

## The Society 1858 to 1957

THE history of our Society was surveyed in the two Presidential Addresses of the late L. G. Payne, "The Story of our Society," delivered in 1947 and 1948\*. In the present issue we have attempted to cover the ground in a different way, with contributions from four of our members who have each played a prominent part in guiding the Society's affairs. We begin with the first part of the Presidential Address delivered by Mr. C. P. Castell on the occasion of the Society's centenary meeting at Church House on March 11, 1958. Then follow some personal reminiscences of the early days contributed by Mr. L. J. Tremayne—who was President of our North London parent society as long ago as 1899, and of the L.N.H.S. in 1930-1—and by Mr. C. L. Collenette, President in 1937-8. Finally Mr. L. Parmenter, President in 1949-51, deals with the last thirty years of the Society.

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### The Society's First Sixty Years

By C. P. CASTELL, B.Sc., F.G.S.

The London Natural History Society arose from the union, in 1913, of the City of London Entomological and Natural History Society and the North London Natural History Society, but this year we are celebrating the Centenary of the founding of the parental Haggerstone Entomological Society.

In April, 1856, the first number of the *Entomologists' Weekly Intelligencer* appeared, price 1d., evidence of the existence of considerable interest in entomology at that time. Two years later, a letter from Henry Aris appeared in the issue for April 12, 1858; it stated that "As many entomologists reside in the N. of London, I think a local society might be formed. I am ready to assist in the construction if anyone will step forward and make a beginning." On June 10, 1858, the original convening meeting was held, with seven entomologists present. The formal inauguration of the Society of 20 members took place on June 17.

By the end of the year the membership had grown to 35 and Edward Newman had become a prominent member. The subscription was a penny a week and members met every Thursday evening from 9 till 10.30 at the Carpenter's Arms, Martha Street, Haggerstone. In the first year, the Society started a Library, spending 19s. on books in the first quarter and in the second 30s. for Wood's *Index Entomologicus* in four volumes, with supplement, 1839. This original purchase is still in our library.

Nine months later the Society took over a large room above the Brownlow Arms, Brownlow Street, Haggerstone (now Dalston), which remained its home for nearly 30 years (Plate 1). In apparent deference to the views of some of the members who would have preferred to hold the meetings in a private house, the Society's address was given as No. 10 Brownlow Street, the actual number of the public house.

By 1860 membership exceeded 60 and not only was a library being built up but a collection too, for in that year a 40-drawer cabinet was acquired. By 1867 the Society possessed 200 entomological and botanical books and 2,000 specimens, and in the following year the Society even

paid part of the expenses of a member to collect in Scotland on its behalf and also held its first Annual Exhibition. By 1870 the Exhibition was so popular that visitors queued outside before opening time and a report stated that "the Exhibition passed off in a most quiet and orderly manner and not an insect received the slightest injury." Membership exceeded 100 by 1874.

In his Presidential Address of 1908, A. W. Mera remembered going as a visitor in about 1878 to one of the meetings in a spacious room over the bar at the Brownlow Arms, "each member being provided with a long clay pipe, while the necessary refreshments were provided from below, under which soothing influences the science of Entomology was keenly pursued. . . . Now things have changed and for many years we have been fortunate in being able to hold our meetings in surroundings more appropriate if less convivial." These were the palmy days of the Society when its room was the meeting place of almost all the best-known entomologists such as Doubleday, Stainton, E. Newman and S. Stevens.

In 1887 a combined agitation among members to get away from licensed premises and to a more central position resulted in the removal to Albion Hall, London Wall, and the new title of the City of London Entomological and Natural History Society.

1891 was an important year, marking the first appearance of the Society's *Transactions*. Before this date, accounts of the meetings and some of the papers read were published in various entomological journals. In volume 1, we learn that there were 80 members, the annual subscription had gone up to 5s., and meetings took place on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 8 till 10 p.m. at 33 Finsbury Square. The *Transactions* were mostly the proceedings of the meetings, with details of exhibits, short papers and discussions. In that year Dr. Buckell read a paper on "The Lepidoptera of a London Garden" and called attention to the need for the compilation of a list of the fauna of the London District. Early in 1892 the Council was appealing for records made since 1880 and defined the London District to mean within 10 miles of Charing Cross, including South London. Although the Society was overwhelmingly lepidopterist, yet there were members interested in other branches of natural history, giving a little justification for the title Entomological and Natural History Society. The President, Dr. J. A. Clarke, was appointed recorder for Birds, F. J. Buckell for Lepidoptera and H. Heasler for Coleoptera. The Society was now meeting at the London Institution, thanks to the friendly offices of Lord Avebury.

In 1893 Dr. J. A. Clarke gave as his Presidential Address a review of the list of London Birds compiled for the Society's London Fauna Lists, but it does not appear to have been published.

A conversazione was held in 1895 and "the hum of conversation was pleasantly interrupted at intervals by vocal and instrumental selections arranged by the organist of St. Andrew's, Plaistow." One member exhibited *twenty* drawers of "Micros" which were "universally admired." Mr. F. J. Hanbury provided "rare and extinct" (or should it have been exterminated?) dried British plants, chiefly orchids. There were stuffed birds, nests and eggs and a fine display of 20 microscopes. In contrast to this enthusiasm, we are reminded in the Annual Report that the Society, for the first time for many years, had "paid its expenses entirely out of its own pocket without accepting generosity at the hands of its worthy Treasurer, whose purse strings have been found to be loosely tied when

the needs of the Society became very pressing." But the Society still owed him £5 10s. on account of previous deficits. A MS. list of records of Coleoptera of the London Area was placed in the Society's library and represented more than half the total number of British species.

1896 is recorded as "memorable for the Society's debt to the Treasurer of £16 5s. 8d." The Society was "wallowing in financial mire" and the Treasurer had resigned, but "not without a crowning act of benevolence. The Treasurer at one fell swoop, actually, but not morally, annihilated that part of the debt due to him by paying £5 of it for life membership and presenting the balance of £1 11s. 2d. as a donation. What can be said of generosity like this?" We gained our first life member, but there was still £9 14s. 6d. due to the Secretary.

The *Conversazione* of 1897 was enlivened not only by a demonstration of X-rays and an address by Lord Walsingham, but by songs, pianoforte solos and trombone solos. The Council complains that "our young men are afraid they cannot write anything to which it would be worth the Society's while to listen" and that "if a man has reached the age of 40 without reading a paper it is pretty certain he will never read one." Membership is down to 63 and the subscription up to 7s. 6d.

The President, J. W. Tutt, drew attention in 1898 to the existence of a rival natural history society north of the Thames and recommends an immediate union, adding that "the present condition is scientifically deplorable." His advice was apparently ignored. This was the year of publication of the first part of the "*Lepidoptera of the London District*" by J. F. Buckell and L. B. Prout.

In spite of the patronage of Lord Walsingham, Sir John Lubbock and H. T. Stainton and the presidency of such eminent entomologists as J. W. Tutt, L. B. Prout, Dr. J. A. Clarke and A. W. Mera, the Society continued for the next fourteen years as a society of Lepidopterists with its membership stagnating between 70 and 80 before dropping to 67 in 1913. In 1906, the Secretary had complained that "for some occult reason it is apparently impossible for the Society to secure more than 70-75 members." There were repeated complaints in the annual reports that visitors were rarely seen at the meetings. It is clear from the *Transactions* that the meetings were run by a small body of enthusiastic and a few very eminent lepidopterists. The scientific value of their work and of the papers in the *Transactions* was remarkable for such a small band of workers; but that, by itself, was insufficient to maintain the Society.

We must now turn to the Society which had become such a serious rival in 1898, and go back to 1886 when four boys at the Grocers' Company's School at Hackney formed the Clapton Naturalists' Field Club, holding meetings at the members' houses. The frontispiece of the *London Naturalist* for 1929 shows a party of these and other boys, aged about 15 to 17, on a day's excursion at Folkestone in May, 1888. The four founder members continued a life-long membership of the Society. Later in 1888, a meeting room was offered at the school and the title was changed to the Grocers' Company's School Science Club, and the President was J. W. Gregory who became an eminent professor of geology.

The Society grew rapidly and at about this time S. Austin, A. Bacot, M. Culpin, R. W. Robbins and L. J. Tremayne joined, all serving in later years as Presidents. Mr. Tremayne is the only survivor, and until recent years he served the Society continuously, holding at one time or another almost every office both of the Society and of its sections.



In 1892 the Society began meeting at the North East London Institution, Dalston Lane, and changed its name to the North London Natural History Society, the eminent botanist F. J. Hanbury being its first President and Tremayne its Secretary.

The North London Society had from the start much wider interests than the City of London Society, all branches of natural history, including astronomy, meteorology and geology finding a place in its programme. There were monthly field meetings, an evening meeting twice a month and a debate every six months. It is interesting to note that a Miss Nicholson gave a description of her summer holiday in 1893, when "persons desiring to become members could obtain full particulars from the Secretary." Next year we see the word "persons" replaced by "ladies and gentlemen" and Miss E. L. Simmons was giving some notes on *her* holiday. She was on the Council the following year and had married the curator, Mr. R. W. Robbins, in 1897. Last year her sister presented the portrait of Mr. Robbins which hangs in our Library. Was this welcome to ladies, combined of course with the equally broadminded natural history outlook, one of the secrets of the Society's success? Its rival waited until 1910 before admitting a lady member and then apparently only because her husband joined as well.

One of our oldest members is our Hon. Vice-President, Mr. Oliver G. Pike, the famous bird photographer, who joined in 1897 and gave a lantern lecture entitled "Notes on the nesting habits of birds." I was surprised to find that, in 1902, Mr. Pike lectured on "The Haunts of our Rarer Birds," illustrated by lantern and *cinematograph*, and Mr. T. Jessop lectured on "Colour Photography" with lantern illustrations, presumably also in colour.

What appears to be the first publication of the North London Society other than its programme, is the slim Annual Report for 1904, which continued in that form until 1914.

The Society was now meeting on the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7.45 at the Hackney Technical Institute. The meeting room, with the library and collections, was open every Tuesday evening from 7 till 10. The subscription was 5s. and membership 78. There was now a Research Section, with four Research Committees—Botany, Biology, Lepidoptera and Protection (the preservation of Fauna and Flora, Footpaths, etc.). Here we see the origin of some of our present sections. We also see the first definition of the Society's area, as within 20 miles of St. Paul's, North of the Thames, and the adoption of 12 divisions for recording purposes.

In 1907 our Hon. Vice-President, Mr. C. L. Collenette, joined the Society and gave a lantern lecture on "Observations on Birds in the neighbourhood of Epping Forest." The following year he was on the Council and had initiated an Ornithological Research Committee and so, 50 years ago, arose our Ornithological Section, which must now be the largest local ornithological society in the country, if not in the world.

It was now the turn of the North London Society to face the occult restrictive influence on its membership, which persisted at about 100. It was decided to combat this by moving headquarters to the City and, in 1909, a room was engaged in Salisbury House, Finsbury Circus. The same year also saw the formation of the Archaeological Committee, with Tremayne as Secretary, and the inauguration of the Chingford Branch. By the end of the following year, membership had jumped to 143. The

Ornithological Committee was already co-operating with the Bird Ringing Scheme just initiated by the *British Birds* journal, and had ringed 155 birds of 16 species. One is startled, however, to read that the type collection of British birds' eyes is growing until we see that an oological cabinet is being purchased to house them.

In 1911, the Chingford Branch had the remarkable number of 600-700 visitors to its Exhibition. So Mr. Collenette, not to be outdone by Chingford, formed a Woodford Branch which in 1912 had an audience of more than 120 to hear Oliver Pike's lecture "In Birdland." The Society's membership was now 211.

1913 was a sad year for many members of the City of London Society, when it was decided to merge with its stronger rival. Both societies were now meeting in Hall 20, Salisbury House, on alternate Tuesdays, but on November 4 they met together and sanctioned amalgamation to form the London Natural History Society. Neither of the societies' finances was flourishing and the new one started 1914 with £15 joint Life Composition Funds and balances of £1 8s. 9d. from the City of London Society and 5d. from the North London Society. The 20 mile radius for the Society's area was immediately extended South of the Thames.

An interesting experiment was started in 1913 in the setting up of a bird sanctuary by arrangement with the owner of a piece of woodland, Hatch Grove, at Chingford. Nesting boxes were set up and nestlings ringed, but by the end of 1914 a new owner cancelled the arrangement and the Society had to abandon the scheme. The effects were sold and realized enough to buy Vols. 1 and 2 of *British Birds* for our library.

The Woodford Branch became a war casualty in 1916, but surprisingly enough, the height of the war saw the inauguration of the present system of sections in 1917 in place of the Research Committee, i.e. Archaeological, Botanical, Lepidoptera, Ornithological and a new Plant Gall Section. In 1920 the Society moved its headquarters to Winchester House, Old Broad Street, where it remained until the transfer to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 1930. Up till now meetings had been held for many years on the first and third Tuesday in each month, but from 1931, except for the war years, weekly meetings have been held.

Until 1921 the Society's publication was in the form of *Transactions* which included the proceedings of the meetings, but in that year they ceased to appear and the title was changed to *The London Naturalist*.

### The North London Society in 1892 and onwards

By L. J. TREMAYNE

The charm of the original Grocers' Club was its schoolboy friendships and butterfly-collecting. We were few, but we knew one another more or less intimately. The original syllabus I think was slight—only a few meetings and fewer excursions. But there was a great deal besides that. There were rowing excursions up the Lea. There were even bathing excursions in the Lea, the thought of which still makes me shudder. Based as we inevitably were upon Epping Forest, some of us were always likely to be prowling about there every week-end, and were always liable to meet others of us on the same prowl. I did not take part in all these outings, because I lived on the other side of London. But I was often at Clive Smith's house, and took part in many of them. Nor were we confined to Epping Forest. We had an annual excursion to the New

Forest at Whitsun, which for some of us was the greatest event of the year. And we had plenty of excursions elsewhere.

Even after we were turned out of the School and became the North London Natural History Society the same conditions still obtained. The men who now joined the schoolboys—Louis Prout, Arthur Battley, Charley Nicholson and others—no doubt brought with them a more scientific interest in the study of Lepidoptera. No one could associate Prout, for instance, with anything but entomology of the most serious kind. But he was a thoroughly good fellow and a pleasant companion. And so were they all. We remained a local body united by friendship and common interests.

We held an annual Exhibition, somewhere about Christmas, which half the town came to see.

On a walking tour in the Chilterns in 1904, led by Arthur Bacot, I first made the acquaintance of Edmund Browne Bishop, who had recently joined the Society, an acquaintance which quickly ripened into a lifelong friendship, and has given me some of the happiest days of my life.

Meanwhile the Society was slowly and imperceptibly changing and expanding. The lady members, I think, were a pretty early development. They were not brought in without a certain amount of opposition, and one promising young member indignantly resigned in disgust. But they soon made good and prospered.

Then there were the inevitable gains and losses. Arthur Battley died young. Charley Nicholson in time retired to the depths and wilds of Cornwall. Prout retired into the Museum, gave up his life to the Lepidoptera and became a world specialist on the Geometridae. Jim Simes (one of the schoolboys) left us early, became a Public Messenger to the Post Office, and an authority on the butterflies of Europe. He rejoined the Society many years later.

But before Prout retired he prevailed upon the Council to institute four private committees for research work in entomology, botany, biology and protection (spoliation). Note that there was no committee for ornithology.

On the other hand new members were constantly coming in, some of great importance. Such were John Oldham Braithwaite, the chemist, who founded the Chingford branch, and Cyril Collenette, who later brought in the Woodford branch, and recently completed fifty years of valuable service to the Society. Collenette came to us as an ornithologist, and repaired Prout's omission by forming an ornithological research committee, a work in which I had the privilege of assisting him. But perhaps our greatest acquisition was that powerful personality Charles Smith Nicholson, F.L.S., who ultimately became President, and our presiding genius for some years.

But all this time the Society had not remained at the Hackney Institute. From there we moved to the Sigdon Road Board School, and when we had to leave that, came the great change. After a great deal of hesitation and deliberation we moved to the City. I fancy C. S. Nicholson was largely instrumental in this. I had been advocating it for some time.

Equally slowly, but surely, the character of the Society must have been altering all this time.

Any extension of our interests must at first, I think, have been based upon Randolph William Robbins, one of the greatest members the Society ever had, who spent his whole life, from his school days until he



retired into Devon shortly before his death, in the Society's close service. Robbins was one of the few among us who had other interests than lepidoptera. He was always a keen botanist. But he was interested in nearly all sciences, and many other things as well. C. S. Nicholson was a botanist pure and simple. Austin took up ornithology and archaeology. Bishop brought in a warm interest in botany, as well as a general love of natural history. Collenette gave a great impetus to ornithology, and later diverged into other branches.

In 1915 we gained a most important new member in Harold Burkill, who brought in the study of plant galls, hitherto untouched by us. He quickly threw himself into the Society's work, soon became an official, and remained a most devoted, loyal and valuable servant of the Society for many years practically up to the time of his death.

With the move to the City the character of the Society changed. We were no longer a local body, appealing only to N.E. London. We were now the *London N.H.S.*, appealing to everyone within reach of London. The change took a little time to get going, but the effect was certain, and we presently began to attract members from all points of the compass.

Then came the crash, the 1914-1918 War, scattering us in all directions. Many were on service, many others in civilian jobs. The Society, naturally, got into a bad way. It did manage to survive, but not by much.

By way of resuscitation, the sections were formed just before the end of the war. Prout's research committees were thrown open to all members. The scheme was only carried after great opposition, but it was sound, and it worked, though it took some time to work. The election of J. P. Hardiman in 1921 gave a great impetus to the Ornithological Section, which for a time carried the Society on its back.

## The North London Society in 1907

By C. L. COLLENETTE

Fifty years ago the North London Natural History Society, as it then was, numbered 70 full members, with 28 associates, the latter living too far from London to attend meetings.

At the present time, the young naturalist can acquire or borrow well illustrated text-books on any subject, scan more periodicals than he can read and hear of more meetings than he can possibly attend. Half a century ago it was perhaps not so easy. The writer searched for his wild flowers in John's *Flowers of the Field*, which had no adequate illustrations; the Lepidoptera in Furneaux's *Butterflies and Moths*, which gave only a small selection of the smaller moths; and birds from the then very exciting and beautifully illustrated books by Richard Kearton and Oliver Pike. The weekly *Country-side*, first published in 1905, and *British Birds*, which appeared in 1907, opened a new world. Then, at last, one heard of a Society where one could meet, once a fortnight, people who really thought natural history a most absorbing occupation, and did not smile in a superior fashion if one was seen with a butterfly net or occupied a corner of the garden with wild plants. There was a very friendly and welcoming spirit at these meetings, and perhaps owing to the late hour of starting, many came early to talk and compare notes.

We met at the Amherst Club, Stoke Newington, with two meetings a month, for which members paid an annual subscription of five shillings. Meetings commenced at 8 p.m., illustrating the fact that hours of business

were long and that some members lived close enough to walk to the meetings. There were few evening attractions in those days, and the more prominent members attended every meeting irrespective of subject. The average attendance reached one-third of the membership. Exhibits were sometimes surprisingly numerous, with the emphasis on botany, and with the insects a good second. This did not prevent ornithology from providing the most popular meeting of 1907—a slide lecture by Oliver Pike—which filled the small room to overflowing. Meetings finished late, and the writer vividly remembers his unlighted walk in winter past the lake in Highams Park and across the Woodford Golf Links.

Official excursions were not numerous, and the Society virtually closed down in July and August, in deference to the almost universal custom of seaside holidays in those months. In the winter months, Mr. and Mrs. Clive Smith of Highgate ran a club known as the Chingford Plain Hockey Club, which appeared in no official report, but was supported exclusively by Society members. Arthur Bacot was a very efficient back, and Dr. and Mrs. Greenwood played, the latter in goal, where her long skirt was very useful. Some of the members walked in Epping Forest during the morning and returned for the game, and we won several of our matches, particularly on our own ground, which was somewhat rough. After two or three seasons it became more difficult to raise a team and play ceased.

In 1907 the Society's accounts showed a deficit of £4, or nearly one-fifth of the total income, and there was talk of raising the annual subscription. "Sending round the hat" was vetoed by the Council, although this method was employed in other cases—for an insect cabinet, and, somewhat later, for a cabinet to house the Society's collection of birds' eggs and again for fencing and nesting boxes for the new bird sanctuary. In this case, with the unofficial approval of the younger members of Council, a subscription dance was held in aid of the funds, in the Morley Hall, Leytonstone, organized by S. W. Bradley and the writer. It was well attended and a great success in every way but one, as the Society benefited to the extent of only five shillings.

## The Years 1927 to 1957

By L. PARMENTER

In 1927, the Society had its first big jump in the numbers of new members enrolled. Twenty-seven had been elected in 1926, but in 1927, 65 joined. Lord Grey of Falloden, K.G., P.C., became our first Honorary President and Messrs. F. J. Hanbury and L. B. Prout, members since 1892 and 1906 respectively, our first Honorary Vice-Presidents. New rules and a new type of Programme were produced. The membership of the Society consisted of 279 members and associates. The sectional rolls were:—Archaeology 50, Botany 61, Entomology and Plant Galls 53, Ornithology 98, Ramblers 35 and Chingford Branch 42.

A Society's growth, influence and strength depends partly on the personalities of its members (and particularly of its officers) and on the amount of time, energy, knowledge and money they can devote to the Society's activities; and partly to external influences. By 1927, few of the old City of London Entomological Society were left. They included the Rev. C. N. Burrows, Dr. E. A. Cockayne and Messrs. R. Adkin and C. H. Williams. However, from the other parent society, the North London Natural History Society, were several who had become important



in the Society's ranks—Messrs. S. Austin, E. B. Bishop, C. L. Collenette, F. G. Dell, A. B. Hornblower, L. B. Prout, R. W. Robbins and L. J. Tremayne.

It seemed that at last the effects of the 1914-1918 War had been overcome and expansion was in the air. The depression was to come, also transport strikes and, far greater and more disturbing, another war. The Society has emerged through all these troubles with increasing strength. The difficulties tended to discourage the non-enthusiastic but gave greater freedom to the enthusiast.

Individuals join a Society for a variety of reasons and this has been our experience. Not all find fulfilment of their hopes or aims, but their reward to a large extent has depended on the amount and quality of their own work and co-operation in the Society's activities. Thus the virility of the various Sections and the success and number of their indoor and outdoor meetings, etc., has depended on the individuals who have been able to co-operate and on the amount and quality of that co-operation. Twenty-five of us are left out of the 279 of the Society of 1927. Of those who have died during the intervening period, the man whose influence in the Society was greatest during his lifetime, and is still evident in the Society's organization and research work, was R. W. Robbins. In the *London Naturalist* for 1941, a volume whose slimness was due to the war, there is a tribute to his work and character. One of the original schoolboy founders of the Clapton Naturalists' Field Club, in time to be the North London Natural History Society, he was an all-round amateur naturalist. Among his official duties in the Society he had been its President, and Secretary and Chairman of three sections—Botany, Ecology and Entomology. He read 56 papers to the Society over 50 years. There have been many others who have given excellent service to the Society, many that are still with us, but his contribution remains outstanding. His wisdom in Council, ability in the field and his charm as host at Limpsfield will be remembered always by those privileged to have known him.

In 1927, when the member's subscription was only 7s. 6d., the Society was operating at a cost of 13s. per head, the *London Naturalist* being published as a result of donations. In the volume for that year we see the commencement of a list of Plants of the London Area with R. W. Robbins as one of the three editors. This publication increased the keenness and numbers in the Botanical Section. The other sections had recording schemes—Archaeology its Church inspection reports, Entomology and Plant Galls lists of interesting discoveries, and Ornithology its annual list of the birds in the London area and reports on uncommon species. The Ramblers' Section had only been formed a year before but had commenced holding long week-end outings in addition to the regular all-day meetings every month. R. W. Robbins became Chairman of the reformed Entomology Section in 1928 when it separated from the Plant Galls Section.

In 1928 W. E. Glegg became President after serving as Secretary to the Society for several years. He was becoming known throughout the country as a competent ornithologist, preparing his *History of the Birds of Essex* of 1929 to be followed in 1935 by his *History of the Birds of Middlesex*. He inspired the Ornithological Section which was expanding steadily. In this year, the first *List of the Birds of the London Area* was produced, summarizing the Society's records. The Entomology Section brought out its first report on British Butterflies. The publications

of these two sections and the appearance of a further part of the botanical list undoubtedly increased interest in the Society and in these three sections in particular. Taking over the duties of recorder to the Ornithological Section and helping to produce the 1928 list, assisted by Messrs. S. Austin and C. S. Bayne, made me realize that most members wanted to help in some research project, however simple, and wished to make some contribution to the furtherance of the study of natural history. From a small local group our members were becoming known over a widening area as their contributions to the national publications were accepted, and as a result experienced naturalists joined our ranks.

In December 1948, L. G. Payne continued his history of the Society as his Presidential address, dealing with the period from 1914, the year of the amalgamation of the City of London Entomological and Natural History Society with the North London Natural History Society, up to 1945, the end of the Second World War. In his account he mentioned the effects of the two wars, the general strike, the world-wide depression and the transport strikes; all set-backs to the Society's progress but successfully overcome. Membership rose steadily. The 279 of 1927 has now grown to 1550. Newcomers in the period have totalled 3,596, 320 joining in 1957. From a Society small enough for all the active members to know each other we have become more specialized, and although the Ornithological Section outnumbers the other sections so completely, the average member is interested in other wild things as well as birds. The many all-round naturalists who have served on the Council and particularly as Presidents have helped to keep the broad viewpoint.

The growth during the period has brought changes in the meeting-places. In 1927 we were meeting in the basement of Winchester House, Old Broad Street, in the City. As the evening approached closing-time, lights were dimmed by the caretaker and at times an over-enthusiastic and eloquent speaker concluded his lecture in the dark. The library was hidden behind frosted glass doors panelling two sides of the room and the books were rarely borrowed. In 1930, our numbers had expanded to such an extent as to require new quarters and we were fortunate to be allowed to use the lecture rooms of the new London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The library installed in the basement was accessible, and became a focal point before and after meetings for more social chats than were possible in the formal atmosphere of the lecture rooms. The epidiascope was an improvement on our old equipment and with the occasional use of the film projector, the success of the lectures brought a flow of new members. Later, the Art Workers' Guildhall was used for many meetings and more recently we have been permitted to use the rooms of the Linnean Society at Burlington House, Piccadilly. The removal of the library and collections to the basement of 25 Eccleston Square, brought problems but also gave an opportunity to the sections to hold informal meetings and demonstrations, widening the scope of the indoor programme. There is still a need, however, for accommodation for the library and collections in the same building as that in which the weekly lectures can be given.

Prior to the 1939-45 War, the Society had held well-attended exhibitions each year, organized by Mr. C. L. Collenette, and the annual dinners of the Ramblers' Section had become the Society's Dinner. They enabled old friends to meet and potential members to sample the Society's organization and friendly atmosphere: busy days for the Secretary who

from 1926 to 1928 was Mr. J. P. Hardiman, a keen ornithologist and bird protectionist. He handed over to Mr. A. B. Hornblower, who continued as Secretary until Mr. H. A. Toombs took over in 1945 to be followed by Mrs. Small in 1956. To them and the two who served so long in their offices, F. G. Dell as Treasurer and H. J. Burkill as Minuting Secretary and the others of the 308 ladies and gentlemen who have served the Society as its Officers, Council or members of Sectional Committees, a great debt is due.

The two parent Societies, the City of London and the North London, were both started by entomologists. In the 1890's, research was the aim of the leaders of these Societies. Louis Prout and A. W. Bacot were becoming outstanding among British entomologists. They had able supporters in R. W. Robbins and L. J. Tremayne, the latter having served as Secretary during J. W. Tutt's Presidency of the City of London Society. Tutt, a great figure in British entomology, urged the amalgamation of the two societies in 1898 but this did not come into effect until 1914. By then, Research Committees were functioning and in 1917 these were reorganized as Sections.

It is this organization of research which Robbins and Tremayne fostered throughout the years and which became the backbone of the sections' activities. The evidence is in the pages of the *London Naturalist* and in the *London Bird Report* (which was first published separately in 1936 when the Society had passed the 500 membership mark). During the years 1927 to 1957, there have been 164 authors of papers in the *London Naturalist*, whilst in the shorter period the *London Bird Report* has had 33 authors. These journals, however, recorded the research work of a much larger number of members and friends. Although we have always had eminent taxonomists and biologists in our ranks, the bulk of our numbers have joined with little knowledge, aiming to acquire more and to assist in simple observational work in their first years with the Society. From the observations of members made in their spare time, the sections have organized comprehensive reports annually, from time to time summarizing the results. The same trend has been seen throughout the country and gave rise to the formation of the British Trust for Ornithology.

The Botanists commenced publishing in 1927, as previously mentioned, a List of Plants of the London Area, in the *London Naturalist*. In 1957, a second and greatly enlarged list, edited by D. H. Kent and J. E. Lousley, has been completed. The recorders numbered 393. The collection and publication of the data forming these lists has stimulated many botanists in and around London. The annual reports of the Ornithological Section were first summarized in 1928 and a steady increase in observers followed. By 1957, 1417 members and friends had sent in records. The standard of recording had risen during the years. The ecological viewpoint has been encouraged and with up to 336 recorders in a year the Area has been well covered. The culmination of the work was the publication of the *Birds of the London Area* in 1957 under the authorship of R. C. Homes and his Committee—Miss C. M. Acland and Messrs. C. B. Ashby, C. L. Collenette, R. S. R. Fitter, E. R. Parrinder and B. A. Richards. The co-operative studies during the period have been many. Among the outstanding were the Heron Census, Great Crested Grebe Census, Duck Counts, Starling Enquiry, Gravel Pit Enquiry and the Beddington Sewage Farm Survey. The 1928 list of birds totalled 192 species, but as many as 190 have since been seen in a single year and the total number of species is now 245.