

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

England & Wales · Charity number 1169733

Details

Other names THE BOC

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2016-10-18

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address c/o Natural History Museum
Akeman Street
Tring
Hertfordshire
HP23 6AP

Phone 02088764728

Email info@boc-online.org

Website www.boc-online.org

Activities

Objects: TO ADVANCE EDUCATION IN THE SUBJECT OF ORNITHOLOGY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC BY PROMOTING SCIENTIFIC DISCUSSION BETWEEN MEMBERS AND OTHERS INTERESTED IN ORNITHOLOGY AND TO FACILITATE THE DISSEMINATION OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION CONCERNED WITH ORNITHOLOGY, AND IN PARTICULAR AVIAN SYSTEMATICS, TAXONOMY AND DISTRIBUTION.

Activities: The Club promotes scientific discussion between members and others interested in ornithology and facilitates the dissemination of scientific information concerned with ornithology. The Club has a special interest in avian systematics, taxonomy and distribution.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Arts/culture/heritage/science, Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£19,024	£28,862	-	-
2023-12-31	£19,552	£25,901	-	-
2022-12-31	£20,415	£14,782	-	-
2021-12-31	£19,614	£31,435	-	-
2020-12-31	£16,784	£20,534	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
CHRIS STOREY	Chair	2016-10-18
Andrew Stephen Richford		2020-01-01
Ashley Jackson		2023-03-27
Douglas Gerald David Russell		2018-05-21
Dr ROBERT PRYS-JONES		2016-10-18
Dr Steven Portugal		2020-01-01
Gehan De Silva Wijeyeratne		2019-01-01
Laura Vaughan-Hirsch		2024-11-12
PHILLIP JOHN BELMAN		2023-03-27
RICHARD MALIN		2016-10-18
STEPHEN EDWARD CHAPMAN		2016-10-18

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

England & Wales - Charity number 1169733

Accounts

The British Ornithologists' Club

Founded 5 October 1892 Registered Charity No1169733

BOC Annual Review and Accounts 2024

The Chairman's Review 2024

The most innovative event of the year was Avian Odyssey 2024 conference held on 21 September 2024 at the Natural History Museum London, in conjunction with the regional bird clubs, and in association with, and support of, the Natural History Museum's exhibition *Birds Brilliant and Bizarre*. It was universally considered an outstanding success, covering in detail the many challenges facing birdlife worldwide. Under BOC meetings in 2024 below, Robert Prŷs-Jones gives a detailed account of this event and the other meetings held during the year, both at the Barlow Mow and in conjunction with the Linnean Society at Burlington House. We were delighted to continue this association with the Society. There were two other outstanding talks given at the Barley Mow : in March by Laura Vaughan-Hirsch on the Stork programme at Knepp (White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* nesting in Sussex) and in November by Utka Perltaş of Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey, on Unveiling diversity: phylogeography, species limits, and evolutionary history of turacos (Aves: Musophagidae) who provided 'A compelling close to a typically diverse year of Club talks.'

Guy Kirwan reports that the Bulletin had another successful year noting that 'Vol. 144 comprised 476 pages (something of a dip after two 'bumper' years) with 41 papers of broad geographical scope, although contributions on New World (especially Neotropical), Afrotropical, and Indo-Pacific region birds once again were especially well represented.' He welcomed two new Associate Editors, 'Juan Freile and Flavia Montaña-Centellas ... [who] unquestionably strengthened our capacity, broadened our outreach to capable referees, and spread some of the workload.'

The BioOne 2024 Report noted that the number of hits in 2024, - full text access, PDF downloads and abstract views - was 160,962 an increase of 14% over 2023.

The report details the articles most accessed during 2024,

Rank	Article Title	Volume	Hits
1	Audubon's Bird of Washington: unravelling the fraud that launched The birds of America	Vol. 140	237
2	A consolidated checklist and new avifaunal records for southern Tigray, Ethiopia	Vol. 143	177
3	The taxonomic status of Crimson-crested Turaco <i>Menelikornis (leucotis) donaldsoni</i>	Vol. 142	166
4	The world's largest hummingbird was described 131 years ago	Vol. 144	147
5	Specimens of the extinct Spectacled Cormorant <i>Urile perspicillatus</i>	Vol. 144	138
6	What's in a name? Nomenclature for colour aberrations in birds reviewed	Vol. 141	109
7	On Temminck's tailless Ceylon Junglefowl, and how Darwin denied their existence	Vol. 137	100
8	The taxonomic history of Black-shouldered Peafowl; with Darwin's help downgraded from species to variation	Vol. 143	94
9	The dark side of birds: melanism—facts and fiction	Vol. 137	86
10	An updated checklist of the birds of Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, with comments on new, rare, and unconfirmed species	Vol. 140	80

and the top users by **Institution** and **Country**,

Rank	Institution	Hits
1	Johns Hopkins University	629
2	University of Illinois at Chicago	269
3	University of Cambridge	161
4	Universiteit Twente	148
5	Cornell University	99
6	UB Freiburg (WIB6049)	96
7	Natural History Museum London	94
8	Michigan State University	78
9	Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS)	72
10	Universiteit Utrecht	59

Rank	Country	Hits
1	United States	2,489
2	Brazil	497
3	United Kingdom	462
4	Netherlands	347
5	Canada	213
6	Australia	211
7	Germany	202
8	Mexico	87
9	Sweden	73
10	India	70

At the beginning of the year, the Club launched a series of biographies of the founders of the Club. Robert Prŷs-Jones introduced the series in The founding of the British Ornithologists' Club, and its main protagonists in the Bulletin 144 (1), 91-95, (4 March 2024) <https://doi.org/10.25226/bboc.v144i1.2024.a10>, followed by the opening Blog on Richard Bowler Sharpe. Biographies were posted monthly ending in June 2025: <https://boc-online.org/boc-blog/founding-biographies>.

An additional Blog was posted with the title: Henry Seebohm lives on in the splendid British Ornithologists' Club Gavel.

Our social media following grows. We have 3,200 followers on Facebook, 755 on Instagram, but so far only 52 on BlueSky.

During the year we published four videos of talks on YouTube, which accumulated 1,214 views; there were a total of 2,386 views across all the talk videos and an additional 50 YouTube subscribers. The PDF of Cuba in Translation has been downloaded 2,298 times since publication in 2021.

Financial Report 2024

RW Malin, Hon Treasurer

Figures reflect transactions in our bank accounts in 2024, rather than allocate income or expenditure to any particular year. They are then 'consolidated' to combine both BOC charities, Old BOC and the new CIO, although these charities are legally separate.

Income and expenditure

Income in 2024 was £20,189, -£573 (or 3%) below 2023 level. Herbert Stevens and Clancey investment income was down by £858 (or 5%), and there were no CIO dividends in the year (£2,607 in 2023). Old BOC subscriptions were down by £45, CIO donations were £81 higher - so this income category was £36 (or 2%) higher. Book sales were £2,253, a 7-fold increase (£1,935) on 2023. Gift Aid of £810 (covering the prior 3 years) was claimed, and £111 interest was received (c.f., nil in 2023).

Expenditure in 2024 was £28,862 – an increase of £2,961 (or 11%) over the year. Most of the increase was legal costs incurred of £2,585 (due to changing the mechanism by which we hold Herbert Stevens investments) and higher BioOne charges (mainly exchange rate related, of £680). Editorial costs were largely unchanged, but we incurred higher publication costs of £9,419 (£9,008 in 2023). Website costs rose by £226, but meeting costs were around £50 lower. The Annual conference, this year with the African, Neotropical and Oriental Bird Clubs, the Ornithological Society of the Middle East, and BirdLife International, cost £1,802 (£1,127 in 2023) but the cost was shared by the five clubs and £340 had already been reimbursed by year end. Due to the timing of billing, Alcedo's charges for the Bulletin were £1,176 lower.

The net shortfall was £8,673 (including £9,419 publication costs) – some 69% higher than the 2023 shortfall of £5,139.

The BOC's investment income stood up well in 2024, and the year's shortfall was largely due to publication costs. Further publications are in hand (and all costs continue to be expensed as incurred) meaning that, unless donation and subscription incomes rise appreciably, there will be more shortfalls. BioOne costs are now refunded by Clancey (to cover one of the CIO's biggest expenses) which reduces the Clancey balance, and hence the amount of interest accrued. This is not immediately reflected in CIO income as interest on CIO deposits is paid at maturity, or at year end, but it will show through in 2025 and beyond.

Balance Sheet

A 'combined' balance sheet at the end of 2024 shows assets of £471,718 – an increase of £5,296 (or 1%) from £466,422 in 2023.

The value of our Herbert Stevens investment units increased by £10,108 (or 1%) – more than offsetting our annual deficit.

Medium-term deposits (Clancey) reduced to £53,286 from £73,548. £23,286 of this decrease was a withdrawal to cover past BioOne costs, £2,797 was interest credited in

the year, and £225 was a late payment from Eden Tree. Despite the withdrawal, interest credited was more than double that in 2023, as deposit interest rates rose in 2023.

The CIO held Building Society deposits were £79,480 at year end, being £40,000 on a 1-year fixed deposit, and £39,480 on an Instant Access account – both at Saffron Building Society. The balance of the latter includes £980 interest credited on 31.12.2024 (and appear as income in the 2025 figures). Interest on the former will be paid on maturity (22.03.25) and will show in our 2025 results.

We opened an account at Invest & Fund (a residential property lending platform) in mid-2024 and had invested £27,700 by 31.12.24 – in a portfolio of c. 10 loans, mainly having lot sizes between £250 and £3,500. The loans pay interest of around 7.5%, and this will benefit our 2025 figures.

R W Malin
Hon Treasurer

7 March 2025

The Bulletin

Guy Kirwan, Hon Editor

Vol. 144 comprised 476 pages (something of a dip after two ‘bumper’ years) with 41 papers of broad geographical scope, although contributions on New World (especially Neotropical), Afrotropical, and Indo-Pacific region birds once again were especially well represented. The Bulletin was unquestionably fortunate that most referees continued to deliver their reviews promptly, despite the many pressures. For the first time in some years, no new taxon names were published in the Bulletin in 2024. Papers of particular interest included: reviews of the history and available specimens of two extinct or presumed extinct species, Spectacled Cormorant *Urile perspicillatus* and White-eyed River Martin *Pseudochelidon sirintarae*, a suggestion that the Sangihe Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx sangirensis* represents a separate (but extinct) species, comments on the taxonomy of various North American birds (the first paper in a projected short series), the first reports of eight Old World bird taxa in French Guiana, and a fresh taxonomic analysis of the mysterious Malagasy endemic *Coua cristata maxima*. For papers published in 2024, the interval between receipt and publication was 2–18 months, with a mean of c. 6.8 months. The Bulletin received a total of 50 new manuscripts in 2024, of which 11 were rejected and the remainder accepted, in some cases subject to substantial and currently incomplete revision.

Grateful thanks are due, as ever, to referees who have given freely of their time and expertise; the Bulletin’s Associate Editors, Bruce Beehler, Lincoln Fishpool, Juan Freile, Flavia Montaña-Centellas, Robert Prÿs-Jones and Chris Sharpe; and to Eng-Li Green, of Alcedo Publishing, for her constant dedication to Bulletin duties, including production of the index and updating the website. Both Juan Freile and Flavia Montaña-Centellas were welcomed as new Associate Editors at the start of 2024, and have unquestionably strengthened our capacity, broadened our outreach to capable referees, and spread some of the workload. 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.

BOC meetings in 2024

Robert Prŷs-Jones

Club meetings in 2024 comprised regular talks early and late in the year, at the usual venue of the Barley Mow, Westminster, and, in between, one lecture jointly with the Linnean at their venue in Piccadilly and a one-day conference held in conjunction with the Natural History Museum at their Flett Theatre in South Kensington. As is now usual, the events were all subsequently posted on-line via YouTube, linked to the Club's website <https://boc-online.org>, allowing numerous people unable to attend in person to view them.

The March talk was delivered by Laura Vaughan-Hirsch on White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* nesting in Sussex. Now also a committee member of the Club, Laura is project officer managing the introduced White Stork project at the Knepp Estate, West Sussex, which aims to establish a self-sustaining population of at least 50 breeding pairs in southern England by 2030. In her fascinating presentation, she focused on the history and life cycle of the species in Sussex and the challenges faced by the adults and their fledglings, considering in particular such factors as diet and the problems faced by those individuals that migrate.

This was followed by the joint meeting with the Linnean Society in May, at which Catherine Sheard, University of Aberdeen, spoke on What can birds' nests teach us about evolution? Having overviewed the diversity of birds' nests and the limitations to our current understanding of the reasons for this, she discussed her recent research in building up a detailed comparative database of nest traits of the world's birds. Among her findings from this so far are, at a macro level, that the types and locations of nests that species build do not correlate with climate, but to some extent do with both body size and a flight ability index. On a more fine-grained level, cup-nesting passerines nesting in colder places build bigger nests, but cold cannot be clearly linked to the structure of nests themselves.

The full-day joint meeting with the NHM in their Flett Theatre in September was the 10th to date and the most ambitious given the diversity of nine ornithological organisations invited to contribute. Entitled Avian Odyssey 1, and with a focus on conservation, proceedings began with Kevin Cox (RSPB) talking on Safeguarding species and giving nature a home, overviewing the RSPB's involved with bird conservation in Britain and overseas. Following this in the morning session, Ken Norris (NHM) spoke on Why Museums matter – the importance of bird collections in a changing world),

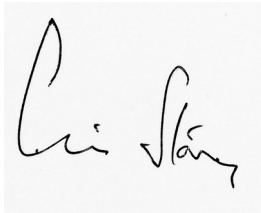
followed by Juliet Vickery (BTO) on Birds, Science, People – a powerful combination), respectively highlighting the key roles that specimen collections and a co-ordinated widespread network of amateur observers can have in protecting species. The final talk of the morning session and the three initial afternoon lectures were given by representatives of bird organisations covering the main geographical parts of the world: Mike Edgecombe (OBC) spoke on Avian adventures beyond Wallace’s Line, Hazell Shokellu Thompson (ABC) on the White-necked Picathartes *Picathartes gymnocephalus* – an African avian oddity, Rob Sheldon (OSME) on Understanding the migration routes of the critically endangered Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* and Joseph Tobias (NBC) on South America: the Bird Continent. Closing the day was an impassioned speech by Nigel Collar (BirdLife) on Birds – brilliant, bizarre, belittled and broken, highlighting the massive scale of the conservation problem we now face and urging us to organise for it. Overall, an always informative, at times depressing, but overall inspiring, event that hopefully sets the stage for similar events to come.

The final contribution of the year came from Utku Perktas, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey, on Unveiling diversity: phylogeography, species limits, and evolutionary history of turacos (Aves: Musophagidae). His talk on this bird family endemic to sub-Saharan Africa covered his research into their phylogeography, species limits and evolutionary relationships using museum collections and DNA sequencing, with results leading to a novel reclassification of the family. Furthermore, he also outlined his co-operative, on-going project to create historical databases of biocultural diversity by integrating African bird specimen data, offering new insights into turaco evolutionary history. A compelling close to a typically diverse year of Club talks.

Trustees and Administration

The Club was delighted to welcome Laura Vaughan-Hirsch as a trustee. Laura is the project officer managing the White Stork Project at the Knepp Estate, West Sussex. After reading Biology at Royal Holloway University, she worked in Education as a Science Teacher and Middle Leader at a secondary school in Horsham.

Finally, I must add my personal thanks to my fellow Trustees, to Guy Kirwan for his continuing outstanding editorship of the Bulletin, to Nigel Redman, commissioning editor of the Checklist series, to Eng-li Green, and Sarah Nichols, and to Frank Mullen for recording and editing the talks on YouTube. Without their unstinting work the Club would not be able to flourish.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'Chris Storey'.

Chris Storey, Chairman

28 August 2025

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

England & Wales - Charity number 1169733

Accounts

The British Ornithologists' Club

Founded 5 October 1892 Registered Charity No1169733

BOC Annual Review and Accounts 2023

Chairman's Review 2023

The Bulletin had another very successful year in terms of content, page count, and reach: see Guy Kirwan's report and the BioOne 2023 report below. The year was also marked by an outstanding series of talks at the Barley Mow in Horseferry Road, London. We were further delighted to continue our association with the Linnean Society, with a joint live-streamed talk at Burlington House where Dr Will Smith presented *A Wild Dove Chase*, and in September we were able to hold the first post-pandemic regional club meeting with the Oriental Bird Club and the NHM. These events are set out in detail in Robert Prÿs-Jones' report below. The talks were recorded and posted on the Club's YouTube site, where the videos continued to reach a large audience, with Dr Catherine Sheard's talk, *What can Birds' Nests Teach Us About Evolution*, being watched 119 times.

The BioOne 2023 Report (<https://bioone.org/journals/bulletin-of-the-british-ornithologists-club/>) noted that the number of hits – full text access, PDF downloads and abstract views – was 141,701, up 5% on 2022 and considerably more than the 2019 figure of 75,530.

There were two new blogs: Amberley Moore, a very longstanding member of the Club, and its Secretary from 1989 to 1995 and Vice-Chairman from 1997 to 1999, wrote a fascinating account of the life of Herbert Stevens, the Club's great benefactor; and Kai Gedeon and Till Töpfer of the Leibniz Institute for the Analysis of Biodiversity Change, Museum Koenig Bonn, wrote on *Is the Crimson-crested Turaco a species in its own right?*

Our Twitter account recorded 965 followers, and the Spanish language version of the Cuban checklist was downloaded 1,861 times.

In addition to our Facebook and Twitter accounts, we added an Instagram account at the end of the year. The aim of the account is to reach a wider and more diverse audience with details of our talks, events, blogs, and the Bulletin.

Eleven email communications were sent to the 399 Friends on our mailing list (a net gain of 2% on the previous year) and were opened by 62% of recipients. New Friends can subscribe from the website link and gains roughly balanced those that chose to unsubscribe.

Financial Report 2023: RW Malin, Hon Treasurer

Figures reflect transactions in our bank accounts in 2023, rather than allocate income or expenditure to any particular year. They are then 'consolidated' to combine both BOC charities, Old BOC, and the new CIO, although these remain legally separate.

Income and expenditure

Income in 2023 was £20,762 - £1,139 (or 5%) below 2022. Herbert Stevens and Clancey investment income was up by £2,473 (or 18%), but CIO investment income was down £1,732 (or 40%), mainly due to the closure of one fund in Q4. Old BOC subscriptions continued down so that, despite slightly higher CIO donations, this income category was £592 (or 27%) lower. Book sales were only £318, 80% below 2022's figure of £1,287.

Expenditure in 2023 was £25,901 – an increase of £11,118 (or 75%) for the year. Most of the increase was £9,008 publication costs (£0 incurred in 2022). Editorial costs were largely unchanged, BioOne was around £600 more, and website and meeting costs were each up around £100. The one-day joint meeting with the NHM and the Oriental Bird Club, cost £1,127 (£0 in 2022)

The net shortfall was £5,139 (after £9,008 publications) – against a surplus of £7,119 in 2022.

The BOC's investment income stood up well against the turbulent global events and challenging economic conditions of 2023, and the year's shortfall was due to publication costs. Further publications are in hand (all costs continue to be expensed as incurred) meaning that, unless donation and subscription income rises appreciably, there will be more shortfalls. Delays within the current publishing programme may allow 2024 to remain in surplus. Trustees agreed in late 2023 that BioOne costs should be met out of Clancey funds, which will cover one of the CIO's biggest expenses. While not yet reflected in these figures, this change should enable us to meet rising operating costs for at least 5 years.

Balance Sheet

A 'combined' balance sheet at the end of 2023 shows assets of £466,408 – a decrease of £10,447 (or 2%) from £476,855 in 2022.

The value of our Herbert Stevens investment units fell by £3,733 (or 1%). Clancey units held by the CIO fell by £2,973 (or 3%) before the funds were returned to us.

Medium-term deposits (Clancey) grew to £73,547. £16,948 of this increase was returned funds, and £1,272 was interest credited in the year. This credit was 132% higher than 2022, because deposit interest rates rose throughout 2023. We are seeking other higher rate opportunities with our recently returned funds.

2023

	Old	BOC	CIO	BOC	Total
Income					
Herbert Stevens/Clancey		£0.00		£16,252.60	£16,252.60
Subs/donations		£1,209.50		£375.00	£1,584.50
CIO dividends		£0.00		£2,606.55	£2,606.55
Book Sales		£0.00		£318.08	£318.08
Gift Aid		£0.00		£0.00	£0.00
Interest		£0.00		£0.00	£0.00
		£1,209.50		£19,552.23	£20,761.73
Expenses					
Editor		£0.00		£-5,460.71	£-5,460.71
Eng-Li		£0.00		£-4,464.00	£-4,464.00
BioOne		£0.00		£-4,335.00	£-4,335.00
Website, Zoom		£0.00		£-1,113.83	£-1,113.83
Meetings/room hire		£0.00		£-252.55	£-252.55
Conference		£0.00		£-1,127.10	£-1,127.10
Publications		£0.00		£-9,007.99	£-9,007.99
Legal		£0.00		£0.00	£0.00
Misc		£0.00		£-139.42	£-139.42
		£0.00		£-25,900.60	£-25,900.60
Deficit for 2023					£-5,138.87
Balance Sheet					
31.12.23					

Bank	£62.19		£94,506.53		£94,568.72
CIO bank deposits	£0.00		£73,547.71		£73,547.71
PayPal	£0.00		£155.89		£155.89
Herbert Stevens Investments	£0.00		£298,135.47		£298,135.47
CIO Investments	£0.00		£0.00		£0.00
Clancey Investment	£0.00		£0.00		£0.00
Total	£62.19		£466,345.60		£466,407.79
			Balance Sheet 31.12.22		£476,854.64
			2023 Decrease in Assets		-£10,446.85

R W Malin
Hon Treasurer

The Bulletin: Guy Kirwan, Hon Editor

Vol. 143 comprised 616 pages (the second consecutive year with a new record page count) and 43 papers of broad geographical scope, although contributions on New World (especially Neotropical), Afrotropical, and Indo-Pacific region birds were especially well represented once again. The high page count, and level of submissions (see below), seem to be now reasonably well entrenched. The Bulletin was unquestionably fortunate that most referees continued to deliver their reviews promptly, despite the many pressures. The only new names introduced in the Bulletin in 2023 were for a new subspecies of the bulbul *Rubigula dispar* and a new genus, *Dicranurania*, for the Mexican Woodnymph *Thalurania ridgwayi*. Other papers of exceptional interest included taxonomic revisions of the Karamoja Apalis *Apalis karamojae*, the Square-tailed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne nitens*, the Red-legged Thrush *Mimocichla rubripes*, the African Barred Owlet *Glaucidium capense*, and the Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler *Erythrogenys erythrogenys*. For papers published in 2023, the interval between receipt and publication was 3–19 months, with a mean of *c.*7.3 months. The Bulletin received a total of 62 new manuscripts in 2023, of which 17 were rejected and the remainder accepted, in some cases subject to substantial and currently incomplete revision.

Grateful thanks are due, as ever, to referees who have given freely of their time and expertise; the Bulletin's Associate Editors, Bruce Beehler, Lincoln Fishpool, Robert Prÿs-Jones, and Chris Sharpe; and to Eng-Li Green, of Alcedo Publishing, for her constant

dedication to Bulletin duties, including production of the index and updating the website. 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.

Guy Kirwan

Meetings in 2023: Robert Prÿs-Jones

Having during 2022 at last got back to holding our regular Club dinners and talks in-person at the Barley Mow in Westminster, this continued throughout 2023, with the talks subsequently being posted online via YouTube, linked to the Club's website <https://boc-online.org>, allowing numerous people unable to attend in person to view them. As well as three regular meetings, recent tradition was followed by holding a fourth in conjunction with the Linnean Society of London at their premises. To round off a successful year, after a gap since 2019 largely caused by the covid pandemic, the Club also held a successful joint one-day meeting with the Oriental Bird Club (OBC) and the Natural History Museum (NHM) at the latter's site.

Kicking off the year's presentations, Robert Prÿs-Jones (NHM scientific associate) spoke in March on *Wallace's Sarawak bird collection and the development of his ornithological knowledge*, in a talk which aimed to highlight how the integration of information from the diaries/notebooks of an important 19th-century ornithologist with that from his specimens and their accompanying labels can provide intriguing insight into the development of his knowledge of a novel (to him) and poorly-known avifauna.

Following this, in May, there was a compelling joint presentation by Richard Sales and Steve Watson (independent researchers) on *The Peregrine Falcon*, highly illustrated (including by video) and based on their ground-breaking recent book of the same name. Richard's area of special research interest, namely the interaction between anatomy and behaviour underlying the Peregrine's flight characteristics and prey capture, synergistically complemented the broader focus of Steve's decades-long field study in Gloucestershire on Peregrine ecology and population characteristics, resulting in a particularly comprehensive overview.

The joint one-day meeting with the OBC and NHM took place in mid-September in the NHM's Flett Theatre, ideally suited to such presentations. The keynote speech was delivered by Pamela Rasmussen, an NHM scientific associate who has recently taken up the post of lead taxonomist at Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology. Much of Pam's research has focused on the Asian avifauna, but the principles derivable from her talk on *Avian taxonomy in the era of citizen science* are applicable much more widely. She was followed by

three fascinating presentations by Sayam Choudhury on *Can we still save the Masked Finfoot Heliopais personatus?*, James Eaton on *Successes and failures: how to find or fail in the quest for new and lost birds*, and Mike Edgecombe on *Mongolia – birds and more in Asia's last wilderness*. Overall, a very successful and much-appreciated day.

Early November saw the simultaneous in-person and Zoom joint meeting at the Linnean Society, in which Will Smith, who recently completed a DPhil at Oxford University's Edward Grey Institute, spoke on *Rock Doves and the process of 'extinction by hybridization'*. The Rock Dove *Columba livia* is the wild form of the feral domestic pigeon and, following widespread hybridization over many years, pure Rock Doves are now extinct across much of Europe. Will's work has focused on remote sites in Scotland and Ireland with Rock Dove populations that have experienced limited interbreeding with feral pigeons, providing both a case study to investigate the process of 'extinction by hybridization' and a valuable natural comparison for those who study domestic pigeons in the laboratory.

Finally, in late November, Keith Betton (currently Chair of the Hampshire Ornithological Society) described his involvement in *Saving the Stone-curlew Burhinus oedicnemus*. Since 2009 he has been part of a small RSPB team that works towards conserving the Stone-curlews that breed in the Wessex region. This was originally set up in the early 1990s and aims to work with farmers and landowners to manage areas to provide suitable undisturbed nesting sites. Without help and intervention, Stone-curlews are unlikely to survive alongside modern farming, but in Wessex the population has increased from about 50 pairs in 1992 to 150 pairs today.

Overall, as befits a club with the worldwide remit of the BOC, 2023 saw a wide-ranging programme spanning diverse regions, bird species and topics. Long may it continue!

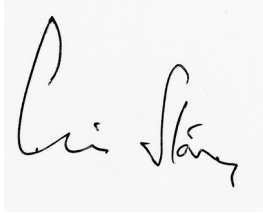
Robert Prÿs-Jones

Trustees and Administration

The Club is greatly indebted to Guy Kirwan for his outstanding editorship of the Bulletin and to Robert Prÿs-Jones for organising the talks programme, which has been in his care since 2010. Next year he will hand over these responsibilities to others, having established an outstanding track record for which we are very grateful.

At the end of the year, Richard Price, Nigel Crocker, and Stephen Rumsey, trustees of the Herbert Stevens Trust, said that they wished to retire as soon as was practicable. Their dedication to the Club and their skilful management of the Trust funds over many years has ensured a firm financial base on which the Club has been able to develop its online presence as well as its book publishing. The Club is very much in their debt, and we send them our thanks and best wishes for the future.

Finally, I must add my personal thanks to my fellow Trustees, and to Guy Kirwan, Nigel Redman, Eng-li Green, and Sarah Nichols, as well as to Frank Mullen for recording and editing the talks on YouTube. We are also delighted to welcome Cecilia Derrick into the team, who at the end of the year launched the Club's Instagram account. Without their unstinting work the Club would not be able to flourish.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "Chris Storey".

Chris Storey, Chairman

20 August 2024

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

England & Wales - Charity number 1169733

Accounts

The British Ornithologists' Club

Founded 5 October 1892 Registered Charity No1169733

The Chairman's Review 2022

The Club celebrated the return to a non-pandemic world with three outstanding talks, a return to meetings in the upstairs room at the Barley Mow and the publication of a major work in the checklist series on the birds of St Vincent, the Grenadines and Grenada. (see Publications below). The talks are detailed in Robert Prÿs-Jones' report below. We were delighted to be able again to meet in person and we held an informal Christmas meeting at the Barley Mow when Tony Statham talked to a sizable group about birds in books and stamps followed by a general discussion on the future of the BOC, its opportunities and challenges.

The BioOne report for 2022 noted that the number of Bulletin hits was 134,876 which is only few more than last year. We have opened discussions with BioOne as to how best to optimise the reach of the Bulletin.

The Blog page had four new additions: Julian Hume on *Beneath the feet of the dodo - a new ground thrush from Mauritius*, Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne's interview with Christine Jackson on her book about William Yarrell, Andy Mitchell on translating the Cuban checklist into Cuban Spanish and Sarah Nichols on *Poo in Paradise: a week of field work on Heron Island*. The numbers accessing the Blog pages increased by 30% during the year.

Our Twitter account recorded 900 followers; Cuba in translation was downloaded by 178 people and the YouTube videos continue to reach sizable viewing figures.

Ten Newsletters were sent to the 391 Friends (a net gain of 3.4% on the previous year) on our mailing list, and were opened by 62% of recipients.

During the year the Club mourned the sad passing of two of its members. **Margaret Carswell** (1935-2022) died on 7 April 2022. She was the principal author of the BOU/BOC's *The bird atlas of Uganda* and her many significant contributions in birding and medical work in Africa are covered in her daughter Nell Carswell's moving tribute to her mother in BBOC 142(4).

Clive Mann (1942-2022) died in August 2022. Clive joined the BOC in 1972, became Hon. Secretary from 1996-2004 and Chairman from 2005-

2009. Clive was a regular attender at Club meetings and his genial presence will much missed. His major contributions to the Club and ornithology are set out in Edward Dickinson's and Michael Casement's Obituary in BBOC 142(4)

Financial Report 2022

By way of explanation: Figures are shown on a cash-book basis (based on transactions in our bank accounts in the calendar year) and do not seek to allocate income or expenditure to a particular year, past or future. The figures are then 'consolidated' to combine both BOC charities, Old BOC and the new CIO, although these charities are legally separate.

Income and expenditure

Income in 2022 was £21,901 - £645 (or 3%) above the 2021 result. Herbert Stevens and Clancey investment income was £1,025 (or 8%) higher, while other investment income was £301 higher. Old BOC subscriptions continued to reduce and CIO donations, while higher, were not lifted in the year by a generous donation. Book sales were doubled (at £1,605) but no Gift Aid claim was made in the calendar year.

Expenditure in 2022 was £14,782 - a decrease of £16,653 (or 53%) in the year. No publication costs were incurred (over £18,000 were incurred in 2021), and BioOne and editorial costs were broadly unchanged. Website and meeting costs were each up around 50%.

The net surplus in 2022 was £7,119 - against a 2021 shortfall of £10,180.

Our investment income stood up well against the pandemic, and the economic fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but our annual result (surplus or shortfall) depends more on the timing of our publications. Operating costs continue to rise but these are, and should continue to be, well covered by investment income. Further publications are in hand (the whole costs of which are expensed as incurred) so, as subscription / donation income continues to fall, we must expect more shortfalls. Delays within the current publishing programme may allow 2023 to remain in surplus.

Balance Sheet

A pro-forma 'combined' balance sheet at the end of 2022 shows assets of £476,855 - a decrease of £29,401 (or 6%) from £506,255 in 2021.

The value of our Herbert Stevens investment units fell by £22,356 (or 7%), the Clancey units fell by £2,517 (or 13%), and the units held by CIO fell by £12,193 (or 13%) - all reflecting the volatility following Russia's incursion, and 2022 values may not be sustained through 2023.

Medium-term deposits grew to £55,318, with interest of £548 credited in the year. Deposit interest rates have become significantly more favourable in 2023.

R W Malin Hon Treasurer

2022						
	Old	BOC	CIO	BOC	Total	% of total
Income						
H Stevens/ Clancey		£0.00		£13,779.29	£13,779.29	62.9%
Subs / donations		£1,485.50		£691.31	£2,176.81	9.9%
CIO dividends		£0.00		£4,339.13	£4,339.13	19.8%
Book Sales		£0.00		£1,605.13	£1,605.13	7.3%
Gift Aid				£0.00	£0.00	0.0%
Interest		£0.76		£0.00	£0.76	0.0%
		£1,486.26		£20,414.86	£21,901.12	100.0%
Expenses						
Editor		£0.00		-£4,805.36	-£4,805.36	32.5%
Eng-Li		£0.00		-£5,088.00	-£5,088.00	34.4%
BioOne		£0.00		-£3,799.00	-£3,799.00	25.7%
Website, Zoom		£0.00		-£990.08	-£990.08	6.7%
Meetings / room hire		£0.00		-£100.00	-£100.00	0.7%
Conference		£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	0.0%
Publications		£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	0.0%
Legal		£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	0.0%
Admin		£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	0.0%
		£0.00		-£14,782.44	-£14,782.44	100.0%
Surplus for 2022					£7,118.68	
Balance Sheet						
31.12.22						
Bank		£52.69		£25,096.44	£25,149.13	5.3%
CIO bank deposits		£0.00		£55,317.57	£55,317.57	11.6%
Paypal				£28.43	£28.43	0.0%
Herbert Stevens Investments				£301,869.31	£301,869.31	63.3%
CIO Investments		£0.00		£78,322.66	£78,322.66	16.4%
Clancey Investment				£16,167.54	£16,167.54	3.4%
Total		£52.69		£476,801.95	£476,854.64	100.0%

The Bulletin Guy Kirwan, Hon Editor

Vol. 142 comprised 546 pages (a new record) and 39 papers of broad geographical scope, although contributions on New World (especially Neotropical), Afrotropical, and Indo-Pacific region birds were especially well represented. The high page count, and level of submissions (see below), were both undoubtedly reflective of the ongoing (albeit diminishing) pandemic. The Bulletin was unquestionably fortunate that most referees continued to deliver their reviews promptly, despite the many pressures. Four new taxon names were introduced in the Bulletin during 2022, two new family-group names, for *Erpornis zantholeuca* and the genus *Pteruthius*, a subfamily name, Sasiinae, for the piculet genera *Sasia* and *Verreauxia*, and *Geokichla longitarsus* for a new subfossil ground thrush species from Mauritius. Other papers of exceptional interest included the restitution of *Fregetta lineata* as a valid species of storm petrel in Pacific Ocean, a comprehensive catalogue of fossil and subfossil Cuban birds, and the commencement of a series on the breeding of Brazilian birds. For papers published in 2022, the interval between receipt and publication was 3–11 months, with a mean of c.6.8 months. The Bulletin received a total of 51 new manuscripts in 2022, only slightly fewer than in the record-breaking year of 2020 and the slightly less busy year of 2021. Of these 51 submissions, eight were rejected and the remainder accepted, in some cases subject to substantial and currently incomplete revision.

Grateful thanks are due, as ever, to referees who have given freely of their time and expertise; the Bulletin's Associate Editors, Bruce Beehler, Lincoln Fishpool, Robert Prÿs-Jones and Chris Sharpe; and to Eng-Li Green, of Alcedo Publishing, for her constant dedication to Bulletin duties, including production of the index and updating the website. 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.

Meetings in 2022 Robert Prÿs-Jones

After the covid-enforced move in 2020 to on-line only meetings via Zoom, which then continued throughout 2021, the Club was finally able to return to in-person meetings from the second talk in 2022. Although the ability to dine and socialize is important to friends of the Club, such talks unsurprisingly tend to attract a smaller live audience than has been achieved via Zoom. An effort was therefore made to get the best of both worlds by also transmitting in-person talks live via Zoom. After initial attempts, however, technical problems related to the usual dinner venue of the Barley Mow pub caused the Club to desist with simultaneous Zoom broadcasts from here. Nevertheless, all Club talks are still posted subsequently on YouTube, accessible via the Club website <https://boc-online.org/> .

The year's talks began with a Zoom contribution by Kathryn Rooke (Natural History Museum assistant archivist), who spoke on *The Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act of 1921, as told through the Natural History Museum's archive collections* on 21 March. Massive demand for bird feathers for millinery purposes during the Victorian and Edwardian periods led to concomitant major declines in populations of species most affected, notably among egrets, grebes, birds of paradise and hummingbirds. Kathryn highlighted the important role played by the Natural History Museum in a lengthy campaign, led by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, in response to this, seeking to end the importation of bird feathers from across the then British Empire. Success was eventually achieved with the passing of a 1921 Act of Parliament.

The talk following, delivered on 16 May by Dr Martin Stervander (Natural History Museum Bird Group fellow) concerning *The Evolutionary History of a remarkable radiation of South Atlantic finches*, was the first since 2019 to take place in-person in the Barley Mow pub, with a simultaneous Zoom broadcast. The fascinating *Nesospiza* "buntings" or "finches", now known to belong to the family Thraupidae, occur on the remote, volcanic Tristan archipelago in the South Atlantic, which comprises three islands: the smallest and oldest (Nightingale, 4 km²) holds two species; the mid-aged and sized Inaccessible (14 km²) holds two subspecies of a third species; and the largest and youngest (Tristan, 96 km²) had an extinct species now known from a single specimen. The presentation focused on the key importance to the genus of the only indigenous tree *Phyllica arborea*, and on the implications of the discovery that the two taxa on each of Nightingale and Inaccessible are their own closest relatives.

On 6 Oct, in conjunction with the Linnean Society and at their venue, it at last proved possible to hear, via Zoom, the talk by Professor Jared Diamond (University of California, Los Angeles) on *What's so special about New Guinea birds?* that had originally been scheduled for an in-person delivery in June 2020. It proved to be well worth the wait! Based on his many years of experience working there, Jared delivered a tour de force overview of the diversity of extraordinary adaptations of birds that inhabit the huge island and the geographical reasons underlying this. As a result, New Guinea has proved ideal terrain for studying speciation, ecological segregation, and other biological phenomena.

The year's main meetings concluded on 21 November with a Zoom presentation by Professor Michael Cherry (University of Stellenbosch) on *What can be done about range declines in South Africa's forest dependent birds?* Over half of South Africa's forest-dependent birds have suffered range declines over the past 30 years, with these being particularly concentrated in the Eastern Cape region despite an increase there in forest cover. Study suggests that much of the problem is habitat degradation arising from informal harvesting of forest products, notably bark harvesting that is increasingly being driven by commercial demand.

Based on this research, suggestions have been provided for improved methods of monitoring and control that could lead to better enforcement of existing law on sustainable harvesting.

In addition to the wide diversity of topics covered by the excellent speakers in the year's regular talk programme, an extra in-person meeting on 28 November was arranged for regular Club friends and attendees to discuss ideas for a series of blog posts on the founding members of the Club, complemented by an informal talk given by Committee member Tony Statham on *Bird books and bird stamps*.

Robert Prÿs-Jones

BOC Publications

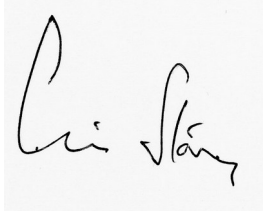
Towards the end of 2021 the Club published James W. Wiley's *The Birds of ST VINCENT, THE GRENADINES AND GRENADA, An Annotated Checklist*. No.27 in the BOC's checklist series. The manuscript was almost finished before James Wiley died on 19 September 2018. Not long before his death Paul Buckley and Allen Keith promised they would see it through to completion. With the help of many of James's colleagues, his wife Beth Wiley (who provided his working files) and Nigel Redman the checklist was made ready for publication. Christopher J. Sharpe in his review in BBOC 142(1) noted that the checklist is '...a worthy addition to the BOC checklist series as well as to the author's already impressive body of literature on the West Indies. A key piece in the jigsaw of West Indian ornithology, it becomes the standard account of the avifauna of St Vincent, the Grenadines and Grenada. The editors and the authors' collaborators are to be congratulated on seeing this valuable work through to completion.'

Trustees and Administration

The Bulletin is at the core of what the Club is about and under Guy Kirwan's skilful editorship it continues to attract outstanding contributions in the fields of avian systematics and distribution: the Trustees are very grateful to him for his professional dedication and sheer hard work. Robert Prÿs-Jones must also be thanked for organising the Club's talks programme.

The Trustees are indebted to the Trustees of the Herbert Stevens Trust for their successful management of the Club's funds in uncertain times. Based on their work the Club has been able to continue to finance both its core activities and its book publishing programme.

Finally, I must add my personal thanks to my fellow Trustees, to Guy Kirwan, Nigel Redman, Eng-li Green, Sarah Nichols and to Frank Mullen who records and edits the talks for uploading onto YouTube. Without their unstinting work the Club would not be able to flourish.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "Chris Storey".

Chris Storey, Chairman

28.9.2023

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

England & Wales - Charity number 1169733

Accounts

The British Ornithologists' Club

Founded 5 October 1892

Registered Charity No1169733

The Chairman's Review for 2021

In 2021, the Club continued to consolidate its online presence. We held four Zoomed talks as detailed in Robert Prÿs-Jones' report below. The talks were marketed through Eventbrite with an average of 115 registrations per talk; the Zoom recordings were placed on YouTube where to date the viewing figures for each talk ranged from 96 to 605, with an average of 345 for the four talks.

The Bulletin has increased its reach, the 2021 BioOne Report noting that 'Annual hits for the title by online users' were 134,147, some 23,000 more than in the previous year and with a pro rata share of 2.34% of hits on the BioOne Open Access collection. Seven new blogs were added to the Blog page ranging from *New Guinea Islands in the Sky* by David Bishop in March to *Forbes-Watson's Swift* by Etienne Marais in July. According to the number of views on Twitter and the number of webpage visits (proxy for blog reads) there has been an overall increase in blog engagement since 2020. The number of Twitter engagements (e.g. likes, retweets and follows) essentially stayed constant.

Year	Views on Twitter	Engagements on Twitter	Page visits
2020	3058	158	18
2021	3721	157	37

Regular Newsletters continued to be an important means of communication with Friends on our mailing list. Fourteen Newsletters were sent out and on average were opened by 67% of recipients. The number of Friends increased by 9% during the year.

On a more personal note, the Club sadly mourned the death of two long-standing members.

David Calder (1925–2021) died on 25 January 2021. David was the Club's Chairman from 1980 to 1983. BBOC 141(2) carried a moving tribute by his daughter, Philippa Luker and Tony Statham.

Bill Bourne (1930-2021) died on 31 May 2021. He joined the Club in 1956 and became a regular contributor to the Bulletin. Stephen Chapman noted in his extensive obituary (BBOC 141(3)) that it was at Bill Bourne's suggestion that *Pterodroma madeira* should be known as Zino's Petrel in honour of the Zino family (Frank Zino being a member of the Club).

Financial Report 2021 - R W Malin, Hon Treasurer

By way of explanation: Figures are shown on a cash-book basis (based on transactions in our bank accounts during the calendar year) and do not seek to allocate income or expenditure to a particular year, past or future. The figures are then 'consolidated' to combine both BOC charities, Old BOC and the new CIO, although these charities are legally separate.

Income and expenditure

Income in 2021 was £21,256, up by £2,755 (or 15%) above the 2020 result. Herbert Stevens investment income was £1,170 (or 10%) higher, while other investment income was £633 higher. Old BOC subscriptions continued to reduce but CIO donations increased by £900 due to a generous donation of £1,000 from the executors of Robin Woods. Lower book sales (£571, or 40% down), were offset by Gift Aid claims for 2019 and 2020.

Expenditure in 2021 was £31,435, an increase of £10,902 (or 53%) above 2020. Almost £9,000 of this increase was publication costs, being: £1,000 to translate Cuba; £10,190 for St Vincent; and £7,000 for Yarrell. BioOne costs were up £728 (mainly exchange rate related), and editorial costs were £738 higher (due to an increase and underbilling). Publication and website costs were each up around £250, while other admin costs were largely unchanged.

The net 2021 shortfall was £10,180, against a 2020 shortfall of £2,034. Without publication costs, 2021 would have shown a surplus of £8,010, up from £7,134 in 2020.

A smaller 'running' surplus than this is to be expected in 2022 - our investment income has stood up remarkably well against the pandemic, but the effects of the invasion of Ukraine are harder to predict. Operating costs continue to rise, further publications are in hand (the costs of which are expensed as incurred), and as subscription/donation income continues to fall, we expect to report another shortfall in 2022.

Balance Sheet

A pro-forma 'combined' balance sheet at the end of 2021 shows assets of £505,255, an increase of £38,495 (or 8%) from £467,760 in 2020.

The value of our Herbert Stevens investment units grew by £39,088 (or 14%), the Clancey units grew £5,583 (or 7%), and the units held by CIO grew by £3,147 (or 20%) - all reflecting the pandemic 'bounce back' by 31 December 2021. Volatility has returned since Russia's incursion, and 2021 values are unlikely to be sustained in 2022.

Medium-term deposits grew to £54,770, with interest of £651 credited in the year.

2021					
	Old BOC	CIO BOC		Total	% of total
Income					
H Stevens/ Clancey	£0.00	£12,753.95		£12,753.95	60.0%
Subs / donations	£1,640.50	£1,375.00		£3,015.50	14.2%
CIO dividends		£4,037.91		£4,037.91	19.0%
Book Sales	£0.00	£824.46		£824.46	3.9%
Gift Aid		£622.94		£622.94	2.9%
Interest	£1.08	£0.00		£1.08	0.0%
	£1,641.58	£19,614.26		£21,255.84	100.0%
Expenses					
Editor	£0.00	-£5,125.77		-£5,125.77	16.3%
Eng-Li	£0.00	-£3,550.00		-£3,550.00	11.3%
BioOne	£0.00	-£3,768.00		-£3,768.00	12.0%
Website	£0.00	-£614.02		-£614.02	2.0%
Meetings	£0.00	-£50.00		-£50.00	0.2%
Conference	£0.00	£0.00		£0.00	0.0%
Publications	£0.00	-£18,189.72		-£18,189.72	57.9%
Legal	£0.00	£0.00		£0.00	0.0%
Admin	£0.00	-£137.98		-£137.98	0.4%
	£0.00	-£31,435.49		-£31,435.49	100.0%
Balance Sheet					
31.12.21					
Bank	£66.43	£17,992.45		£18,058.88	3.6%
CIO deposits	£0.00	£54,769.87		£54,769.87	10.8%
Herbert Stevens Investments		£324,225.43		£324,225.43	64.0%
CIO Investments	£0.00	£90,516.47		£90,516.47	17.9%
Clancey Investment		£18,684.61		£18,684.61	3.7%
	£66.43	£506,188.83		£506,255.26	100.0%
31.12.20			Total	£467,760.29	
Combined 2021			Increase	£38,494.97	
Income	£21,255.84				
Expenses	-£31,435.49				
Shortfall	-£10,179.65		2020 Shortfall	-£2,033.58	

The Bulletin – Guy Kirwan, Hon Editor

Volume 141 comprised 496 pages (only slightly smaller than the record set in 2020) and 40 papers of broad geographical scope, although contributions on the New World (especially Neotropical), Afrotropical, and Indo-Pacific region birds were particularly well represented. The high page count, and level of submissions (see below), were both undoubtedly reflective of the ongoing (albeit diminishing) pandemic. The Bulletin was unquestionably fortunate that most referees continued to deliver their reviews promptly, despite the many pressures. Two new taxon names were introduced in the Bulletin during 2021, including a new fossil raptor from Cuba, and a new family-group name for the oddball Crested Shrikejay *Platylophus galericulatus*. Other papers that registered a strong interest on social media included a taxonomic revision of the humble Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, the first southern African record of the Forbes-Watson's Swift *Apus*

berliozzi, and a revisionary perspective on the infamous (at least in British ornithological circles) Hastings Rarities. For papers published in 2021, the interval between receipt and publication was 3–14 months, with a mean of *c.* 6.5 months. The Bulletin received a total of 56 new manuscripts in 2021, only slightly fewer than in the record-breaking year of 2020. Of these 56 submissions, 13 were rejected, one withdrawn following review, and the remainder accepted, in some cases subject to substantial and currently incomplete revision.

Grateful thanks are due, as ever, to referees who have given freely of their time and expertise: members of the Working Group on Avian Nomenclature (WGAN), especially Richard Schodde, and the Bulletin's Associate Editors, Lincoln Fishpool, Robert Prÿs-Jones and Chris Sharpe; and to Eng-Li Green, of Alcedo Publishing, for her constant dedication to Bulletin duties, including production of the index and updating the website. 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.

Meetings in 2021 - Robert Prÿs-Jones

My report for 2020 dwelt on the impact of covid, which resulted in meetings being unable to take place prior to the autumn, by which time the Club had got to grips with the (then) new world of Zoom. It concluded with the hope that in-person dinner meetings could soon be resumed in 2021, as these clearly have benefits that Zoom cannot entirely provide. In the event, this did not prove possible, but four extremely successful talks nevertheless took place via Zoom, attracting far larger live audiences (well over 100 in some cases) than in-person talks would have, as well as proving extremely popular when made available subsequently via the YouTube link on the Club's website.

The talk year kicked off on 29 March, when Ron Summers (RSPB Scotland) spoke on *Abernethy Forest: its history and ecology*, highlighting the long-term studies and habitat management that the RSPB has been conducting in this key remnant of the formerly widespread Caledonian pinewoods. Ron himself has contributed greatly to these studies, and he drew in particular on research in which he has been involved on the Western Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*, Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* and crossbills *Loxia* spp., balancing his focus on birds with much information on the fascinating wider environment.

On 24 May, the Club's 1,000th recorded evening meeting was delivered by Steve Portugal (Royal Holloway University of London), a Club committee member, who discussed his research into *Bird flight and co-operative aerodynamics*. The talk fell into two main parts: firstly, using novel biologging technology to reveal remarkable new insights into the factors influencing both how individual Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus*

eremita position themselves in the species' characteristic V-formation flights and the aerodynamic interactions that take place between them; secondly, using studies of the seemingly more unstructured flocks of homing pigeons *Columba livia* var. to demonstrate how the personalities of individual birds provide insight into their exploratory and homing abilities, as well as their flock positioning during homing flights.

The British public are probably the most avid garden feeders of wild birds in the world, and over many years this has been promoted, including by conservation organizations, as a fundamentally good thing, even if with a caveat regarding its potential for spreading disease. The 18 October talk *Does bird feeding help or hinder avian conservation?* by Alex Lees (Manchester Metropolitan University) took wider issue with this concept, adducing evidence that points to the increased survival, productivity and hence population growth in the already common dominant species making most use of bird feeders being offset by serious population declines in subordinate competitor species. The compelling take home message was that there is now an urgent necessity for an in-depth re-evaluation of the whole rationale of garden bird provisioning and its largely unforeseen side effects.

The year's talks closed with a presentation on 15 November by Ken Smith (now retired from the RSPB) entitled *Bars and spots – varying fortunes of our British woodpeckers*, summarising his and his wife Linda's many years of research on the family, complemented by that of volunteers who are increasingly stimulated to contribute by the Ken's and Linda's on-line site www.woodpecker-network.org.uk. Ken particularly focused on the varying fortunes of the Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor*, with the former increasing in numbers and the latter in serious decline over many years. Data collected to date point to low breeding success among Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers as the key reason underlying their decline, with changes in feeding ecology, rather than predation, seemingly being the key driver. Intriguingly, the situation in Britain is in contrast to the near continent, with both species currently increasing in the Netherlands. All these talks remain available on YouTube via the Club's website, so do catch up with any of these excellent presentations that you missed. Although the first (March) talk for 2022 will continue via the medium of Zoom only, the Club currently hopes to run combined in-person and Zoom meetings later in the year. This should include a key presentation on the birds of New Guinea by Professor Jared Diamond that was originally planned for 2020 but has had to be postponed since due to covid. Keep an eye on the Club's upcoming meetings page on its website – <https://boc-online.org/meetings/upcoming-meeting> - to discover exactly when meetings will occur and in what format.

BOC Publications

The Club was delighted that 2021 saw the publication by John Beaufoy, in association with the BOC, of Christine E. Jackson's outstanding *A Newsworthy Naturalist: The Life of William Yarrell*. This important and beautifully produced book set out in compelling detail Yarrell's life and times as a great 19th century naturalist. The work was edited by Robert Prÿs-Jones and we hope that it will be the first of a series of BOC biographies.

Trustees and Administration

The Trustees would like to thank Guy Kirwan for another outstanding BBOC year. Guy's unstinting hard work and editorial flare ensured that the Bulletin continued to go from strength to strength as indicated in the BioOne statistics quoted above. Thanks are also owed to Robert Prÿs-Jones for ensuring that we were able to hold four excellent Zoomed talks plus a Friends' meeting at the Barley Mow pub (the first since the pandemic). This gathering in December did not count as a formal meeting of the Club but its occurrence should be marked as it reestablished the Club's long-standing tradition of meeting in person for discussion and a meal. On this occasion trustees gave short presentations about the lives and times of the 15 founding fathers of the Club with the intention that these accounts would shortly be published as blog posts on the Club's website.

The Trustees are particularly indebted to the Trustees of the Herbert Stevens Trust for their skillful management of the Club's funds in the current circumstances.

Finally, I should like to add my personal thanks to my fellow Trustees, and to Guy Kirwan, Nigel Redman, Eng-Li Green and Sarah Nichols. I am very grateful for all their unstinting help and advice.

Chris Storey, Chairman
16 August, 2022

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

England & Wales - Charity number 1169733

Accounts

The British Ornithologists' Club

Founded 5 October 1892

Registered Charity No1169733

Chairman's Review for 2020

2020 was a particularly challenging year for us all. We have very much missed meeting in person both as a committee and with friends over food and drink after the Barley Mow talks. However, with the rest of society we have rapidly learnt to Zoom and rely on the internet to sustain our interests and work. The planned series of talks, including the joint talks with the Linnean Society, were rapidly re-jigged and by the end of the year, through Robert Prÿs -Jones's outstanding efforts, we held two highly successful Zoomed talks as detailed below. Zooming has enabled very many more people both in the UK and abroad to participate and we hope to continue to offer that facility even when in-person events are resumed. And the talks posted on YouTube continue to attract considerable viewers.

The three-year BioOne contract came up for renewal at the end of the year. After careful consideration and consultation we decided to renew the contract for a further three years.

We were very sorry to learn of Robin Woods' death. His outstanding *Birds of the Falkland Islands* , which came out in 2017, is a fine memorial to his life and work and the Bulletin of December 2020 (140(4)) carried a moving tribute by Mark Adams.

It is also an extremely sad duty to record the sudden death of David Fisher on 22 May 2021. David was a long standing member of the Club , serving as a Trustee and latterly helping as a manager of the website. Steve Rooke pays a moving tribute to David in the August 2021 edition of British Birds, outlining his

considerable contributions to the world of birds and birding and emphasising David's cheerful and helpful nature. The Club was certainly the beneficiary of his willingness to help and he will be very much missed.

Financial Report 2020

The effect of the pandemic on our financial position has been marked, but as Richard Malin points out below less than we might have feared.

By way of background: Figures are shown on a cash-book basis (using payments through our bank accounts in the calendar year) and do not seek to allocate income or expenditure to a particular year, past or future. The figures are 'consolidated' to show combined numbers for both BOC charities, Old BOC and the new CIO, but these charities are not legally combined.

Income and expenditure

Income in 2020 was £18,500.72 - £3,180.76 (or 15%) below the 2019 result. Income from Herbert Stevens was £5,625.06 (or 33%) lower, while other investment income was £2,273.27 higher. Falklands book sales were £912.07 higher. Old BOC subscriptions and new CIO donations both fell - the former by £259 (or 13%), the latter by c. £160, as donations in the prior year proved to be one-offs. A Gift Aid claim for 2020 has yet to be made.

Expenditure in 2020 was £20,534.30 - an increase of £8,264.53 (or 67%) compared to 2019. The £9,207.35 cost of our forthcoming Cuba publication was paid up-front but savings were made elsewhere: no meeting or conference costs (£0 against £740 in 2019); no legal fees (£0 against £720 in 2019); and reduced BioOne costs (£3,040 against £3,324). Editorial and publication costs were £511.55 higher (less than expected due to late billing / underbilling), while other admin costs were largely unchanged.

The net deficit for 2020 was £2,033.58 - against a surplus of £9,411.71 in 2019. Without publication costs the 2020 'running' surplus would have been £7,137.77 - a reduction of £2,237.94 (or 24%) from 2019.

A smaller 'running' surplus than this is expected in 2021 - as our Herbert Stevens and other investment income remains impacted by the pandemic, and our operating costs rise. With further publications in hand (the cost of which is expensed as incurred), and as subscription / donation income continues to fall, we expect to report another deficit in 2021.

Balance Sheet

2020					
	Old BOC		BOC CIO		Total % of total
Income					
H Stevens Investments	£0.00		£11,583.80		£11,583.80 63%
Subscriptions / donations	£1,715.50		£400.00		£2,115.50 11%
CIO Dividends	£0.00		£3,405.34		£3,405.34 18%
Book Sales	£0.00		£1,395.20		£1,395.20 8%
Gift Aid	£0.00		£0.00		£0.00 0%
Interest	£0.88		£0.00		£0.88 0%
	£1,716.38		£16,784.34		£18,500.72 100%
Expenses					
Editor	£0.00		-£4,387.25		-£4,387.25 21%
Eng-Li	£0.00		-£3,275.00		-£3,275.00 16%
BioOne	£0.00		-£3,040.00		-£3,040.00 15%
Website	£0.00		-£425.93		-£425.93 2%
Meetings	£0.00		£0.00		£0.00 0%
Conference	£0.00		£0.00		£0.00 0%
Publications	£0.00		-£9,207.35		-£9,207.35 45%
Legal	£0.00		£0.00		£0.00 0%
Admin	£0.00		-£198.77		-£198.77 1%
	£0.00		-£20,534.30		-£20,534.30 100%
Balance Sheet at 31.12.20					
Bank	£74.85		£27,958.04		£28,032.89 6%
CIO bank deposits	£0.00		£54,118.59		£54,118.59 12%
H Stevens Investments	£0.00		£285,137.11		£285,137.11 61%
Clancey Investments	£0.00		£84,933.95		£84,933.95 18%
CIO Investments	£0.00		£15,537.75		£15,537.75 3%
	£74.85		£467,685.44	Total	£467,760.29 100%
Combined 2020					
Income	£18,500.72				
Expenses	-£20,534.30				
Surplus	-£2,033.58				
Combined 2019 Surplus	£9,411.71		31.12.19	Total	£510,958.69
	-£11,445.29		Change		-£43,198.40 -8%

A pro-forma combined balance sheet at the end of 2020 shows assets of £467,760.29 - a decrease of £43,198.40 (or 8%) from £510,958.69 in 2019.

The value of our Herbert Stevens investment units fell by £34,823.61 (or 14%), and the value of our newly acquired Clancey units fell by £6,300.27 (or 7%) - both reflecting the markedly lower investment values prevailing on 31 December 2020. Values have continued to be volatile since year-end, and it is far from clear that 2019 values will return in 2021.

Medium-term deposits grew to £54,118.59, from interest of £917.18 credited in the year.

R W Malin
Hon Treasurer.

BBOC Online

Vol. 140 comprised 504 pages (a new annual record) and 39 papers of broad geographical scope, although contributions on New World, especially Neotropical, and Pacific region birds were particularly well represented. The record page count, and level of submissions (see below), were both undoubtedly reflective of the pandemic, with many workers having more time to write up results! The Bulletin was unquestionably fortunate that most referees continued to deliver their reviews promptly, despite the many pressures. Several new taxa were described in the Bulletin during 2019, including a new fossil vulture species and fossil *Ornimegalonyx* owl, both from Cuba, and two new subspecies of *Amytornis* grasswrens in Australia. Other papers that registered a strong

interest on social media included a review of Audubon's Bird of Washington, which author Matthew Halley revealed to be probably a fabrication designed to ensure the commercial success of his famous publishing project. For papers published in 2020, the interval between receipt and publication was 1–47 months, with a mean of *c.*6.2 months, but this declines to 4.9 months when we discount two papers that were only resubmitted after periods after more than a year and more than three years! The Bulletin received a total of 61 new manuscripts in 2020 an increase on 2019 (see above), and the largest total during the incumbent's editorship. Of these 61 submissions, 13 were rejected and the remainder accepted, in some cases subject to substantial and currently incomplete revision.

Grateful thanks are due, as ever, to referees who have given freely of their time and expertise; members of the Working Group on Avian Nomenclature (WGAN), especially Richard Schodde, and the Bulletin's Associate Editors, Lincoln Fishpool 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 the late 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.

Guy Kirwan Hon Editor

Meetings in 2020

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had a severe effect on the BOC's meetings in 2020. Unlike in most previous years over the past decade, no joint one-day conference with the Natural History Museum and one of the regional bird clubs was feasible. Even more unusually, only two evening meetings took place, and

both could only happen on-line using Zoom, as the usual in-person dinner meetings were impossible due to the restrictions in place.

The first meeting of the year had been planned for 23 March, when Beth Okamura, Natural History Museum, was due to speak on *How birds shape freshwater diversity*. This had to be called off at little over a week's notice, but the Club was fortunate that Beth then agreed to deliver it via Zoom later in the year, on 21 September, thereby becoming the guinea pig for this at least temporary movement to on-line only for the Club's talks. In the event, the re-scheduled event proved extremely satisfactory: technical gremlins were held to a minimum; the on-line talk was free and open to anyone who registered for it, so garnering a wider than usual audience; and Beth delivered some fascinating insights into the profound effect of waterbird movements on the development and dynamics of freshwater communities and consequent impacts on aquaculture and emerging fish diseases.

BOC evening meetings have been running continuously since 1892, and 2020 was the year in which the 1,000th such event was due to take place. To celebrate this milestone, it had been planned to hold two special lectures by eminent scientists, organised in conjunction with the Linnean Society and taking place at their central London premises. The first of these, on 21 June, was intended to be by Professor Jared Diamond from the University of California, Los Angeles, on the subject of *What's so special about New Guinea birds?* In addition to being a Pulitzer-prize-winning author of five best-selling books about human societies and human evolution, Jared is the world authority on New Guinea birds and also has long-standing links to the BOC. Unfortunately, his planned 2020 visit to the UK was cancelled due to covid restrictions, but it is still hoped that he will be able to deliver his talk in person during 2022.

The second such lecture planned was to be delivered on 16 November by Jon Fjeldså, Professor of Biodiversity at Copenhagen University, on *The evolution of passerine birds explained*, a topic regarding which he is lead editor of a major new book. Although unable through covid restrictions to attend in person, Jon

most kindly agreed to give his presentation via Zoom, which was very efficiently organised by the Linnean Society. To probably the largest audience ever for a BOC evening meeting, Jon delivered a tour de force that covered a huge amount of ground as he explained how molecular phylogenetics have in recent years revolutionised our understanding of the relationships of songbird groups. Moreover, in delivering it Jon was kind enough to highlight both the past and the continuing relevance of research published by the Club's *Bulletin* since 1892.

As is now usual, both the talks that took place in 2020 remain available to view via the Club's website. Although the Club's evening meetings in early 2021 have continued to be solely via the medium of Zoom, it must be hoped that in-person dinner meetings can be resumed relatively soon, as these clearly have added benefits that Zoom cannot entirely substitute for.

Robert Prŷs-Jones

BOC Publications

After a long gestation, *The Birds of CUBA* was published. It is no. 26 in the Checklist series and the second to be published solely by the BOC. It is a major work of scholarship and an outstanding tribute to the authors and to the unstinting work of David Wells and Nigel Redman, who as Editor saw it through the final stages of publication.

Trustees and Administration

I am delighted to say that Sarah Nichols, who is studying for a PhD in parasite dynamics in the sequential colonization of silver eyes in the South Pacific Islands supervised by Prof Beth Okamura and Dr Sonya Clegg, has been co-opted onto the Committee as website manager and as the creator and editor of the BOC Blog. The Blog is a new and important addition to the BOC website. Sarah took over

the web manager responsibilities from Eng-Li Green at the end of the year, Eng-Li having decided to lighten her online work load. The Club is however relieved and reassured that Eng-Li will continue to provide design and related services in respect of the Bulletin.

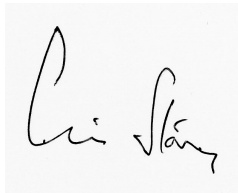
The Trustees would like to thank Guy Kirwan for sustaining the relevance and impact of the Bulletin: in a crowded online market place the Bulletin continues to attract outstanding articles and we are very grateful to Guy for all his work.

Thanks are also owed to Robert Prÿs-Jones for ensuring , in spite of the coronavirus restrictions , that we were able to hold two Zoomed talks.

The Trustees are particularly indebted to the Trustees of the Herbert Stevens Trust for their skillful management of the Club's funds in the current circumstances.

Josephine Rogers continued to manage the MailChimp lists and to provide admin support to Stephen Chapman in the issue of the regular newsletters.

Finally may I add my personal thanks to my fellow Trustees and Guy Kirwan, Nigel Redman, Eng-Li Green, Sarah Nichols and Josephine Rogers. The Club wholly depends on the many hours of dedicated commitment by all concerned and I am very grateful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Storey', is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

Chris Storey, Chairman

20.9.21

