



annual review 2014



www.bds.org.uk

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



This Annual Review underpins the British Deer Society's aim to be the UK's leading authority on wild deer and their management. It looks at the Society's governance, structure and activities throughout 2014.

As well as summarising the annual accounts, the review highlights key issues that BDS has addressed in the past year, reports on our continued support for deer-related scientific research and outlines some of the activities undertaken by branches throughout the UK.

In 2014 the British Deer Society:

communicated with over **60** policy groups and organisations

attended more than **30** shows and provided **130** events throughout the branch network

presented the **20,000th** DSC1 certificate at the CLA Game Fair

implemented vibrant **new branding**

received sponsorship, donations and prize contributions from **200+** organisations and individuals.

We focus on **deer welfare** and promoting **conservation** in balance with the environment.



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The British Deer Society was founded in 1963 to
protect the species of wild deer within the UK.

Promoting conservation through a programme of
education, research, deer management, training,
shows, and the Society Journal, Deer.

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Annual Review in
association with
Swarovski



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



A particular highlight of 2014 was the award of the 20,000th Deer Stalking Certificate at the CLA Game Fair. It does not seem long ago that the Society launched its Woodland Stalking Certificate to, it should not be forgotten, some widespread criticism of many things including the demise of deer in the UK. Well that did not happen, and with the subsequent transfer of the award to Deer Management Qualifications, it is quite an achievement to record just how many people have completed this course and in doing so developed their personal skills and knowledge. This can only be beneficial to the welfare of wild deer, the core purpose of the Society.

As to the future this figure will continue to grow, as the course and its delivery continues to be revised. It will remain the cornerstone of skill development. However I can see a growing number of courses that will become available to add to DSC1, work which will continue in 2015.

Other training delivered included more bespoke DSC1 courses than in other years. In particular we provided courses for the Metropolitan Police Firearm Licensing Department, and for the Cairngorm National Park Authority at the

other end of the country. We also tailored a course for Help for Heroes to provide an introduction to stalking for injured combatants, something we intend to do much more of as it is such a valuable cause, not least because of the strong links the Society has always had with the military.

Research

On the research front we have focused on practical applications. We funded a study to assess genetic diversity in the Major Histocompatibility Complex in open hill and forest populations of red deer, which will help to inform future management and conservation strategies. We funded a Risk Assessment paper outlining the effect of lead in animals for the Lead Advisory Group, and we published our longstanding project into accuracy and wounding rates. Feared controversial by some, this work was widely acclaimed as a very good starting point in gathering information from sources far and wide to inform best practice and training as to the most effective methods of controlling deer with firearms. The findings exposed most if not all the wild claims that have been hanging around this area for too long, and hopefully further stages of this work will be completed over coming years to consolidate the outcomes to the extent that has happened in Scandinavia, where similar work over 25 years or more

has led to universally accepted figures on which all relevant legislation is based.

As to future research we have published guidelines inviting projects on topics which include: deer impacts on environmental and human interests; impacts of humans on deer including welfare and disturbance; the role of deer in livestock and human disease; urban deer issues and problems associated with management; ways of improving welfare impacts of culling wild deer; responses of deer and their habitats to climate change; and research to help combat wildlife crime. You may detect a general drift towards deer-related topics involved in the delivery of public benefit and interest which is the intention.

Fundraising

Fundraising for research, education and other purposes is an area where there is always room for improvement. We had another successful internet auction, a path now taken by many other organisations that have followed our lead. My thanks go to all those who donated and to all those who bid to make such a substantial sum on which I hope we will continue to see annual increments every succeeding year.

Membership

To address our slowly declining membership, which is particularly

evidenced by the number of DSC1 course members who do not renew membership after one year, the Board set up five sub board groups to look at our main areas of activity in order to improve membership appeal. These areas are research; promoting knowledge; influencing policy; providing comprehensive education; and providing appropriate training development and qualification. This work is ongoing and will result in changes to be announced in 2015 to the way in which we deliver our focused charitable remit towards the welfare of deer found wild in the UK.

Without the hard work of the Society's staff and volunteers nothing would be achieved, and so for the last time I thank them for all that they do. After the 2015 AGM the Society will have a new chairman to take forward these new challenges, and I wish that person every success. It has been an honour to chair the Society for the last 14 years, and although I do not intend to be that far away in continuing to help in specific areas, I thank all those who have provided such invaluable assistance to what I have tried to do.



Mark Nicolson



It has been an honour to chair the Society for the last 14 years, and although I do not intend to be that far away in continuing to help in specific areas, I thank all those who have provided such invaluable assistance to what I have tried to do.

OBJECTIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS



The Society's intention to promote knowledge and awareness of deer-related issues to the public and to those with a specific interest in deer was reaffirmed.

Passing its 50-year milestone provided the opportunity for the Society to review whether it was fit for purpose for the next half century. 2014 was used to ensure BDS was capable of tackling existing and new threats to deer and developing future policy. Led by a core strategy group supported by the Board and Area Councils, time was taken to define and confirm the five key Society objectives:

- ▶ to fund research
- ▶ to promote knowledge
- ▶ to influence policy at all levels
- ▶ to provide comprehensive education
- ▶ and to provide appropriate qualifications.

Research

It was appreciated that a specific commitment would be necessary to fund research to increase our understanding of deer both in the context of their place in society and in the environment. Accordingly it was agreed to make available 10% of gross membership fees for research. BDS will also work to further develop the Society's relationships with those researching deer issues and encourage peer review of publications and output.

Knowledge

The Society's intention to promote knowledge and awareness of deer-related issues to the public and to those with a specific interest in deer was reaffirmed. Key to this was the focus both on current and new methods of communication via the BDS website, Deer Journal, e-newsletters and other available media. The significance of social media, electronic delivery and the public's widespread use of smartphones and other technology was well-recognised. The importance of delivering specific relevant data to target audiences was seen as essential together with a need to engage more with members and find out more about them and their interests. A further need, to review and redevelop the BDS presentational presence at shows and events was also identified.

Education

In order to provide comprehensive and continuing education it was agreed to revisit the Society's educational approach for children, young adults and their teachers. The need to locate areas within the curriculum where deer ecology fits was acknowledged, and to utilise current technology and methods of communication to distribute the information.

Influence

BDS has always used its expertise to influence government economic, social and environmental policy but it was recognised this had been as-and-when required and on a fairly reactive basis. It was therefore agreed to review the approach, and become more proactive, ensuring that BDS is represented on all appropriate bodies and committees.

Qualifications

Finally it was recognised that the Society's involvement in training for over forty years had resulted in its current highly efficient training department plus an extremely able training committee with a wide variety of skills. However it was noted that there was a wealth of further training opportunities beyond DSC1, DSC2 and Deer Management Courses. It was believed that providing education and training in the craft of skilled deer management could encompass all aspects of deer life and management, in effect providing more information for all.

A fundamental purpose of this major review and forward planning exercise was to acknowledge that whilst existing members of the Society understand and appreciate its relevance, there are many more people involved with deer who could and should want to be members of BDS. The Society must promote itself to this wider audience and recruit from within it.

To progress this, five sub board groups were set up with participants drawn from Area Council members, the Board and Management Team. Meetings continued through autumn and winter 2014 and are now ongoing to develop these five key Society objectives.

Throughout the year the Society in pursuit of its aims met and/or corresponded with:



All Party Shooting and Conservation Group (Westminster)	Lantra, Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector
Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)	Lead Ammunition Sub Group
Association of Deer Management Groups (ADMG)	Lowland Deer Network (LDNS)
British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC)	Mammal Society
Cairngorm Deer Advisory Group	Moredun Research Institute
Cairngorm National Park Authority	Moorland Forum
Central Scotland Green Network	National Biodiversity Network
Country Land and Business Association (CLA)	National Gamekeepers Organisation (NGO)
Countryside Alliance (CA)	National Rifle Association (NRA)
Cross Party Animal Welfare Committee, Holyrood	National Trust
Deer Management Qualifications (DMQ) Board meetings	National Trust for Scotland
Deer Management Qualifications Quality Assurance Group (QAG)	Natural England
Deer Management Round Table Group	Northern Ireland Assembly's All Party Group on Countrysports
Defence Estates (DDM)	Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime (PAW)
Defra Wildlife Health and Welfare	Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime (PAW) Scotland
Deer Initiative (DI) Partnership and Ltd Company meetings	Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime (PAW) Northern Ireland
DI research group	PAW Poaching Priority Committee
Deer Initiative Best Practice Steering Group	Police Firearms Licensing Liaison Groups
DI Wales	Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
England Implementation Group (EIG) Animal Health and Welfare Strategy	Police Wildlife Liaison Officers meetings
European Commission	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
FACE (UK)	Scottish Government
Firearms and Explosives Licensing Working Group (FELWG)	Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)	Scottish Landowners and Estates (SLE)
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA)
Food Standards Agency Game Meat Group	Scottish Venison Partnership
Food Standards Agency Meat Hygiene Policy Forum	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Forestry Commission (FC)	Standing Conference on Countryside Sports (SCOCs)
Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (various)	Tracking Mammals Partnership
The Heather Trust	Transport Scotland
Highways Agency	Ulster Reform Club
Institute of Chartered Foresters	Various university/regional council specialist interest and biodiversity groups
The James Hutton Institute	Veterinary Deer Society
John Muir Trust	Wildlife Trusts (various)
	Wild Scotland
	Zoological Society of London



Communicating

While the printed word remained key to BDS, digital technologies now form an increasingly important element in our communications.

Digital channels

The website continued to be well used as a source of information by members, the public and the press, particularly when deer-related issues were raised in the media. Further improvements are planned for 2015 with the launch of our new website, made possible by the generous support of the Lonsdale Trust. This will provide a more modern, easily accessible resource for everyone interested in deer-related issues. Our use of social media channels, Facebook and Twitter, continued to develop with regular postings and tweets on items of interest.

The e-newsletter Deer Bytes continued to carry a varied selection of news and information. The use of MailChimp, an email marketing service provider, has greatly improved coverage. We encourage members to supply email addresses to improve communication right across the Society and to be cost efficient.

Media

The Society has an unrivalled body of deer-related knowledge in the UK and responded to press enquiries throughout the year. Our media profile continued to benefit from the PR expertise of Board member Selena Barr. Numerous mentions in the print, broadcast and digital media were enhanced by particularly good coverage in the trade press.

BDS expertise was called upon by researchers, writers and journalists for a range of factual and fictional programmes and publications including BBC Countryfile, Springwatch and local radio.

Publications

The Deer Journal remains the major voice for general deer articles, research, training and legislation plus BDS news and branch activities. Its success is due, in no small part, to the expertise of the publisher, contributors and the many advertisers who support the magazine.

Branding guidelines

As a large organisation with an extensive and active branch structure it is vital that we project a professional and consistent image that underpins our expertise and reputation. As a result, this year saw a review and update of our visual identity and how it is applied to publications, display material, website, correspondence and other material. The revised logo and visual style is an evolution of the existing branding and represents a fresh and lively development of the BDS look. It will gradually be implemented across all communications and new brand guidelines are available to help all members and branches to implement the revised style.



Campaigning

Deer Awareness

Campaigns alerting the motoring public continued in areas of high risk.

BDS Wessex branch's ongoing campaign for deer warning signs on busy forest roads met with some success. Hampshire County Council began trialling Temporary Illuminating Multi-Purpose (TIM) signs on the A337 and A35 during the rut.



A new road safety campaign began on Cannock Chase, alerting drivers during the short days of winter. Cannock Chase Ranger Robert Taylor and BDS Midlands member Joan Brookes organised display safety signs.

Wildlife Crime

Deer poaching continued as high priority with members involved in anti-poaching initiatives. BDS is a member of the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW), where its energies are channelled through the Poaching Priority Group. This aims to increase the level of awareness of poaching and hare coursing as serious wildlife crimes, and to build better trust and relationships between the law enforcement agencies and local communities leading to increased prevention, intelligence flows and

enforcement success. In Scotland, where John Bruce chairs the PAW Poaching and Coursing Priority group, the unrelenting pressure to remain on high alert with timely and accurate reporting of incidents to the police resulted in successful prosecutions. So too in Northern Ireland where branch officers attended PAW-NI and Poaching Subgroup meetings.

BDS also sent delegates to the first NGO organised National Anti-Poaching Conference. This brought together police forces from across Great Britain represented by front line wildlife and rural crime officers and representatives from numerous organisations.

Chronic Wasting Disease of Deer

BDS continued campaigning hard to promote awareness through Border Controls information and by continuing to distribute an information leaflet produced in collaboration with other concerned organisations. The leaflet provides advice on simple biosecurity precautions to reduce the risk of introducing the disease to the UK.

Coaching

Jim Taylor Page Bursaries

Bursaries are awarded annually to a number of students otherwise unable to afford a DSC1 course. In 2014, ten students successfully passed DSC1 through this route. They came from various learning establishments – Royal School, Armagh, NI; Cardinal Newman College, Lancashire; London South Bank University; Hartbury College, Gloucester; Harper Adams University, Shropshire; Bishops Burton College, Yorkshire; Lancaster University; and Budehaven Community School, Cornwall.

Anti-poaching conference

BDS representatives attended the first national anti-poaching conference run by the National Gamekeepers Organisation. The event brought together farmers, gamekeepers, police, DEFRA, Crown Prosecution Service and a range of rural groups to explore a range of issues and share expertise.

BDS on show

The show season provides an important platform to showcase BDS to the wider community.

In July the Society promoted its products and services at the annual CLA Game Fair held at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire. With over 143,000 visitors the 3-day event is a mecca for countryside enthusiasts and BDS volunteers and staff worked hard throughout the long weekend. They provided information on training courses, general deer-related issues and recruited members, in addition to selling stalking and lardering equipment, books and DVDs.



Over 34,000 people attended the GWCT Scottish Game Fair in July and BDS was delighted to welcome many of them to its stand. Our thanks to Central Branch for their work in setting up the display and all branches involved in manning the stand over the weekend.



Scottish Area Chair, John Bruce makes a presentation to Maitland Rankin on his retirement from the Scottish Council.



Catching them young

2014 saw the Society represented at over 30 shows and fairs across the country.

At the CLA Game Fair education was high on the agenda when BDS ran a special area for young people which included a fallow deer skeleton.



A cleaned and reassembled fallow skeleton, together with antlers, skins and bones drew in the young crowd at the CLA Game Fair. Our thanks to Jan Andrews and Chris Howard for their work on this highly creative exhibit.



How our young visitors see our deer.



Young transatlantic visitors.



Archie Colville hands over his donation to BDS.



Jan Andrews with budding wildlife biologist Sam Drayton.

RESEARCH



To support relevant research, the Board established a list of priority areas where they feel research is needed, and within which BDS will favour applications for funding

Research is one of the Society's five key objectives, increasing our understanding of deer, and their interaction with society and the environment.

Genetic diversity in the Major Histocompatibility Complex in Scottish red deer

BDS funding is supporting a two-year study by Dr Sílvia Pérez-Espona of Anglia Ruskin University, in collaboration with Dr Javier Pérez-Barbería of the James Hutton Institute, to assess genetic diversity in the Major Histocompatibility Complex (MHC) in forest and open hill populations of Scottish red deer. The following is their interim report.

This two-year study consists of genotyping the MHC class II DRB3 exon 2 in 48 Scottish red deer from two forests (Tarlogie, Inshriach) and two open hill sites (Strathconon, Abernethy). Twelve individuals from each population (six stags and six hinds) were identified. For each individual a total of 48 clones, resulting from the amplification and cloning of the MHC class II DRB3 exon 2, are being sequenced. This will give a total of 2,304 MHC sequences that will establish the minimum number of clones per individual that need to be screened to capture the complete MHC allelic diversity in an individual red deer.

At the time of writing 24 red deer stags have been sampled from the four

selected populations already analysed (MHC class II DRB3 amplified, cloned and sequenced). For the 24 red deer hinds, the MHC class II DRB3 has already been amplified, all PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) products cloned and the samples are now being prepared for sequencing.

Preliminary results from the sequencing of the 24 red deer stags revealed that genetic diversity at the MHC is high, with the highest number of alleles ever discovered in an ungulate (some individuals presented more than 30 alleles) – reflecting the importance of conducting thorough analyses to accurately assess genetic diversity at the MHC. Genetic diversity was high in both forest and open hill populations. Although more detailed data analyses need to be conducted when the hind data is available, the data indicates that some sets of alleles are habitat-specific (ie only found in either forest or open hill).

The next stage of the project is to finalise the sequencing of MHC alleles of the 24 red deer hinds.

Factors associated with shooting accuracy

The results of a BDS funded research project into shooting accuracy and wounding rates in wild deer management were published in 2014 providing the basis for planned improvements to best practice and BDS training.

The findings of this study largely confirmed previous best practice teaching, but also offer clear pointers for improving welfare by maximising the chances of a quick and certain kill and minimising wounding.

Researcher Nicholas Aebischer carried out statistical analysis of data collected in 2005 by BDS. Information had been collected over a period of a year from a number of UK stalkers for a study to identify the key factors that influenced whether a deer was killed cleanly or not, and to make recommendations to minimise unnecessary wounding. Anonymous information was collected regarding the age, experience, qualifications and employment profile of the stalkers as well as details of each shot fired, the conditions under which the shot was taken, the deer that was targeted, environmental conditions on the day and the outcome of the shot.

Most of the factors that influence accuracy will not be unexpected, however the research provided clear statistical confirmation of anecdotal understanding of these factors and sound evidence to support efforts to reduce wounding and animal suffering.

While environmental factors and deer behaviour play significant roles in achieving a clean kill, not surprisingly, the judgements made by the shooter and their level of skill and experience were also major factors. While the probability of hitting a target deer was high with someone who practised shooting frequently, this reduced considerably with a lack of practice. Similarly, those qualified to DSC2 and Advanced Stalking Certificate level were more accurate than those with DSC1 or no qualification. The research suggested that DSC1 training should include more firing practice under field conditions and that stalkers should

undertake target practice at least once a month.

The Society is incorporating relevant information into training courses, guidance notes and other forms of information to assist both trainee and experienced stalkers.

Outcome of shots

- ▶ A total of 102 stalkers fired 2,281 first shots resulting in 102 (4.5%) clear misses and 2,179 (95.5%) hits.
- ▶ Of the deer that were hit, 2,026 (88.8%) were killed outright and 153 (6.7%) were wounded.
- ▶ Of the wounded deer, 125 (5.5%) were killed with a subsequent shot while 28 (1.2%) were lost or escaped.



Image: Graham Downing

Summary of key factors to achieve a clean kill

- ▶ Choose a comfortable shooting position
- ▶ Use a rifle support
- ▶ Aim at chest or lower neck
- ▶ Use bullets heavier than 75 grains
- ▶ Avoid shooting when there is insufficient time to achieve a clean shot
- ▶ Shoot a distant animal only if there is sufficient time
- ▶ Shoot an animal when it is stationary
- ▶ Avoid shooting a deer that is heavily obscured or in a thicket
- ▶ Take extra care when shooting on unfamiliar ground
- ▶ Practise shooting at least once a month

BDS funded the research project with Hugh Rose responsible for the survey design and data collection. The Society also funded the data analysis and preparation of the manuscript by Nicholas Aebischer and Christopher Wheatley of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust. The full research report entitled 'Factors associated with shooting accuracy and wounding rate of four managed wild deer species in the UK, based on anonymous field records from deer stalkers' was published in October 2014 by PLOS ONE, the



international peer-review publication that carries primary research from any scientific discipline. The full report can be viewed at <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0109698>

Detecting changes in deer numbers in space and time

BDS contributed to a pilot study to examine the impact that recreational land use might have on deer distribution and the economics of deer stalking, and to determine whether further research might be warranted. The Perthshire study was carried out by Danielle Gauthier BSc and Dr Philip Stephens, both of Durham University, and Dr Justin Irvine of the James Hutton Institute.

Scotland's open moorland and mountain landscapes are valued and enjoyed by both residents and visitors. These areas

also host a range of activities such as hill farming, deer stalking, game birds, forestry and fishing, all of which support the rural economy. In recent years a number of changes have affected deer management in the uplands:

- ▶ an increasing emphasis on managing grazing impacts through reducing deer densities, especially for priority habitats
- ▶ culling and fencing associated with increased woodland planting have affected deer numbers and distribution.
- ▶ trends in recreation, coupled with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, have led to more people walking in the mountains.

In some cases these changes have led to conflicts between the legitimate

objectives of landowners and the public benefits that these landscapes provide.

Improving our understanding of the nature of these conflicts would aid management, and the study focused on any impact that recreational land use might have on the economics of deer stalking; in particular on whether available management information can be used to assess trends in:

- ▶ deer abundance
- ▶ culling levels
- ▶ distribution
- ▶ habitat preferences of red deer.

The study was centred on the North Chesthill estate in Perthshire and six neighbouring landholdings that form part of the Breadalbane Deer Management Group. The estate covers much of an SSSI, designated for its montane habitats and rare arctic-alpine plants, and is ringed by four Munros that attract many hill walkers.

Data sources

Three data sources were examined. Firstly, the eight winter foot and helicopter-based counts conducted between 1987 and 2012 were collated. Secondly, cull data for North Chesthill were available for 1998 to 2013 (2014 for stags), together with estate level cull data for the neighbouring land holdings for 2005 to 2013. Thirdly, the Land Cover of Scotland map from 1988 (LCS88) was updated with the National Forest Inventory Scotland data from 2011 and used to extract habitat information. The collated data were analysed to indicate trends in deer numbers and density.

The project concluded that the distribution of deer in the study area does appear to have changed. In winter, deer have moved away from the mountainous centre of the study area to the lower grounds of the periphery. Given the limited historical data



available, explanations for this change in distribution are speculative and the researchers felt that it was impossible, at this stage, to pinpoint the drivers of those changes.

The analysis has highlighted that:

- ▶ the change in distribution is consistent with the hypothesis that the reduction of sheep grazing at lower altitudes will affect distribution as deer move into newly available areas
- ▶ stags in summer (during the open season) have a preference for areas also used by hill walkers.

The wealth of operational data being gathered by or on behalf of estates has the potential to shed light on deer population trends, but it is critical that this information is collected in a consistent and systematic way. The trends in deer distribution detected in this study support the development of a more comprehensive project focusing on these issues. Behavioural observations of deer, sheep and hill walkers using a range of GPS technologies and questionnaires could shed light on the sensitive situation where ecotourism and stalking activities co-occur within the same landscape.

The final report, when available, will be on the BDS website, www.bds.org.uk.

BDS Practical Assistance

Fluke in Deer

Moredun Research Institute in Edinburgh: Members assisted with sample collection from deer during the course of their deer management activities as part of ongoing research. Deer are known to act as a reservoir of infection for a number of fluke species, including liver fluke, a serious parasite in livestock.

Disease and lesions

Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, Edinburgh: Professor Jim Simpson requested help with the Scottish Deer Project. Deer stalkers were asked to send phone images and samples of unusual lesions for the study.

Project to develop a DNA-based kit

University of Central Lancashire: PhD student Tania Johnson was helped with small tissue samples for her work on developing a DNA-based kit expected to be a valuable tool for law enforcement officials investigating cases of illegal poaching, eg matching DNA evidence obtained from a poacher to that found at a crime scene.

Impact of Deer Browsing

University of Brighton: Ecology student Philip Stannard was loaned camera traps and helped with positioning them for his project to study the impact of winter deer browsing on selected coppice sites.

BDS Research Priorities

To support relevant research, the Board established a list of priority areas within which BDS will favour applications for funding (or on occasion actively commission research work). While considering applications for funding on ANY deer-related topic it will give particular consideration to applications received within these key topic areas.

BDS priority areas for research funding:

- ▶ Deer impact on the environment and human interests
- ▶ Impact of humans on deer including welfare and disturbance
- ▶ The role of deer in livestock and human diseases
- ▶ Urban deer: problems and problems associated with management
- ▶ Novel methods of controlling impacts of deer
- ▶ Ways of improving the welfare impacts of culling wild deer
- ▶ Responses of deer and their habitat to climate change
- ▶ Research to help combat wildlife crime.



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Specific training requests are always welcomed and bring the Society into contact with a range of diverse and interesting organisations.



TRAINING



Deer management is one of the fastest growing shooting sports and now attracts many newcomers each year. Encouragingly, many of these new participants are actively looking for knowledge and qualifications before becoming involved in deer management from the rear end of a rifle. Their thirst for information has kept the BDS training department busy. Deer stalking courses have been delivered both by direct contact and through distance learning which the Society is unique in being able to provide thanks to the development of its Ultimate Deer Data programme.

Specific training requests are always welcomed and bring the Society into contact with a range of diverse and interesting organisations. This year these included the well-known charity, Help for Heroes. The organisation's Shooting for Heroes programme is an initiative to introduce wounded, injured and sick servicemen, women and veterans to all aspects of game shooting. As part of the learning process the Band of Brothers (Help for Heroes fellowship for the wounded, injured and sick) was welcomed to BDS Fordingbridge for a half-day introduction to deer

management and stalking presented by Chris Howard a BDS Senior Course Manager.

More Help for Heroes

The half-day was so well-received that BDS offered to subsidise and host a further 3-day DSC1 qualification course. Chris Howard and David Mullen ran the course over a weekend in July to a keen and receptive audience of steely-eyed potential deer stalkers keen to learn more about deer stalking as a recreational activity, as well as the paid opportunities it might offer for those interested in pursuing a career in countryside management. It was a packed few days and the attendees were pushed in all matters relating to deer stalking, but all agreed that it provided an interesting insight into the world of deer management. It particularly appealed to the tactical, field-focused side of military men, and also armed them with a recognisable industry qualification and the confidence to approach local landowners for future stalking opportunities.

A further training request was received from the Metropolitan Police Firearms Licensing Department interested in a number of their officers and staff attending a BDS DSC1 course. The



The Society is unique in providing deer stalking courses through distance learning.

DSC1 milestone

Ryan Ford was selected as the representative candidate to receive the 20,000th DMQ award of the Deer Stalking Certificate 1 at the CLA Game Fair. Ryan took his course in Cirencester and received his award at the BDS stand from Lord de Mauley, Defra Minister within the House of Lords.

objective was for Police personnel liaising with stalking rifle users to gain an insight into the activity, and use their knowledge to improve communications with firearms users. A number of Police staff observed various courses and then opted to take the formal course assessments and achieve their own qualifications. The officers attending were very impressed with the BDS course and BDS will be making more places available on DSC1 courses for the Metropolitan Police firearms licensing staff during 2015.

Humane Animal Dispatch

Deer welfare issues relating to road vehicle collisions show no sign of abatement making the BDS Humane Animal Dispatch Course as important as when it was first conceived. Demand for this Lantra Customised Award remained high throughout the year resulting in a number of one-day courses in various parts of the country. Toward the end of the year a review of the course, and its content, was undertaken by an invited panel. This has resulted in a number of changes to both course content and the

accompanying manual to make it even more fit for purpose. Internal reviewing of all courses is a traditional function of the BDS training department resulting in our confidence that all the training we offer is delivered to the highest available standards.

As well as running training courses BDS training department personnel attended many of the major country shows held during 2014. They were able to offer advice and answer the many interesting, and sometimes obscure, questions posed to them by visiting members of the public.

2014 was a particularly busy year for the department. Alongside offering the usual training programme we have also been developing a wide range of new training initiatives and courses that will be introduced during 2015. These initiatives will ensure BDS maintains its position as the innovator of deer-related training with the introduction of events and courses designed specifically to enhance the personal development of deer managers.

Ryan Ford, gamekeeper on the Tusmore Estate, near Bicester, receives his award from Lord de Mauley watched by BDS Vice Chair Michael Thick





BDS supports Help for Heroes

BDS hosted and subsidised a three-day DSC1 qualification at Tedworth House in Wiltshire, one of four recovery centres run by Help for Heroes, the charity that supports wounded, injured and sick ex-service personnel.





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HOW WE WORK



Organisational Structure of the Society

The Society is governed by a Board of Trustee/Directors responsible for:

- ▶ setting and directing policy
- ▶ agreeing annual business plans and budgets
- ▶ establishing specific subgroups for research, education, training and influencing policy
- ▶ publishing an annual report and accounts
- ▶ ensuring that a risk management process exists and publishing a risk management statement
- ▶ overseeing the work of the management team.

The management team is responsible for:

- ▶ implementing BDS policy
- ▶ delivering the annual business plan
- ▶ managing the Society's finances
- ▶ developing new initiatives
- ▶ setting targets and monitoring progress
- ▶ developing and maintaining links with partner organisations
- ▶ encouraging and supporting deer-related research
- ▶ responding to deer-related issues

- ▶ contributing to regional and national developments in deer management
- ▶ promoting the Society's activities and its reputation.

The management team comprises:

Mark Nicolson *BDS Chairman*

Philip Mackenzie *Treasurer and Financial Director*

Sarah Stride *General Manager and Company Secretary*

David Goffin *UK Training Manager*

John Bruce *Trustee Director and Chairman Scottish Council*

Phillip Rosslee *Finance Officer*

Individual Trustee/Directors contributed specialist input as required as ex-officio members.

Risk Management Policy

The Society's Trustee/Directors take a responsible view of risk management, and in accordance with the provisions of SORP 2005 (Statement of Recommended Practice) Accounting for Charities, examined major risks to which they considered the Society might be exposed, reviewing and putting in place systems and procedures to manage and mitigate them. The process is recorded in a risks register which is subject to regular review.





Professor James Simpson at the BDS AGM. His keynote speech explained his research with the Scottish Deer Project at the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, Edinburgh.

Fundraising

Annual Internet Auction

Every year much effort goes into sourcing lots for the Society's internet auction. It is a popular way to raise funds for the charity and the generous response from all contributors is truly appreciated. In 2014, bidders in the auction helped to raise just under £33,000 from 140 donated lots.

Draws

Responding to members' requests, rather than feature a rifle, for 2014 the Society's main Countryside Extravaganza Draw featured a variety of donated prizes. These included binoculars from Swarovski, original artwork from Clare Brownlow and Clare Villers, countryside clothing and sporting accessories from Arxus, Bushnell, Edgar Brothers, Hammond Sporting, Paramo, and Napier UK plus exquisite engraved crystal from David Whyman. The Society is very grateful to all donors and to those who gave support by buying tickets.

At local level a number of branches also ran draws to help raise funds.

Annual General Meeting

The Society's AGM weekend was hosted by West Branch on the edge of the Cotswolds at Rodborough. Members visited Awre Severn Cider, Lydney Dock and then Dyrham Park to view the park's Fallow herd. Following Saturday's dinner, James Bond gave a talk on mediaeval deer parks and warrens. On Sunday, prior to the AGM, Professor James Simpson gave a talk on his research with the

Scottish Deer Project at the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, Edinburgh.

2014 awards announced at the AGM

The Jim Taylor Page Trophy was awarded to Tom Brown, President of Northern Ireland Branch for his outstanding commitment and promotion of the Society. Tom was responsible for initiating the Northern Ireland Branch and has held positions of secretary, chairman and training officer within the branch as well as encouraging many to join the BDS. This is the first time that the trophy has gone to a member in Northern Ireland.



Tom Brown (r) receiving The Jim Taylor Page Trophy from Greg Kane, NI Branch Chairman.

The Jim Taylor Page Bursary Award was again used to assist young students with places on BDS DSC1 Courses.

The award for most recruitment through membership blister pack sales during the course of the previous year went to South West England Branch.

The Dulverton Trophy for branch photographic entries was awarded to Wessex Branch.

“

Trust donations were gratefully received from The Stonewall Park Charitable Trust, Mrs N. E. M. Warren Charitable Trust, Mr & Mrs T. C. S. Haywood Charitable Trust, Diana Symon Trust, The Lonsdale Trust and the Culra Trust.



Our 16 branches ran a full programme of events throughout the year as well as attending shows to support BDS. Their combined effort is gratefully acknowledged.

BRANCH ACTIVITIES

– a snapshot

Midlands, Wales & the Marches

For over 200 years the Birmingham Gun Barrel Proof House has ensured that UK-made firearms meet the highest standards of workmanship and materials. A visit by branch members proved to be a memorable experience when they toured the premises, heard a lecture on the evolution of the Birmingham gun trade and history of the Proof House and visited the two on-site museums and library.

North West



The branch ran a number of range days throughout the year offering participants the chance to practise their shooting and zero telescopic sights.

Wessex

Dogs for Deer was an intensive learning weekend in September helping handlers to use their dogs in deer management. Five attendees who took the 20-hour blood trail test were passed as official trackers.

Yorkshire

BDS Yorkshire branch supported a Best Practice day in Dalby Forest organised by the Deer Initiative and the Forestry Commission. Despite being oversubscribed and suffering from poor weather the day was very successful.



The Yorkshire branch also held an Autumn Deer Day at Harewood House near Leeds to educate the public about spotting and identifying deer and deer behaviour.

North East



The branch hosted a training day in conjunction with the Deer Initiative at Rothbury in Northumberland in May. After a morning in the classroom, participants completed a Deer Activity and Impact Assessment in a local forest.

East Anglia

Managing wild and farmed deer, deterring poachers and making the most of your carcass were discussed in May when over 50 members attended an open day at Houghton Hall near Kings Lynn by kind permission of Lord Cholmondeley. As well as presentations and discussions members were treated to a superb lunch and a tour of the park and farm.



East Mercia

The branch now numbers around 260 members and, along with members of the East Anglia branch, represented BDS at the Newark Stalking Show in November.

South West



October saw historic Prideaux Place host an operatic fundraising day including a champagne reception, excerpts from a number of operas presented by Duchy Opera and a vintage tea party.

South East



A total of 39 shooters took part in the annual Stalkers' Shoot at BSRC Bisley in May. In addition to the competition, members enjoyed an excellent barbecue showcasing a range of venison and game.

Northern Ireland

The branch sponsored a butchery and cookery demonstration at the Portadown campus of the Southern Regional College by providing sustainably-sourced wild venison. The event was well attended and the branch is working with the college on similar demonstrations.

South East Scotland



Improving members' butchery skills so that they could get the most from a carcass was the aim of a demonstration in October by a former member of staff at Forsyth's Butchers in Peebles.

South West Scotland

Mill House Deer Farm, Lockerbie hosted an activity day for 15 members and non-members. The day included hands-on experience of gralloching followed by a butchery demonstration.

Scotland – Highland



John Lycett was presented with a working model of a Hythe Target frame in appreciation of his work in the butts at all of the branch shoot days.

Branch representatives meet at least 3 times a year at Area Councils to share information and ideas. Area Council Chairmen sit on the Main Board to act as the link between Board and Branches.





FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Review for the Year ended 31 December 2014

The 2014 Accounts set out overleaf are the consolidated financial statements of the British Deer Society including all branches and the wholly owned subsidiary BDS (Sales and Services) Ltd. The Accounts are presented in the same general format as last year. The support costs have been re-allocated over the direct charitable and other expenditure in accordance with the current best practice for Charities and SORP 2005, and on a consistent basis to previous years.

Subsidiary – The British Deer Society (Sales and Services) Ltd.

Sales and Services' turnover was down by £15,000. This was partly caused by a decision to reduce the cost to members of the BDS Stalking Insurance package (run through Sales & Services), in order to make it a competitive and more attractive option as part of the membership package. There were also no new BDS products available this year (especially DVD's which have a good profit margin) and the book market is generally becoming increasingly competitive.

Work is currently being undertaken on the design of a new Society website (with financial assistance from the Lonsdale Trust) which should be more user-friendly



It is encouraging to report that the income derived from members' subscriptions along with amounts recovered through Gift Aid shows an increase of £14,000 on the previous year.

than the old website and it is hoped will drive more business to the e-commerce site. Once again I would urge members to look at the Society's website for any stalking-related purchase rather than heading straight for Amazon. Any surplus generated by Sales & Services helps reduce the Society's overhead costs.

Charity

I am pleased to report that the Society has generated a small surplus of £4,250 in the current year. This is lower than last year's surplus of £15,129 but is slightly better than the budgeted break even position. It is encouraging to report that the income derived from members' subscriptions along with amounts recovered through Gift Aid shows an increase of £14,000 on the previous year. However an income stream that has not increased is that of legacies left to the Society, which were £5,000 in the previous year but less than £500 in the current year. Many charities rely to some extent on legacies and I would encourage members to consider changing their wills and leaving a small amount to the Society.

One other area that has shown an improvement on the previous year is the Society's investments. This is mainly due to a decision taken by the Board to move part of the Society's funds to investment funds run by Ruffer investment managers owing to the very poor returns available on deposits held by the Banks. This action has resulted in a gain on the investments of £8,090 which is shown at the bottom of the Accounts (in line with the Charities accounting rules). Obviously this gain is only a snapshot at the year end date and

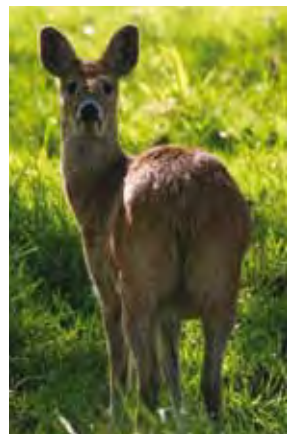
investments will move up and down in line with the financial markets, but so far this investment decision has benefited the Society in both increased income and a capital gain.

Having achieved a small surplus last year, the training division income has fallen by £18,000 with fixed costs being much the same as in the previous year. This reflects a very difficult and competitive market for training, and the training division is developing a range of new training initiatives to try and improve the position.

The branches have recorded an overall surplus of just over £5,000 and this is particularly due to the efforts of South West England and East Anglia branches. All branches are encouraged to follow their example as any surplus generated at branch level benefits the Society as a whole.

Once again I would like to record my thanks to the staff at Fordingbridge who do sterling work on behalf of the Society and its members. The year ahead may be more difficult, but I believe that the Society is in good shape to tackle any challenges that may lie ahead.

Philip Mackenzie, Treasurer



GROUP STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

	Total 2014 £	Total 2013 £
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds		
Voluntary Income		
Members Subscriptions and Donations	353,235	336,578
Legacies and Specific Donations	449	5,000
Grants and Sponsorship	8,136	6,585
Total Voluntary Income	361,820	348,163
Charitable Activities for Generating Funds:		
Fundraising Events, Auctions & Draws	39,436	55,098
Trading Income	87,972	103,056
Total Charitable Activities Income	127,408	158,154
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities		
Training Income	140,122	158,331
Branch Activities	35,685	34,192
Investment Income	5,687	5,512
Total Incoming Resources	670,722	704,352
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Costs of Generating Funds		
Direct Costs of Fundraising Events	26,411	32,690
Membership, Marketing and Data Management	88,380	85,311
Trading	50,251	60,975
	165,042	178,976
Charitable Activities		
Research and Public Education	61,589	60,124
Technical and Advisory	70,898	68,990
Media and Publications	85,079	88,911
Training	161,272	157,581
Other Activities	98,710	106,142
	477,548	481,748
Governance Costs	23,882	28,499
Total Resources Expended	666,472	689,223
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources Before Transfers Recognised Gains and Losses	4,250	15,129
Gains on Investments	8,090	–
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources Before Transfers	12,340	15,129
BALANCES AT 1 JANUARY 2014	463,515	448,386
BALANCES AT 31 DECEMBER 2014	475,855	463,515

GROUP BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2014

	Group 2014 £	Group 2013 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible Assets	56,285	63,030
INVESTMENTS	153,818	–
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	17,871	24,899
Development Costs	8,000	–
Debtors	50,120	24,800
Deposits with Banks	170,000	308,512
Cash at Bank and In Hand	174,809	212,070
Total Current Assets	420,799	570,281
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	126,049	138,573
NET CURRENT ASSETS	294,750	431,708
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	504,853	494,738
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due after more than one year	28,998	31,223
NET ASSETS	475,855	463,515
Representing:		
INCOME FUNDS		
Restricted Funds	155,223	157,964
Unrestricted Funds:		
Designated Funds	43,497	38,497
General Fund	277,135	267,054
	475,856	463,515
TOTAL FUNDS	475,855	463,515

Financial Report 2014

These Summarised Accounts are an extract from, and are consistent with, the Statutory Accounts but may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Society.

Our Auditors, Messrs Fletcher & Partners, have given an unqualified audit report on the full Statutory Accounts, which were approved by the Directors (who also act as trustees for the charitable activities of the British Deer Society) on 5 March 2015. They will be presented for approval of the members at the AGM on 17 May 2015. The full Statutory Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005) Accounting by Charities.

Copies of the full Statutory Accounts will be lodged with the Registrar of Companies and the Charity Commission. The full accounts may be inspected at the Society's offices at The Walled Garden, Burgate Manor, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP6 1EF, and copies are available to members on request.

Signed on behalf of the Board
Philip Mackenzie, Treasurer
 27 March 2015

Independent Auditors' Statement to the Trustees and Members of The British Deer Society

We have examined the summarised accounts for the year ended 31 December 2014.

Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Auditor

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised accounts in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law. Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised accounts with the full annual consolidated accounts and the compliance with the relevant requirements of section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and the regulations made thereunder.

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 2008/03 issued by the Auditing Practices Board. Our report on the company's full annual consolidated accounts describes the basis of our opinion on those accounts.

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised accounts are consistent with the full annual consolidated accounts of The British Deer Society for the year ended 31 December 2014 and comply with the applicable requirements of section 427 of the Companies Act 2006, and the regulations made thereunder.

Fletcher & Partners, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
 Salisbury, 27 March 2015



The full accounts may be inspected at the Society's offices at The Walled Garden, Burgate Manor, Fordingbridge, Hampshire SP6 1EF and copies are available to members on request.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Auction and Draw Donors 2014

Adrian Liddle
 Alan Hayward of Vicars
 Game Ltd
 Alan Shannahan
 Alex Bingley
 Andrew Hoon
 Andy Pearce
 Ashley Boon
 Audiofit
 Bin Ends at the Bear
 Blaze Publishing
 Charles Fenn
 Charles Smith-Jones
 Chewton Glen Hotel
 Clare Brownlow
 Clare Villar
 Coch-y-Bonddu Books
 Cotswold Inns & Hotels Ltd
 David Barratt
 David Whyman
 Defence Deer Management
 Derek Clifford
 Derek Stimpson
 Dominic Griffith
 Don Palfrey
 Drew Bain
 The Duke of Argyll
 The Duke of Grafton
 The Earl of Dalhousie
 The Earl of Lonsdale
 Edgar Brothers
 Sir Edward Dashwood Bt
 Emma Paterson
 Forest 4 Wheel Drive
 GAP 180
 George Trebinski

Gerald Collini
 GMK Ltd
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 Graham Downing
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 Iain Semple
 Ian MacGillivray
 Ian Smales
 Invercauld Estate
 Jack Cosgrove
 Jan Robinson
 John Bruce
 Dr John Fletcher
 John Thomas
 Jojo Glass Design
 Jonathan Sainsbury
 MD Small Deer
 Management Ltd
 Maitland Rankin
 Marco Pierre White
 Margaret Ralph
 Mark Held
 Mark Nicolson
 Martin Ridley
 Michael Hitchmough
 Sir Michael Strang Steel
 Mike Bagnowicz
 Mike Short
 Millbank Parkland Venison
 Monarch Country Products
 NapierUK
 Nick Rout

Nigel Maydew
 Peter Elliott
 Peter Tweddle
 Major Philip Hope-Cobbold
 Philip Mackenzie
 Quiller Publishing Ltd
 Richard Wills
 Roddy Ando
 Rosie Lowry
 Ross Minerva
 Roy Viccari
 Shampers Restaurant
 South Ayrshire Stalking
 South Downs Venison and
 Game
 Sparsholt College
 Steve Bennett
 Stephen Bishop
 The Hunting Lodge
 The Viscount Coke
 The Viscount Ridley
 Thoresby Estate
 Major Tom Wills & Captain
 Nicholas Wills
 Tony Cook
 Tony Dalby-Welsh
 Trevor Hughes
 Ursula-May Halifax
 Victor Gubbins
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 Wadhurst Park
 West Highland Hunting
 Will Browne-Swinburne
 William Mathews Taxidermy
 Woodmill Shootings Ltd



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 benefactors not
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Sponsors and Donors including:

Swarovski Optik, Edgar Brothers, Country Land and Business Association, Countryman Fairs, Vantage Events Management Ltd, Highland Field Sports Fair Ltd, Tweed Media, CIC UK Trophy Commission, Wilsons Solicitors, Women of Wadhurst, Roger Buehler, Culra Trust re. The late Philip Byam-Cook, Simon Collins, Stephen Ballantyne, W Aniszewski, Archie Colville, Mark Hatt-Cook, DM Dawe, Marc Baldwin, JG McKee, P Dean, J Hanman.

WHO'S WHO



Patron:

HRH The Prince of Wales KG,KT,GCB,ADC (P)

Trustee/Directors:

President Sir Michael Strang Steel Bt DL

Chairman Mark Nicolson

Vice Chairman Michael Thick

Treasurer Philip Mackenzie

English/Welsh Area Chair Mark Held
(resigned October 2014)

Scottish Area Chair John Bruce
Roddy Ando
Selena Barr
Dominic Griffith
Dorothy Ireland
John Johnson
Maitland Rankin
Nicholas Rout
Charles Smith-Jones
John Thomas
(resigned May 2014)
Leigh Welch
(appointed May 2014)

Branches:

England

South East England | South West England
East Anglia | Wessex | Midlands | East Mercia
Yorkshire | North East England
North West England | West

Scotland

South East Scotland | Central | Highlands
North East Scotland | South West Scotland

Northern Ireland

Special Interest Group:

Defence Deer Management

Honorary Advisors:

Veterinary Peter Green BVSc, Cert EO, MRCVS

Scientific Dr Alastair Ward

Legal Wilsons, Solicitors

Staff:

General Manager Sarah Stride

P/A, Sales Administrator Sue Varvill

UK Training Manager Dave Goffin

Training Coordinator Cheryl Seymour
(until March 2014)
Dawn Cope
(from March 2014)

Finance Officer Phillip Rosslee

Membership Coordinator Annie Nadin

Administration Assistant Sharon Towers

Vice President:

Major The Hon PC Baillie

Fellows:

Raymond Chaplin BSc, MIBiol, FZS
Norma Chapman
John Childs
Dorothy Ireland
Jeanette Lawton
VJA Manton MRCVS, FIBiol
Hugh Oliver-Bellasis, FRAGS
Professor Rory Putman
Richard Prior CBiol, MIBiol, MIEEM
John Thomas MBA, TD
Tony Waterson



The Walled Garden, Burgate Manor, Fordingbridge, Hampshire SP6 1EF

t: +44 (0) 1425 655434 f: +44 (0) 1425 655433 e: h.q@bds.org.uk w: www.bds.org.uk

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