Recording and recorders

Thanks go to our recorders for all their continuing hard work.

Journals and other publications

The London Naturalist **95** (2016) was distributed to members. The new editorial team are continuing to produce a high quality journal of which the society can be proud.

The London Bird Report for 2015 was published. The editorial board continues its hard work getting these reports out in a timely fashion. There are a lot of stages necessary in getting these out involving record submission, verification, validation, processing, and subsequent writing up so it is a tribute to their work that this all gets turned around so effectively.

Work on the London Flora, London Bird Atlas and Butterflies of the London Area continued and have been discussed in the Activities report above.

Library

David Allen the LNHS librarian continues his excellent work operating and maintaining our library in its home in the Angela Marmont Centre for UK Biodiversity at the Natural History Museum's Darwin Centre Phase 2 making it available to the public (for reference) and LNHS members (for borrowing). The library is an important resource for members providing access to a wide range of out of print and hard to find natural history titles, and unlike many other libraries the Angela Marmont Centre is very welcoming of people bringing in specimens to try to identify. Members are encouraged to make use of it.

Conservation of the natural environment

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Rich habitats are still under threat from developers. The Society is often asked to lend its voice to protests against such developments. Council's view is that an appropriate campaigning body in such cases is the London Wildlife Trust, the LNHS being better placed to provide evidence-based advice if required. Our partnership with GiGL helps ensure that our high quality validated records are available for such purposes.

This report has been prepared with due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.