

# **BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB**

*Founded 5 October 1892*

*Registered Charity No. 1169733*

## **CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW FOR 2017**

In summary the main events of 2017 may be accounted for under the following heads :

- BOC CIO and legacy arrangements
- Accounts for 2017
- BBOC online
- Meetings in 2017
- BOC publications
- BOC website
- Trustees and administration

### **BOC CIO and Legacy Arrangements**

The Club's new constitutional format, based on the Charity Commission's 'Foundation' model requires the transfer of all BOC 'old style' assets to the new BOC CIO and the Trustees to pass a formal resolution dissolving BOC 'old style'. During 2017 and with the agreement of the Herbert Stevens Trustees, we began the transfer of the assets of the Herbert Stevens and the Clancy Fund Trusts to the new BOC CIO account. This process will be completed in 2018. However, as the majority of standing order subscriptions continue to be paid into the BOC 'old style' bank account, Trustees have determined to keep both accounts active and to defer the dissolution of BOC 'old style', until most subscriptions lapse or migrate to BOC CIO. BOC CIO has its own bank account at Barclays, and a PayPal account to facilitate payments from overseas (as the Club no longer benefits from the BOU credit card arrangements).

## **Accounts for 2017**

In recent years the BOC's Report and Accounts have been prepared by Porritt Rainey, chartered accountants, as independent examiners within the terms of section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011, and submitted by the BOC to the Charity Commission. The BOC's 2016 Report and Accounts were submitted to the Commission online, and Porritt Rainey did not need to finalise a document for submission, thus saving the BOC an examiner fee.

Bearing in mind that both BOC 'old style' and BOC CIO are entitled to make online submissions to the Commission (as their annual gross income is less than £25,000) Trustees decided that:

- From 2017 onwards both Report and Accounts will be prepared and presented within the terms of the Charity Commission guidance on Receipts and Payments Accounts Introductory Notes of June 2013: new format 2017
- The format will follow the Commission's Introductory Notes as set out under 'Features of receipts and payments accounts'. We will no longer allocate income and expense to a calendar year, but simply reflect its receipt or payment. Accounting on this basis means we do not require an independent examiner.
- A Trustee will examine the report prepared by the Hon. Treasurer, prior to submission to the Charity Commission. Mike Earp kindly volunteered to fill this role for 2017.
- Accounts for 2017 (attached) show both BOC 'old style' and BOC CIO figures. Together they show net income of £1,271 and an increase in capital reserves of approx. £22,000 in 2017 (to £472,358): a satisfactory state of affairs as the income number includes the final payments to BOU (approx. £ 4,760) and substantial one-off costs for the Falklands Checklist (approx. £4,230 net of sales).
- Trustees have reviewed a 2018 budget reflecting significant changes to our cost basis, as an online publisher. We anticipate that our income, although reduced, will continue to exceed our

costs, which no longer include our two largest expense categories, BOU administrative charges, and hard copy publication.

### **BBOC Online**

Guy Kirwan, Hon. Editor , writes:

Vol. 137 comprised 339 pages and 39 papers of broad geographical scope, although contributions on seabirds, Asian-Pacific and Neotropical birds were particularly well represented. For papers published in 2017, the interval between receipt and publication was 3–12 months, with a mean of c.5.8 months. The year marked the Bulletin's transition to an online platform, initially using the Club's own website, but with plans to move to the BioOne site in 2018. The Bulletin received a total of 35 new manuscripts in 2017. Of these, two have been rejected to date and the rest have been accepted or are still being refereed for potential publication.

Grateful thanks are due, as ever, to referees who have given freely of their time and expertise; members of the Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature (SCON), especially Edward Dickinson, Richard Schodde and the Bulletin's Associate Editors, Frank Steinheimer and Robert Prÿs-Jones; and to Eng-Li Green, of Alcedo Publishing, for her constant dedication to Bulletin duties, including production of the index and updating the website in tandem with David Fisher. Chris Storey and Robert Prÿs-Jones helped prepare the cover information and Club Announcements, whilst staff at The Natural History Museum, Tring, continue to offer much-needed assistance in all manner of ways.

BBOC Vol 137 , in its open access online form was carried on the BOC website each number being transferred for archive purposes to the BioOne site. Vols 1-131 are on the Biodiversity Heritage Library(BHL) site and thanks to Alison Harding , Researcher Services Librarian , Tring, action is in hand to transfer Vols 132 -316 to BHL. All subsequent Volumes will be archived on the BioOne site.

## Meetings in 2017

As usual over recent years, the BOC held four evening meetings during 2017, but for the first time in a number of years did not co-operate with another club in organizing a full-day conference. The talks held were of a uniformly high standard. In March, Julian Hume reviewed his on-going ground-breaking research into the extinct dwarf Emus *Dromaius* spp of the Australian islands, giving his audience a pre-publication insight into his many novel findings. This was followed in June by Alex Bond, then of the RSPB but who has since taken up an appointment in charge of NHM Bird Group, delivering an enthusiastically received account of research into the grave problems that introduced mice are causing to the seabirds of Gough Island, south Atlantic, and progress made towards the mice's eradication in a programme organised by the RSPB in association with the Tristan da Cunha government. In September, Nigel Collar, senior conservation biologist with BirdLife International for many years, overviewed the background to and production of BirdLife's recent monumental two-volume *Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World*, in which he played a central role. His talk focused in particular on the reasons for the taxonomic decisions adopted in that work, and on how progress towards agreement on a flexible but standardised single world list might be made. Finally, in November, Claire Spottiswoode, who holds positions in the Universities of both Cambridge and Cape Town, delivered a tour-de-force synopsis of her multi-faceted research, carried out over many years in Zambia, into the co-evolutionary arms races that exist between parasitic African cuckoos, honeyguides and finches and the host species they target.

More detailed information on each of these talks can be found on the BOC website at: <http://boc-online.org/meetings/past-meetings/2017-boc-meetings> .

As part of an initiative that the club hopes to develop over time, Nigel Collar's talk was videoed, and a link to this is provided on the same page. All evening talks are free and open to all, so all Friends of the BOC would help it by encouraging potentially interested colleagues and associates to attend the future ones advertised at: <http://boc-online.org/meetings/upcoming-meeting>

Robert Prÿs-Jones

## **BOC Publications**

The event of the year was the publication in August of Robin Woods' *Falkland Islands Checklist*. A remarkable achievement and an outstanding addition to the Club's checklist series. The occasion was marked by a very enjoyable and well attended celebration at the Bird Fair. A debt of gratitude is owed not only Robin Woods for his scholarship and persistence but also to David Wells as Commissioning Editor and Nigel Redman who saw the final work into print. Ninety-six copies had been sold by the end of December 2017.

The remaining copies of the joint BOU/BOC checklist series were transferred during the year, at the BOU's expense, from the lock-up in Peterborough to the NHBS in Totnes. Whilst the BOC retains its joint rights in the series, it has waived its share of any income from sales in favour of the BOU (on the grounds that the cost of transfer to the NHBS at Totnes would far exceed any sales income). The remaining copies of the BOC Occasional Publications series, including the Uganda Checklist, were transferred in January to Richard Malin's garage in Norfolk. A final decision about these copies has yet to be made.

In respect of *Systematic Notes on Asian Birds 2010*, No.5 in the Occasional Series, published in association with the Trust for Avian Systematics (TAS) , the Club has released to TAS any further interest in the rights to that title .

## **BOC Website**

The change to an online only presence requires that special attention is given to making sure the site is user-friendly, up-to-date and engaging. And in addition to the information on the site we sent out during the year seven Newsletters via MailChimp to all Friends, associates and relevant institutions including Libraries with the intention of optimising our online presence. The Club is much indebted to Eng-Li Green as our web-master and also to David Fisher for his work in keeping the site up-to-date.

## **Trustees and Administration**

The Trustees welcomed Dr D.G.D. Russell, Senior Curator, Birds at the Natural History Museum at Tring, as a Trustee.

The Trustees wish to ensure a change in the age profile (downwards) and the gender profile of the board and actively seek new Trustees.

On 6 October 2017 the Club celebrated the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first meeting on 5 October 1892 at the Mona Hotel, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London. Stephen Chapman brought a suitably decorated celebratory cake which was cut by Dr Claire Spottiswood at the end of her talk.

In an attempt to reduce the administrative load on Trustees the Club has secured the ad hoc services of Josephine Rogers who manages the MailChimp lists.

The Trustees would like to thank Guy Kirwan for his outstanding Editorship of the Bulletin: it might be said that the Journal is the BOC and its relevance, style and readability is dependent on Guy's commitment and hard work. But of course the Club is also its meetings and Robert Prys-Jones has again delighted us with an outstanding series. The Club hope to be able to record and publish on YouTube the Barley Mow talks: Nigel Collars' talk was the first of this venture and he reports that as a consequence, others, having seen the video, have accepted the BirdLife taxonomic order. The video recording of the talks would not possible without the filming and editing skills of Frank Mullen.

The Trustees are indebted to the Trustees of the Herbert Stevens Trust for their skilful management of the trust funds and their continuing support of the Club and its plans for the future.

Finally, I am extremely grateful for the constant support and hard work of my fellow Trustees: there is a lot to do and it all happens in a great collaborative spirit : many thanks.

CS 2.5.18

Combined	2017	Old	BOC	CIO	BOC	Total	
Income	£19,725.67		£15,323.80		£4,401.87	£19,725.67	
expenses	-£18,454.42		£15,584.82		£2,869.60	£18,454.42	
year result	<b>£1,271.25</b>		-£261.02		£1,532.27	£1,271.25	6%
<b>Expenses</b>							
FalkInds		-£5,452.74		-£48.00		-£5,500.74	30%
BOU		-£4,760.33		£0.00		-£4,760.33	26%
Editor		-£2,237.55		-£2,221.60		-£4,459.15	24%
Eng-Li		-£1,410.00		-£350.00		-£1,760.00	10%
Postage		-£621.25		£0.00		-£621.25	3%
Meetings		-£385.56		-£200.00		-£585.56	3%
Website		-£493.00		-£50.00		-£543.00	3%
		-£15,360.43		-£2,869.60		-£18,230.03	99%
<b>Income</b>							
H Stevens		£8,533.77		£2,932.76		£11,466.53	58%
Subs		£3,224.93		£80.00		£3,304.93	17%
Sales						£1,633.66	8%
FalkInds				£1,270.37			
Other		£363.29					
Interest		£1,880.62				£1,880.62	10%
Units		£1,262.53				£1,262.53	6%
capitalised		£15,265.14		£4,283.13		£19,548.27	99%
<b>Balance Sheet</b>							
<b>31.12.17</b>							
Bank		£5,673.20		£11,032.27		£16,705.47	4%
Deposits		£47,595.95		£96,976.55		£144,572.50	31%
H Stvns		£129,285.01		£181,795.40		£311,080.40	66%
		<b>£182,554.16</b>		<b>£289,804.22</b>		<b>£472,358.37</b>	100%
<b>31.12.16</b>							
H Stevens		£289,208.77				£289,208.77	