

# **BDS THE FIRST FORTY YEARS**

## **1963-2003**

**Four decades of work for the welfare of deer**

A Personal View and Memoir by Founder Member  
Peter Carne



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# 1. Why a British Deer Society?

THE FIRST HALF of the twentieth century was a dark age for British deer, in England especially. Two world wars and their aftermath saw the closure of very many ancient deer parks. Some were converted to farmland for wartime and post war food production. Others were requisitioned as sites for military camps or for other defence purposes. Yet others fell into neglect, with no staff to keep walls and fences in good repair. In some cases all the deer were shot. In many others some deer survived by escaping into neighbouring open countryside, where they found refuge in woodland and established wild populations where none had previously existed.

These wild deer caused damage to farm and forest crops, and there were calls for their destruction. There being no established tradition, in lowland Britain as a whole, of controlling wild Deer numbers by methods recognised as humane, recourse was had to snare and shotgun. Lingering deaths from strangulation and horrendous suffering by Deer shot but not killed outright and never recovered were all too frequently the result. To complicate matters further, there were no legal close times or close seasons when Deer might not be killed to avoid orphaning dependent young or for other good reasons, in which respect Britain was almost unique among other European countries.

People who knew how these things were managed so much better in mainland Europe, and a few concerned and articulate Britons, made known their deep dissatisfaction about the situation here, but for many years theirs were voices which seemed to be crying in the wilderness.

The first hopeful signs that a better future might prove possible were a re awakened interest in mammals as subjects worthy of closer attention by British naturalists and others during the early post war period. In the absence of a suitable national organisation to serve their specific interests, deer minded people linked up with others mainly by chance, or not at all. To quote an example from the personal experience of the writer, and which was to have far reaching repercussions entirely unforeseen at the time, in one of its issues in 1950 the magazine Country Life published a letter by a certain Gerald Johnstone appealing for information on deer distribution in these islands for the purposes of a survey he was conducting.

Having been interested in this aspect of deer since my teenage years or earlier, I wrote to Gerald Johnstone and gave him such details as I had garnered. Quite unexpectedly, he invited me to partner him on his study, undertaken purely as a hobby, mainly by writing to masters of foxhounds and others likely to know what deer occurred in particular areas, I agreed to do so without hesitation.

Another of Johnstone's correspondents was a Norfolk schoolmaster, F.J. (Jim) Taylor Page, who taught biology at Norwich Grammar School and was hoping Johnstone could help him with a study of his own, the significance, if any, of the presence of the fungus ergot as a determinant for the location of roe deer rutting rings. Having no knowledge whatsoever of this esoteric subject, Johnstone passed on Jim's letter to me. I knew nothing about it either, but did my best to divert

Jim's interest to the subject of deer distribution. I had only limited success, but thus began an exchange of letters upon deer matters of all descriptions, which continued throughout Jim's lifetime.

## 2. The Deer Group

FOUNDED in 1953 as a small corresponding group of individuals with wide ranging interests in deer, under the Messianic influence of its secretary, Jim Taylor Page, The Deer Group grew in membership from an initial dozen or so to around 120 ten years later. It was hoped at the beginning that the 12th Duke of Bedford might be persuaded to serve as President. He declined to do so, however, on the grounds that as owner of one of Britain's largest park herds of deer, at Woburn in Bedfordshire, he might be deemed to have too much of a vested interest in these animals. Naturalist author R.S.R. (Richard) Fitter and other influential people played a prominent part, however, in publicising the Group and promoting its interests.

With the foundation in 1954 of The Mammal Society of Great Britain, it was seen to make sense for the tiny deer Group to merge with the new and larger organisation as a semi autonomous entity, and this was done. As paid up members of The Mammal Society, Deer Group members participated fully in the benefits of that membership as well as in those of The Deer Group, which included from the start a regular newsletter from their Secretary, typed in his inimitable style and duplicated for distribution. All the latest news from the deer front thereby reached members with little delay.

Deer literature was then sparse and public awareness of deer and their place in the natural scheme of things correspondingly slight in the 1950s. There was an obvious need, therefore, for a pocket handbook on deer in Britain. Determined to fill this gap in the market, Jim Taylor Page gathered about himself a team of eight contributors with varying degrees of expertise on different aspects of their subject. Agreement to finance and publish A Field Guide to British Deer having been given by The Mammal Society, work started in earnest.

As Field Guide editor, Jim had the task of knitting together harmoniously the disparate and sometimes contradictory offerings of the experts he had recruited to supply the basic facts: a task he accomplished skilfully without treading on too many toes. There remained, however, a few problems to be ironed out person to person, and for this purpose Jim called a meeting of contributors at the Bedford Arms Hotel, Woburn, in January, 1956, where most of those involved, including the writer, met each other for the very first time.

Apart from its primary purpose, this meeting served an important secondary one by bringing together two who were to play an important role in putting deer management in Britain's forests on a sounder footing. One of these was J.S.R. (Jack) Chard, Forestry Commission Conservator for North West England and one of the far seeing few in positions of authority who recognised the urgent need for radical change in the way deer in our forests and elsewhere were managed. The other was Major H.A. (Herbert) Fooks, known to his friends as "Herbie", who had been in charge of deer management in the British zone of West Germany for several years after the Second World War and was well grounded in deer management as practised in that country. Following this encounter, Herbie was appointed as the Forestry Commission's first ever Game Warden, with responsibility for training Commission staff responsible for pest control how to control deer selectively with the rifle

during specified open seasons for each species and sex

Herbie was one of those present at a memorable weekend field meet held by The Deer Group that August in the Lake District. Among others present was Baron Adam Konopka, the Polish-born chairman of the St. Hubert Club of Great Britain, a sporting organisation which had already initiated training for its members of managing deer which had been long practised on the Continent and were to become the basis of how this was dealt with in Great Britain. From our hotel alongside Haweswater we were able to watch wild red deer on the fells directly opposite, which we were later to view at much closer quarters on foot in brilliant sunshine.

Among those on that deer watching walk over the high ground of Martindale were Dr. Peter Delap and G. Kenneth Whitehead, who were both to become Vice Presidents of the British Deer Society, as was John Willett after a lengthy term of office as Society Chairman. We were also privileged to have with us Henry Tegner, author of many books on field sports and the countryside and of a monograph on roe deer. Henry gave me a lift to Penrith station to catch my train home the following day giving me the only opportunity I ever had to spend time in his company.

First published as a pocket size hardback in 1957, *A Field Guide to British Deer* was an instant success. Several times reprinted, it proved a useful publicity medium for The Deer Group and, hence, for its parent body, the Mammal Society of the British Isles.

Deer Group membership grew throughout the late 1950s, but not to such an extent as to end the cosy, club like atmosphere where almost everyone knew everybody else. On field trips and by correspondence members kept in close touch with each other and with the latest news from the deer world passed on by Jim Taylor Page in his newsletters.

No one was keener than Jim to see some movement on deer legislation, to which end he sought the support of MPs and others in high places. Of particular help with these endeavours was Major C.W. (Charles) Hume, M.C., Secretary of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (U.F.A.W.), who knew better than most how to find his way safely through the minefield of drafting Parliamentary Bills and enlisting support from the great and the good.

The first Deer (Scotland) Act reached the Statute Book in 1959, one result of this measure being the creation of the Red Deer Commission to monitor management of this species and provide help with this when necessary. A parallel Bill for England and Wales was being sought in the early '60s when a crisis loomed in the hitherto smooth and amicable relations between the Mammal Society and its Deer Group component.

### **3. Birth of the BDS**

I FIRST HEARD about this crisis one Sunday lunchtime in June 1962 when John Willett called unexpectedly with the news that, two days earlier, the Mammal Society's Council had voted to ask Jim Taylor Page to resign as Deer Group Secretary. This was because the pressures Jim was exerting for better deer management in Britain were deemed to be incompatible with the Mammal Society's purely scientific remit. Wondering what Jim's reaction might be, on a hunch I telephoned Victor Ross, a mutual friend and fellow Deer Group member, with whom Jim turned out to be spending the weekend, as I had suspected he might.

Jim and Victor strongly shared John Willett's and my opinion that the time had come to form a separate, wholly independent, organisation to combine scientific study with concern for deer welfare issues.

On 25 August that year a meeting was held in London at which both parties were represented. Jim Taylor Page took the chair and argued the case for independence, in which he was strongly supported by Charles Hume of U.F.A.W. and others, H.M (Mick) Southern and T.J. (Joe) Pickvance, Chairman and Hon. Secretary respectively of the Mammal Society, thought science and welfare matters would not be comfortable bedfellows. They said many of their members were debarred, as civil servants, from any involvement in politics, and that a breakaway Deer society would drain away vital membership from the Mammal Society. The meeting ended with a majority vote in favour of forming a separate Deer society.

In late October, 1962 it emerged at a weekend meet of The Deer Group, based on Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, that the Mammal Society's President, the Earl of Cranbrook, had circulated a letter to Deer Group members urging second thoughts about "going it alone". Jim Taylor Page was apprehensive about what effect this might have. When the matter was put to the vote at a meeting, chaired by R.S.R. (Richard) Fitter, a large majority of those present favoured independence, however.

Discussion about a suitable name for The Deer Group's intended successor was renewed with some vigour. Despite suggestions from some quarters that future international development might be better allowed for with an all-embracing name like "The Deer Society", the title "British Deer Society" was finally settled upon. Inevitably, this is shortened in everyday use to "BDS" regardless of the slight disadvantage that this is shared with the British Driving Society and probably others having no connections with deer.

Original plans to launch the BDS in London were shelved in favour of Woburn Abbey, with its 3,000-acre park then containing 1,500 deer of ten different species. On Saturday morning, 23 February 1962, some 40 of us assembled for a guided tour of Woburn Park, much of it still snow covered as a legacy of the exceptionally harsh 1962—63 winter. In the afternoon I party on foot through the woods outside the park in the hope of seeing feral muntjac. However, all we found were three dead ones, two of them lying side by side in a woodman's hut where they had presumably sought warmth

and shelter.

Inauguration Day, 24 February, began with a morning meeting chaired initially by John Willett at which, sitting in briefly for Jim Taylor Page, who had become unwell at breakfast, I summarised developments to date. Before the meeting ended Jim arrived with Richard Fitter, provisional Chairman, in time to hear Marcus Kimball, M.P., address us on the various provisions of the Deer (England and Wales) Bill of which he was one of the sponsors.

After lunch we headed for Woburn Abbey to welcome guests at the main entrance. The Inauguration ceremony was held in the Tapestry Room, where Richard Fitter inducted the Earl of Lonsdale as the Society's first President. In his Presidential address Lord Lonsdale outlined the tasks ahead of us. Well-wishing messages were read out or delivered personally by guests representing many organisations and institutions. Herbie Fooks, as an "elder statesman", finally counselled the new Society not to try to run before it could walk.



## 4. Early days

WE WERE PLUNGED into a maelstrom of activity from the word "go". There were letters to be answered, card indexes to be created, and multitudinous other tasks directly consequent upon the launching of a new and vibrant national society eager to make its mark in its chosen sphere. On the very next evening immediately following Inauguration Day two BDS personalities, John Willett and Oliver Hook, a well known New Forest naturalist, presented a wildlife film show (in which deer featured prominently) to some 70 Forestry Commission personnel headed by their local chief executive, Deputy Surveyor Arthur Cadman, at Lyndhurst in the New Forest. This and similar events up and down the country provided excellent opportunities to spread the word about our aims and recruit more members.

Then, within three days of our launching, Victor Ross, one of our leading lights, succumbed to heart disease. Victor was a German Jewish political refugee who brought deep knowledge of enlightened Continental deer management methods to Britain and delighted in sharing this knowledge with us. He was also artistically gifted. His illustrations graced the pages of A Field Guide to British deer, to which he also contributed a great deal of factual detail.

In April that year we lost another distinguished Founder Member', the deer artist Vincent Balfour-Browne. In his memory the Balfour-Browne Trophy, a bronze replica of a red deer stag, was presented by his sister to be awarded annually to an individual judged to have made an outstanding contribution to wild deer conservation. The award alternates between Forestry Commission staff members and individuals nominated by the British Deer Society. Deer related lectures and field trips figured in the programme of the Mammal Society's Annual Conference, based that year on Southampton University and attended by many former Deer Group members, most of who retained their Mammal Society membership. Relations thenceforth between the Mammal Society and the BDS were good, and the Mammal Society's Chairman, H.N. Southern, and Hon. Secretary, T.J. Pickavance, both initially had seats on BDS Council.

National Nature Week in May, 1963 and its successors in subsequent years as well as the CLA Game Fair and numerous other country shows provided publicity opportunities of which the British Deer Society took full advantage by mounting its own exhibits and otherwise.

Our administrative arrangements having been confirmed by popular vote with Richard Fitter as Chairman, Jim Taylor Page as Hon. Secretary, John Hepper as Hon. Treasurer and others in positions they had held on the formative Committee, Council held its first formal meeting at Woburn in late June 1963. At this John Hepper informed us that a basic subscription of £1 per annum had already produced sufficient revenue to fund three annual duplicated newsletters, which I was asked to edit. Thus began a commitment, which was to continue for 30 years.

Deer News duly appeared between printed covers bearing the red deer logo agreed upon by Council as the Society's official emblem, dated July 1963. The 11 duplicated pages of that first issue of our newsletter were dominated by a swirl of ideas from our inspirational Hon. Secretary on how the

Society might develop, and nearly all his suggestions were adopted in due course.

On 31 July The Deer (England and Wales) Act, 1963, received the Royal Assent, and I was privileged to represent the British Deer Society at a small celebration that evening on the Terrace of the House of Commons. This was hosted by Jasper More. M.P., and Mrs. More, and in his welcoming address Mr. More paid special tribute to the pioneering work of the BDS and its members in bringing about essential change to the ways deer are managed.

In the late summer of that year my wife, small son and I joined Jim Taylor Page and a mutual friend on a deer watching tour of Belgium, Luxembourg, West Germany and The Netherlands. We intended to sleep under canvas but instead were hosted by kindred spirits who welcomed us as ambassadors from the newly formed BDS

Early meets of the BDS were convivial affairs at which we all got to know each other, greatly enlarged our knowledge of deer and visited prime deer areas which were new to many of us, and the 1963 autumn meet in South Lakeland was no exception. Some three dozen of us converged on Brantwood, John Ruskin's old home overlooking Coniston Water, and now a field study centre which we used as our base for the weekend of 25–27 October. We enjoyed a mixed programme of talks on the local deer and their habitat, wildlife films by Kenneth Whitehead and field trips to forest areas where some of us saw the elusive south Lakeland red deer. On our way back south on the Sunday several of us rounded off the weekend with a personally guided tour by Kenneth Whitehead of his deer museum at his home in Lancashire.

Our Chairman Richard Fitter having indicated the likelihood of his having to miss some meetings due to other pressures on his time, at a Council meeting in London on 19 January 1964 Sir Dudley Forwood, Bt., and John Willett were elected Joint Vice Chairmen to ensure adequate coverage of this function in the future.

The 18 duplicated pages of Deer News No. 2, in October, 1963, were dominated by the challenging ideas for future development put forward in "Notes from the Hon. Secretary", which remained a regular feature whilst Jim Taylor Page held this position. Deer News No. 4's 25 pages, three months later, had more the appearance of a duplicated magazine than a newsletter, containing as it did a good proportion of contributed material in the form of by-lined articles from members.

At the Society's first Annual General Meeting, held on 15 February 1964 in the Lecture Room of the Zoological Society of London at Regent's Park Zoo, we learned that BDS membership had increased from an initial 118 to well over 200. Seventeen of these lived in Scotland, where pressure was being exerted to boost membership substantially by creating a Scottish Branch. Exchange Memberships enabled a two way publications link to be maintained with kindred organisations in countries like West Germany, The Netherlands and New Zealand.

## 5. Forging ahead

ON 2 MAY 1964 the BDS held its first national one-day field meet. The venue was the National Trust owned Ashridge Estate, on the Chiltern Hills above Berkhamsted, where fallow deer have roamed wild ever since escaping from Ashridge Park in the 1920s, and more than 50 people turned up to see these animals in the company of estate manager John Wilson. A very successful foray on foot was followed by high tea at the nearby Bridgewater Arms Hotel.

At a Council meeting in London on 26 July, 1964 we learned that BDS membership was now in excess of 300 and already exceeded that of the Mammal Society, despite which relations with that Society were now cordial. In January 1965 Joe Pickvance, Mammal Society Hon. Secretary and head of Birmingham University's Extra-Mural Studies Department, arranged a "Deer in Britain" study weekend at Barford, in Warwickshire, at which John Willett, Jim Taylor Page and I were invited to lecture. Something of the booming interest in deer at that time was reflected by a capacity attendance of about 50.

Meanwhile, our autumn weekend meet in Dorset, held from 9–11 October, 1964, and based at the King's Arms Hotel in Dorchester, had attracted a record attendance of about 60. A high point of this meet was the opportunity to help with the catching up and radio collaring for future identification of roe deer at Chedington, West Dorset, part of an ongoing study of patterns of movement by roe.

A new name to come to the fore at the 1965 AGM was that of Norman Dewhurst, who was voted Hon. Membership Secretary in succession to Col. O.C.S. Dobbie, a Founder Member. Norman also struck up a friendship with George Logan, a Forestry Commission employee who was one of those pressing most strongly for the formation of a Scottish Branch. Jim Taylor Page had ended a Hebridean holiday a day early the previous summer in order to call on George Logan on his way home to discuss the matter.

More than 100 people attended on 27 February, once again in the Lecture Room of the Zoological Society in London. This was followed by a Symposium on deer control, the speakers being G. Kenneth Whitehead, Lt.Col. P.C.H. Grant of the Red Deer Commission, Peter Garthwaite of the Forestry Commission, General Herbert Sélle of Deutscher Jagdschutz Verband e.V. (The West German Hunting organisation) and Gaston Braun, a leading figure in game management circles in Belgium, with whom five of us had stayed on our visit in 1963. Later I had the privilege of conveying General Sélle as a dinner and overnight guest to the home of New Forest Deputy Surveyor Arthur Cadman.

The next important event in the BDS calendar was the inauguration of our Scottish Branch. This took place at Kindrogan Field Centre, Perthshire, as the peak event of a meet arranged for Easter weekend, 1965. Lt. Col. Patrick Grant of the Red Deer Commission was elected Scottish Branch Chairman and George Logan as Hon. Secretary. Also prominent in this very first BDS branch from its beginning was Lea MacNally, a Highland stalker and prolific writer on Scottish wildlife for the

sporting and country press.

On 8 May 1965 a one-day meet in Epping Forest was organised by two local deer enthusiasts, Donald Chapman and Raymond E. Chaplin, who had specialised in studying the deer of south west Essex. A morning visit to Queen Elizabeth Lodge, a Tudor building once used for observing the progress of the hunt and now a museum, preceded afternoon deer watching forays, which were largely unsuccessful. High tea at a pub called The Bald Faced Stag was followed by a winding-up talk on Epping Forest by our two hosts.

An Assistant Conservator, two District Officers, a Chief Forester, two Conservation Foresters and five other professional stalkers of various grades made up an exceptionally strong Forestry Commission presence at the BDS Autumn weekend meet held from 22—24 October, 1965. Based at Ludlow in Shropshire, its main focus of interest was the Mortimer Forest fallow deer herd with its freakish looking longhaired individuals. A visit was also paid to Wyre Forest to learn something about the fallow deer there.

The weekend of 29—31 October 1965 was chosen by the Scottish Branch for a meet based on Kinloch Rannoch in Perthshire. Around 60 people attended, including a score of non-members who joined the BDS at the meet. News of developments in Scotland encouraged the Society's Irish members, numbering around a score, to probe the possibilities of forming a BDS branch in Ireland. Following a visit by Jim Taylor Page to Belfast to discuss this with some of the key individuals, a provisional committee was formed to study the possibilities and make appropriate recommendations.

## 6. Onward and upward

ON 16 JANUARY, 1966 Council met by invitation at the Hampstead home of Sir Ian Mactaggart, Bt., and Rosemary, Lady Mactaggart. Sir Ian owned a deer forest on the Hebridean island of Islay. Lady Mactaggart had written a number of articles for Deer News on deerstalking and deer management in Scotland and her enthusiasm for the work of the BDS had led to her being elected to Council. On this occasion she and Sir Ian's secretary recorded the minutes. Coffee was brought round in mid morning and Sir Ian, Lady Mactaggart and one of their daughters served us buffet lunch preceded by sherry.

Thus cosseted, we got speedily through the business of the meeting, one of the items being a decision to go into print with Deer News or with a differently named successor publication. During the previous year I had been impressed by the quality of a printed magazine produced for its members by Devon Naturalists' Trust and edited by Ken Watkins, a BDS member. If a county naturalists' trust could afford a printed magazine, I reasoned that surely such a publication might be no longer beyond the reach of an organisation like our own, with our rapidly rising membership.

I therefore sent a copy of Deer News to the Plymouth firm, Hitchings & Mason, who printed the Devon Trust magazine, and asked them to quote for a printed counterpart to our then still duplicated newsletter. When I told Council this could be done for under £100 for 700 copies of equivalent volume, there was no hesitation in my being given, as Editor, the green light to go into print.

It was also agreed at this meeting that the increasing volume of business requiring executive action between meetings of Council could best be dealt with by the appointment of an Executive or General Purposes Committee to hold additional meetings to those of the full Council. To avoid excessively long journeys it was further agreed that membership of this Committee should be drawn from Council members living within easy access of each other in the South, i.e. Messrs Willett, Page, Cranfield, Garthwaite, Hotchkis, Lucas and myself. In practice, Peter Garthwaite was usually represented at meetings by Fred Courtier, who had succeeded Herbie Fooks as Forestry Commission Game Warden for England and Wales. Meetings were held at John Willett's home in Bishopstone, East Sussex.

Chaired by our President, Lord Lonsdale, the AGM on 16 February 1966 was held once again in the Lecture Room at London's Regent's Park Zoo. An important matter dealt with was the doubling of the Ordinary Membership annual subscription from £1 to £2. A few Scottish members objected to this. Then followed a Symposium on deer research, with contributions from six speakers.

On 5 March 1966 Welwyn Natural History Society and the BDS joined forces to live capture muntjac in woods near Welwyn in Hertfordshire. Organised by Oliver Dansie, a local medical practitioner known to his friends in the BDS as "the muntjac doctor", the party of some 120 was divided into beaters and catchers to drive the woods section by section towards a net spread to effect capture. There was no shortage of muntjac. They all fought shy of the net but several were rugby tackled

successfully, ear tagged for future identification and then set free.

Exhibition arrangements for the year's National Nature Week, ways of stimulating interest by deer park owners in their deer and of securing close liaison with local deer control societies were discussed at the first meeting of the Executive Committee, held on 10 March 1966.

Later that spring a brief spell of incapacitating illness obliged me to seek help with the preparation of the tenth and final issue of Deer News. This was willingly given by David Percy, a professional forester who lived near me and who had become a personal friend whose talents and abilities I had come to value and appreciate.

A hotel in Kensington was the venue for a Council meeting on 12 June 1966 at which branch organisation and problems connected with deer control were the main items of business. Sir Ian and Lady Mactaggart's secretary recorded the minutes.

Published in June, 1966, the final issue of Deer News listed eight deer control societies established and working in accordance with precepts laid down in the BDS handbook deer Control, written jointly by H.A. Fooks and John Hotchkis and published not long previously primarily for the guidance of such societies. The eight societies concerned undertook deer control in Ashdown Forest, East Sussex, The Central Cotswolds, Cranbourne Chase, the Eden Valley, the Border District, West Cumberland, and West Sussex respectively. Having agreed to adopt the principles laid down in deer Control, they were formally affiliated to the British Deer Society, with which they maintained liaison via John Hotchkis, who had been appointed Co coordinator for the purpose by BDS Council. Further new deer control societies were in the process of formation, and others were likely to follow.

The same 64 page "newsletter" noted a change of status for the four individuals, three of them M.P.s. who had been prominent in securing the passage into law of The Deer (England and Wales) Bill of 1963, who had hitherto been described as Patrons. They had now become Vice Presidents, increasing the number of these to seven.

Deer News No. 10 was accompanied by a second, fully updated Membership Directory. Compiled by our Membership Secretary, Norman Dewhurst, it detailed not only names and addresses but also each member's specific interests as listed when applying for membership. Described at the time as a vital means of enabling members to communicate with others sharing their own individual interests, data protection legislation precludes the possibility of its having a present day counterpart.

The Scottish Branch being now firmly established, the pattern was set for the creation of regional Branches elsewhere. The first to be launched was the Midlands Branch, largely inspired by the enthusiasm and drive of two individuals Norman Dewhurst and Gerald Springthorpe, Forestry Commission head deer warden for the Midlands and warmly supported by Jack Chard, Forestry Commission Conservator for North West England and an influential ally of the BDS from the beginning. The launch took place on 24 June 1966 at Cannock Chase Deer Museum in Staffordshire and attracted nearly 50 members and friends.

The Wessex Branch swiftly followed, being launched in Savernake Forest, Wiltshire, on 16 July 1966 with a welcoming address by M.J. (Morley) Penistone a Forestry Commission Assistant

Conservator and staunch friend of the BDS At a formal meeting later a Branch Committee was elected, with Richard Prior as Branch Chairman.

Now with its own governing Council, the Scottish Branch had been busy arranging a programme of its own. In May 1966 the control of roe deer was the theme of a meet at Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire. Principal speaker was Ken MacArthur, a pioneer practitioner in selective deer control with the rifle, who had been awarded the British Empire Medal for his work in these fields.

As well as his B.E.M., Ken MacArthur was an early recipient of the Balfour-Browne Trophy, awarded annually, as already mentioned, to an individual judged to have made an outstanding contribution to wild deer conservation. The Forestry Commission and the BDS are represented on the Trophy Award Committee.

## 7. Further branch development

With the Scottish Branch and two English regional Branches already in being, the stage was set for the creation of a web of additional Branches to serve the remainder of Great Britain, or most of it. Next to emerge from its chrysalis was the South West England Branch, launched on 8 October, 1966 to coincide with a National field meet arranged for 7–9 October. Attracting more than 70 members and guests, this commenced on the Friday evening with talks by myself and Morley Penistan of the Forestry Commission on the deer species present in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall with their current distribution. Two local members, W.A. (Alf) Scott and Colin Yeo, then told us about the areas to be visited over the weekend.

Richard Dempster, who taught biology at Hele's School, Exeter, led us on a Saturday morning walk through the Teign Valley woods, where he had conducted a survey of the fallow deer population. Sir John Lister-Kaye, the baronet father of a similarly named son who was one of those most prominent in their desire to form a local BDS Branch, produced from the boot of his car a liberal supply of canned liquid refreshment for all to enjoy at lunchtime as a prelude to the early afternoon official launch of the South West England Branch, of which Dr. T.W. Wright was elected Chairman. Colin Yeo then led us on a further walk through the Teign Valley woods to a roadside cafe at Fingle Bridge, where we had afternoon tea. We then returned to Exeter to prepare for the Society Dinner, held in the banqueting hall at the Rougemont Hotel and generally reckoned to be the best of its kind so far.

On a Sunday morning visit to nearby Haldon Forest I was asked, as the only person who had his stalking rifle with him, to shoot a three-legged black fallow buck, which had been seen there. I sat in a high seat while efforts were made by the rest of the party to move the buck into the open where it could be culled. The buck did not appear, so I was spared having to demonstrate to a highly critical audience my ability or otherwise to shoot accurately and quickly. In the afternoon we toured Powderham Park with Messrs. Scott and Yeo, from whom we learned about some of the difficulties of culling fallow deer there, for which they were then responsible.

As well as being Wessex Branch Hon. Secretary, David Percy was by now my Assistant Editor. At his very sensible suggestion, before heading home to Hampshire, my wife and I drove down to Plymouth to meet Mr. N.E. Prong, managing director of the printing firm Hitchings & Mason Ltd., who are producing our new periodical publication. Influenced though it was by the obvious merits of simplicity and brevity as well as appositeness, my choice of *Deer* as the name of our new journal was suggested by the need for a different title than *Deer News* for a publication. That was so clearly not just the newsletter it was succeeding but a magazine with broader ambitions.

Dated November 1966, *Deer* Vol. 1, No. 1 arrived from the printers on 28 October. Having thumbed through its 32 pages with some narcissistic pleasure, I felt we were on the right lines with our brand new printed journal.

General approval was expressed on 6 November at a meeting of Council, held once again at a hotel



in Kensington. Donald Chapman joined us after lunch to contribute to a discussion on a favourite topic of his, the proposed National Deer Distribution Scheme: a survey to which Society members would submit their local knowledge. We learned that membership now exceeded 900, but we were warned by our Hon. Treasurer, John Hepper, that his budgetary projection for 1967 anticipated a possible 30% fall off in membership due to the basic annual subscription being increased from £1 to £2.

On 9 December, 1966 Fred Courtier drove me in his 4WD to an Executive Committee meeting at John Willett's home in East Sussex, at which the go ahead was given for publication by the Society of a manual or pamphlet on woodland stalking by H.A. Fooks.

My diary reminds me that the year 2001 was not the first when BDS plans had to be altered because of foot and mouth disease. An outbreak of this in Hampshire forced the postponement of a sika catch up in neighbouring Dorset planned for 14 January 1967 by the Wessex Branch in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy. The Wessex Branch held an indoor event, its first AGM instead.

Published in February 1967, Deer Vol. 1, No. 2 had twice as many pages as Vol. 1, No. 1 and carried reports of the inauguration in the later months of 1966 of three additional BDS Branches. Over 50 people gave an enthusiastic send off at Ashridge, on the borders of Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire near Berkhamsted, to the East Anglian Branch, of which Dr. W.H.D. (Walter) Wince was elected Chairman. Two dozen people met at Blagdon, the Northumberland home of Viscount Ridley, to give their blessing to the launch there of what was initially called the Northumberland and Durham Branch. Veteran wildlife and country sports author and stalker Henry Tegner became the first Chairman of this Branch and Dr. Peter Delap, M.C., who served with the Commandos in World War II and had acquired an intimate knowledge of deer in Ireland and the Lake District through many years of study, was a natural choice as first Chairman of the North West England Branch. Sixty five people attended the launch of the latter Branch, which took place at the Nature Conservancy's Merlewood Research Station, Grange over Sands.

The same issue of Deer gave details of ten local deer control societies offering farmers, woodland owners and others a humane and efficient alternative to shotguns, still fairly widely employed at that time, as a means of keeping deer numbers within manageable limits and minimising damage caused by them. Names, addresses and telephone numbers of chairmen and secretaries of these societies were given as well as the date when each was founded and whether or not affiliation to the BDS had been effected. Affiliation signified agreement to abide by commonsense rules laid down by the BDS for such bodies. The ultimate aim was to cover as much of the British countryside as possible with BDS affiliated deer control societies, thus ensuring the maintenance of high standards under central supervision, leaving few gaps for unprincipled independent operators to cash in on for personal profit under the guise of offering properly regulated deer control services. Liaison with local deer control societies was maintained on behalf of the BDS by John Hotchkis, who worked hard to encourage the setting up of new ones.

## 8. The Journal

FROM VERY BASIC beginnings, Deer News had been progressively evolving with each of its ten issues into a model for the printed periodical that was to follow. Learning, as Editor, as I went along how might seem best how to handle it, as number one priority I established deadlines for late acceptance of contributions for each issue: something the importance of which not everyone seems to realise even now, I understand. The purpose of deadlines, it hardly needs stating, is to ensure sufficient time for editorial processing, proof submission and correction and final printing and distribution in accordance with some predetermined pattern of periodicity. Readers like to know when to expect to receive their periodical literature, and with a thrice yearly publication such as Deer was throughout my editorship, this is particularly important.

I spared no reasonable effort to eliminate misprints ("literals" as these are called by journalists and printers) and to this end everything was read three times: firstly for editing purposes, secondly for proof correction and, thirdly, when in page proof form, to correct any errors that may previously have slipped through undetected. Between the second and third readings came the task of cutting up galley proofs and pasting them up in page form for the guidance of the printers as to what should go where. Making everything fit could be quite a challenge, especially where illustrations had to be sized and cropped to fit in with the text.

All this, I should add, was when magazine printing was still in the "steam age", before modern computer technology came to the aid of editors. It was knocking at the door when I finally handed over to my successor, Michael Baxter Brown, in 1993 and, to be honest, I have few regrets about not having had to involve myself with it. Having learnt about the intricacies of print at an earlier time, I was more than content to leave it at that and not have to learn it all over again.

As for the content of our journal, in my time this largely arranged itself into a pattern, which continued to evolve, but did not fundamentally change.

Apart from the Society's red stag logo on the front cover, the first two issues of Deer lacked illustration of any kind. The third issue had 11; eight half tones (reproductions of black and white photographs) and three line drawings, and the use of illustration increased until we were able to accommodate the occasional photo feature. Not until much later did expensive colour break into our journal: for the first time in Vol. 6, No. 2 (November, 1983) with a front cover picture of a roebuck, and later in some advertisements. Technology took time to deal satisfactorily with the problem of reproducing colour transparencies and prints, which were increasingly being offered to illustrate articles and at first these were reproduced in black and white. The high cost of reproducing in colour delayed its more general use for years, until black and white pictures began to look so thoroughly old fashioned that editors felt obliged to find some means of meeting the cost in order to "keep up with the Joneses".

Many papers and articles of high technical quality were contributed spontaneously. In addition to

these, from the very beginning I trawled papers from contributors to Society symposia. I sought to give the journal an international flavour by encouraging contributions about the deer scene overseas, it being my object to develop Deer into a recognised world medium for the publication of original material on deer of all species, everywhere. At the same time I wanted Deer to offer something to all of our members, however technical or otherwise might be their level of interest, and in this I felt I had some success.

Editorial notes and official updating from Headquarters claimed regular slots in the journal, as did Regional and Branch reports, readers' letters, reviews and various other features peripheral to the by lined papers and articles which were our core material. Paid advertisements were accommodated, usually at the back, and odd corners filled with newsy paragraphs, some translated from the German hunting magazine Wild und Hund by Peter Davenport, one of our members.

Deer acquired a new look in July, 1983 when Vol. 6, No. 1 appeared in a changed format. What had been a two-column quarto page size magazine became a three column A4 one, a change dictated by metrication and adopted, with minor variations, by nearly all other periodicals. As do changes of every kind, this evoked protests from some quarters, mainly because the larger page size demanded deeper bookcase shelf size for future bound volumes. It also allowed greater flexibility of layout while making the planning of page layouts more time consuming because it was more complex. Changes of cover design were introduced from time to time, culminating in the later years of my editorship in the normal use of a colour illustration of particular merit or interest as its centrepiece.

As with so many organisations both large and small, many of our members rarely or never attend Society meetings, either National or Branch ones. They must therefore either maintain their membership out of loyalty to our cause, or in order to keep in touch with the deer world by receiving Deer, now at quarterly intervals, or perhaps for both of these reasons. There can be no doubting the fact that Deer, under Michael Baxter Brown's dedicated editorship, attained new heights of excellence and offered indispensable reading to deer minded people of all descriptions.

## 9. Moving on

THE LECTURE ROOM at London's Regent's Park Zoo was again the venue, on 25 February 1967, for the Society's AGM and National Symposium. Some 60 to 70 members attended, and after the business meeting and morning coffee we reassembled for a slide illustrated talk on Highland red deer by Lea MacNally. Lunch in the Fellows' Restaurant preceded the Symposium, in which Dr. Archie McDiarmid, a Government veterinarian, lectured us on deer diseases. He told us, *inter alia*, that foot and mouth disease had never been proved to occur among deer in Europe. Gordon B. Thompson from Cambridge spoke on deer ectoparasites and Angus N. Dunn, of the Veterinary School at the University of Glasgow, dealt with the endoparasites of deer.

This scientific excursion marked a significant step forward in the Society's development, as did the fact that during this month BDS membership passed the 1,000 mark.

Having reached four figure membership numbers within its first four years, the British Deer Society could now take stock with some satisfaction of its development as a whole. It now had six regional Branches in England, with two others in the process of formation, and each established regional Branch offered members within its area a programme of local meets, both indoors and outdoors. Each worked within the framework of a Branch Constitution approved by Council and each contributed as appropriate to the Society's work and objectives overall.

The Society's Scottish arm was governed by an Area Council of its own and enjoyed proportionate autonomy, with a comparable programme of weekend and day meets to that of the BDS nationally. Foundations were also being laid for the creation of regional Branches serving different parts of Scotland along the same lines as in England.

Centrally, the Society had formed, or was in the process of forming specialised committees to focus on matters and interests such as control and conservation, deer photography and deer parks. How best to encourage and cater for Junior Members was being considered, and consolidation in general was matched by sustained efforts to achieve further expansion in both membership and influence.

In 1967 the annual cycle of meets and events in general followed what by now had become its customary course. The weekend of 31 March- 2 April was devoted to a National meet in the New Forest, for which a sub committee headed by Wessex Branch Secretary David Percy arranged a varied programme. Talks and slide shows on different aspects of this ancient hunting ground were complemented by visits to museums and to the New Forest Buckhound kennels, dawn deer watching from high seats and during the day in a sanctuary area where wild fallow deer were hand fed and approachable at close quarters. In paddocks and pens at Denny Lodge east of Lyndhurst, we were shown specimens of five different deer species, and at Beaulieu we were told about the history of deer there.

Sir Dudley Forwood, Bt., who helped save red deer in the New Forest from extinction a few years previously by introducing fresh stock, entertained us to buffet lunch *al fresco* on the Saturday. The

Society Dinner, held at Brockenhurst, preceded the showing of films of New Forest deer by Eric Ashby, who pioneered wildlife film making here.

A recent conference on deer control, attended by John Hotchkis on behalf of the BDS, was among the main subjects discussed at an Executive Committee meeting held on 18 April, 1967 at John Willett's home, its usual venue.

A family holiday in Scotland in late May gave me a chance to meet Lea Macnally, a Scottish Council member and prolific writer on Highland wildlife whom I had recently persuaded to be Scottish Editor of Deer. He held this purely voluntary office with great distinction until his death shortly after retirement as a nature warden and professional Highland stalker 26 years later, and was of enormous help in ensuring that Scottish deer matters were dealt with authoritatively and adequately in our journal.

On 24 June, 1967 more than 60 members visited Petworth Park in West Sussex to attend the inauguration of the South East England Branch of the BDS and to see the large herd of exceptional quality fallow deer there: some of the best of their kind in Britain.

Dated July, 1967, Deer Vol. 1, No. 3 recorded the death of one of our Vice Presidents, Captain C.E. ("Joe") Lucas, owner of that other famous deer park at Warnham Court, near Horsham, noted internationally for its uniquely high quality red deer. An appreciation was contributed by Harold Evetts, a Founder Member and a long time friend of Captain Lucas.

Moves to amend the game laws in the Republic of Ireland to give better protection to wildlife including, possibly, Deer prompted BDS members and others living in and around Dublin to contemplate the formation of an Irish BDS Branch. Meetings were held to promote this idea in June and August 1967 when a small committee was appointed to prepare submissions for BDS Council to consider.

A leading enthusiast for a development of this kind was A.A. (Andy) Morrissey, who in the "Troubles" of the early 1920s had commanded the Cork Brigade of the I.R.A. and who now more than 40 years later, hoped to unite North and South in Ireland within one cohesive BDS Branch. An influential figure in the Irish sporting world, Andy was to prove a very good friend to us hereafter. He made a point of attending BDS Council meetings whenever he could.

With National meets now supplemented by meets organised by Branches which members everywhere could attend if they so wished, we all now had a lavish pick and mix choice of events to be supported. Deer Vol. 1, No. 4 a 36 page issue published in November 1967, reminded readers of coming events ranging from the next National AGM and Symposium, the next Scottish AGM, a three day stalkers' course in Ashdown Forest, a residential weekend workshop on deer worldwide and the next Wessex Branch AGM to events planned for the following autumn.

Published in February 1968, Deer Vol. I, No. 5 carried a detailed report by Peggy Cunningham on the National weekend meet held at Thetford Chase, on the Norfolk- Suffolk border, on 6-8 October 1967. Senior Wildlife Ranger Rex Whitta organised early morning high seat vigils and deer watching walks in Thetford Forest which enabled almost everyone to see roe deer, and collaborated

with the St. Hubert Club of Great Britain to lay on an exhibition of local red and roe deer trophies. Visits were paid to Norwich Museum and to Norfolk Wildlife Park at Great Witchingham, and Jim Taylor Page gave talks on his early studies of roe deer, here, by Michael Clarke and Donald Chapman on the Deer Distribution Scheme by Dr. R.V. (Roger) Short on the sex life of the roebuck and by a local forester on deer from a forester's viewpoint.

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Sykes Davies showed members some of the fruits of their deer studies and, after the Society Dinner, to which more than 60 sat down, Paul Richards, an enthusiastic photographer showed some of his wildlife colour transparencies taken locally. Having just moved house, the resultant turmoil obliged me to miss this meet.

Saturday, 21 October 1967 saw the launch of the Yorkshire Branch at Studley House, in Studley Royal Deer park, the perfect setting for such an occasion and a favourite venue for subsequent meets of this Branch.

On 28 October Wessex Branch members assisted in a catch up exercise involving sika deer in Dorset's Wareham Forest. One sika brocket (yearling male) entangled itself in the capture net. It was ear tagged for future identification and then released.

Sunday, 19 November saw the birth of what emerged after all not as another BDS Branch but as the Irish Deer Society (IDS). More than 100 people gathered at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, to give the new Society a suitable send off and Andy Morrissey was elected Chairman.

It was reported five days earlier at a meeting of the Executive Committee that some members considered Deer an unsuitable medium for publishing scientific papers. It was decided to seek the views of the Research Committee on what form a scientific supplement to the journal ought to take, but in the event no change resulted.

The dining room at Middlesex Hospital Medical School in London was the venue for a BDS Council meeting on 7 January 1968. John Willett's farm manager, Tony Visick, recorded the minutes, a task I originally undertook in my secondary role as Assistant Secretary, and the large volume of business dealt with gave Tony a chance to hone his skills at what I had come to regard as one responsibility too many. We enjoyed an excellent lunch in house at a cost per head of around five shillings (25p).

The Society's AGM and Annual Symposium was held on 24 February 1968 in the Edward Lewis Lecture Theatre at Middlesex Hospital Medical School and was attended by more than 150 members. The subject of the Symposium was "The Growth and Function of Antlers", with contributions from Anthony B. Bubenik, G.Russell Coope and Dr. Roger Short. Four IDS members were present and their chairman, Andy Morrissey, stopped over to attend a BDS Council meeting the following day.

## 10. Spreading the load

IN 1968 THE SPREAD of responsibility from the centre to the Branches for organising meets and other events, including "flying the flag" for the BDS by arranging and manning exhibits at country shows, was particularly marked. One such event of major importance was a weekend residential course on "Deer of the World", arranged in its entirety by East Anglian Branch and available to members everywhere. Held at Pendley Manor, Tring, Hertfordshire on 19-21 January 1968, the course included lectures by Raymond Chaplin and Oliver Dansie on Chinese water deer, musk deer and muntjac, by John Willett on moose and elk. Followed by a film on migrating caribou by Mikel Utsi and Dr. Ethel Lindgren of the Reindeer Council of the United Kingdom. Other speakers during the weekend dealt with reindeer, fallow deer, roe deer, white tailed deer and the deer of South America.

Deer Vol. 1, No. 6 carried a detailed report on this course and a list of ten "Dates for your diary" including several arranged by Branches.

In the same issue was an obituary by Dr. Peter Delap on Herbie Fooks, who died on 29 March, 1968 after what Peter described as "a prolonged and desperate illness endured with a sardonic, throwaway courage typical of the man". Herbie's key role in shaking up and modernising deer management came as a sequel to a varied and adventurous life which included getting severely mauled by a tiger whose skin hung on the living room wall of his home at High Hay Bridge, in a remote corner of south Lakeland.

A countryside writer of great talent and influence whose early death at the age of 45 was also noted in Deer Vol. 1, No. 6 was Garth Christian, who lived with his mother near Chailey in Sussex and was a good friend to the BDS.

The Scottish Region was an obvious candidate for further Branch development, and in the same issue of deer plans were announced for the creation of six such Branches to cover six different geographical areas. From this issue onward space was also given in deer to news from Ireland.

Extensive views from Win Green Hill across Cranborne Chase on the Wiltshire-Dorset border greeted Wessex Branch members who assembled there for a one-day meet on 20 April 1968. A picnic lunch was enjoyed in bright spring sunshine before we headed for Cranborne Chase Deer Museum, where Branch Chairman and local Deer manager Richard Prior commented on features of interest. Restricted space obliged us to be split into two separate parties for this visit. My family and I were in the second party, and when we emerged after viewing the exhibits the first party had departed and left no instructions where to find them. Efforts to find them proved fruitless so we went deer watching in Chase Woods, where we had excellent views of fallow deer, mostly black ones and some roe.

Northumberland and Durham Branch ably organised the National Meet based at Otterburn in Northumberland on 10-12 May 1968. Subjects dealt with by local speakers included the history of

roe deer in England's two north eastern most counties, roe management in Kielder Forest and roe at Blagdon, Northumberland, the home of Viscount Ridley. The close proximity of Kielder Forest and its deer helped determine the choice of Otterburn as headquarters for this meet.

As a sequel to the highly successful Deer of the World weekend residential course organised earlier in the year by East Anglian Branch, Deer Vol. 1, No. 7, which appeared in November 1968, included the first of a series of centre supplements on this subject. Editorially responsible for these was Michael Clark, a member who lived in Hertfordshire, taught art at a local college and drew the black and white illustrations and maps, which accompanied these supplements.

Plans to hold a second Deer of the World residential course, again at Pendley Manor, Tring, were announced in the issue of Deer, which contained the first of these supplements. Arranged once again by East Anglian Branch and scheduled for 7–9 March 1969, the theme of this course was to be conservation.

After a brief term of office by Lt.Col. P.C.H. Grant of the Red Deer Commission, chairmanship of the British Deer Society (Scotland) passed to Lord Burton of Dochfour, who pursued a vigorous policy of development and expansion. The 1968 CLA Game Fair was held at Blair Drummond in Perthshire, where BDS (Scotland) put on an exhibit at which 50 new members were recruited.

Deer parks were the subject of the Annual Symposium following the BDS National AGM held on 22 February 1969 at Middlesex Hospital Medical School. Contributors dealing with different aspects were G. Kenneth Whitehead, Charles Lucas of Warnham Court Park, Philip Wayre of Norfolk Wildlife Park, Lt.Col. D.G. Moncrieff (a Scottish deer park owner), and Arthur Cadman and Bill Grant, both of the Forestry Commission. The resignation in 1969 of Henry Tegner as Chairman and of Alastair Cowen as Hon. Secretary respectively of what up to that year had been known as the Northumberland and Durham Branch of the BDS coincided with a change of name for that Branch to North East England Branch.

The year 1969 was also the last in which I combined being Assistant Secretary with my primary function as Hon. Publications Editor. As Assistant Secretary, a job title dating from Deer Group times, I had been little more than a potential standin for the Society's Hon. Secretary should illness or other emergency oblige that official (Jim Taylor Page) to suspend his duties for the Society.

The weekend of 17-19 October 1969 brought members from all over Britain to the ancient Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire for a BDS National Meet with a mixed programme of talks, films and field trips. Early morning forays into the Speech House area in the Forest's centre and into the Highmeadow Woods to the west produced good sightings of both black and common fallow deer with audible indications of the rut being under way. Further forays later in the day yielded more deer sightings on the Saturday, while on the Sunday morning Hubert Pepper led members on a visit to Lydney Park to see the deer there. A Sunday afternoon Council meeting was mainly devoted to discussions concerning Deer and its future.

At the same Council meeting authorisation was given for Peter Delap to edit a series of booklets on individual deer species to be published by the Society to mark Conservation Year, 1970. Peter would



write two of the booklets, on red deer and roe deer, himself.

The serious business of learning about the local deer and looking for them, mainly while being driven around the Forest of Dean and Highmeadow Woods in motorised convoys was leavened, as usual at these events, by light hearted social interaction between members who had become friends. Our Hon. Treasurer, John Hepper, who in his bachelor days travelled by air from Leeds to London and back again for meetings of Council, brought with him on this occasion a generous supply of his own home brewed beer, which he urged us all to sample. Having swallowed a modest amount, George Logan, our Scottish Secretary, was asked by Norman Dewhurst, who was standing near, what he thought of it. George screwed up his face and declared "it tastes like broon boot polish!"

## 11. Into the '70s

INCREASING MEMBERSHIP and influence continued throughout the 1970s. At a meeting of Council in London on 11 January, 1970 we learned that paid up membership at the end of 1969 totalled 1,485, but that 141 pre existing members had failed to renew their subscriptions despite two reminder letters with stamped, addressed envelopes enclosed. At the same National Council meeting it was decided to conclude Vol. 1 of Deer with issue No. 10 rather than extend it to include two further issues. This decision was largely influenced by the looming spectacle of future metrication. Lengthy discussion also took place on the details of a proposed Constitution for Area Councils.

At the Society's AGM, held at Middlesex Hospital Medical School on 28 February, John Willett resigned as Chairman and was succeeded by Major The Hon. Peter Baillie, younger brother of Lord Burton of Dochfour, the Scottish Area Chairman. "Living with Deer" Was the theme of the Annual Symposium which followed.

A National Council meeting at the same venue on 1 March was largely devoted to the question of providing additional facilities and/or paying a small honorarium to offset expenses incurred in the course of his duties for the Society by the Editor of Deer. Monetary remuneration in any form was rejected by a majority vote of seven to five. Protracted discussions and exchanges of correspondence over the following weeks failed to resolve the issue, and a further emergency meeting of Council was held at Wellington Barracks in London on 26 April. At this agreement was reached to supply some basic office equipment for the Editor's use, to have the telephone installed and for the Society to meet the cost of telephone rental and of calls made on the Society's behalf. To help spread the workload a small editorial panel was also appointed.

On 12 May 1970 the BDS Executive Committee met for the first time at Peter Baillie's London flat in Avonmore Road, Kensington. I was able to tell the meeting that the next issue of Deer (Vol. 2, No. 2) was likely to run to 60 pages for the first time ever. This prediction was duly fulfilled, and the price (to non members) was more than doubled, to fifteen shillings or 75p in new money.

This issue of our journal contained updated details of properly constituted local deer control societies, 15 in number at this juncture. All but three of these had been granted affiliation to the British Deer Society, implying agreement to conform to standards laid down by the national organisation. John Hotchkis, our then Vice Chairman, remained responsible as BDS Coordinator with these bodies.

Also recorded in Deer Vol. 2, No. 2 was the retirement of the Earl of Lonsdale as our President after serving us in this capacity since the Society's inauguration. At the AGM in February, 1970 he was presented by retiring Chairman John Willett with a painting of a Highland scene by Hubert Pepper, a BDS member, in appreciation of his services to the British Deer Society during its vital formative years. His legacy was the Lonsdale Trust, set up to sponsor approved developments in the educational field initially by the proceeds of an Appeal addressed selectively to potential private and

institutional donors.

Lord Lonsdale was succeeded as President of the British Deer Society by The Viscount Ridley, of Seaton Burn in Northumberland, a prominent member of our North-East England Branch.

Chaired at this time by Gerald Springthorpe of the Forestry Commission, Midlands Branch organised a National Meet and Symposium based at Attingham Park, a National Trust property in Shropshire, on 16-18 October 1970. Titled "Deer Today, Gone Tomorrow?" the Symposium examined the likelihood or otherwise of current wild deer populations continuing to flourish into the foreseeable future. Members enjoyed close up views of the mainly menil fallow deer in the park and of wild fallow in Mortimer Forest, where one fifth of the many deer sighted were of the long-haired variety peculiar to the area.

Despite non-receipt of last minute details of the 1971 AGM and National Symposium due to a strike of Post Office workers, some 60 members turned up at Middlesex Hospital Medical School on 6 March for this double event. The subject of the Symposium was "Catch up, Handling and Translocation of Deer". A Council meeting the following day meant that those of us who lived outside London and wished to attend this meeting as well as the AGM and Symposium had a choice of booking an hotel bed or staying with friends in London overnight, or of travelling, perhaps for many miles, on both days. I chose the latter course as being the less expensive option.

A new face at the Council meeting was that of Reg Low, who had succeeded George Logan as Scottish Area Secretary. As was usual at this period, Branch representatives comprised a substantial proportion of those attending meetings of National Council, this one being no exception. At the meeting Vice Chairman John Hotchkis, our expert on Parliamentary matters, updated us about progress of a new deer Bill now in the pipeline designed, inter alia, to give close season protection to roebucks in England and Wales during the antler growing period.

Stuffed muntjac and Chinese water deer, a moose head and deer distribution maps were among exhibits in the BDS tent at the 1971 CLA Game Fair, held on 30-31 July at Stow in Buckinghamshire. A prominent sign outside our tent, which warned "There's a moose loose inside", did nothing to discourage the curious from venturing within. Admission to the Game Fair that year cost 80p per head and 30p per car, with no discount for late arrival as there had been the previous year, those were the days.

The World Exhibition of Hunting, staged at Budapest in communist Hungary from 27 August-30 September 1971 attracted many BDS members and a number of trophy exhibits from Britain including an 11 point New Forest sika shot by Christopher Dalgety and a bronze medal West Sussex fallow head shot by myself. Later in the year British exhibitors and others were invited to a special reception at the London embassy of the People's Republic of Hungary.

Based at Midhurst in West Sussex, the Annual National Meet for 1971 was held on 22-24

October and was organised by South East England Branch. Visits were made to Parham Park to see the herd of all black fallow deer there, to Petworth Park where the rut was in full swing, with fallow bucks groaning in all directions, and to Warnham Park to see Charles Lucas's

incomparable red deer.

Tender and tasty fallow venison from Petworth was served at the Society dinner on the Saturday to an appreciative assemblage of members and guests. At a "mini symposium" on the Sunday two speakers examined the evidence available concerning the origin of roe deer at Petworth, about which there is still some uncertainty.

From time to time the adequacy of existing open seasons for completing essential culling operations was questioned in certain quarters. A meeting of the Executive Committee in October, 1971 was largely devoted to discussing a proposal to lengthen the hind/doe open season for all deer species by one month, but this was vigorously opposed, particularly in regard to red deer, by the North West England Branch among others, and one vice president had threatened to resign if the BDS supported a change of this kind, and the matter was dropped.

Earlier that year my wife, Gladys, and I attended the opening of Hay Bridge Deer Museum in south Lakeland, created by Mrs. Helen ('Tissie') Fooks in memory of Herbie, her late husband, the man who had pioneered modern deer management in the Forestry Commission. A selection of Herbie's trophies and other deer memorabilia were displayed in the new museum, located in a wild deer sanctuary where roe and sometimes red deer could be watched by visitors from high seats. During the course of discussion the need for a resident curator was pressed upon Tissie Fooks, and the question arose whether BDS founder Hon., Secretary Jim Taylor Page might be the right person for this job, to which he might contribute an important educational dimension to the purpose of the museum.

In due course Jim retired from his teaching post in Sussex and in November 1971 announced his new address as The Deer Museum, Low Hay Bridge, Bouth by Ulverston, Lancashire (now Cumbria). As well as his work for the museum, Jim was also provided with office facilities to pursue his secretarial function for the British Deer Society, the official address of which this duly became.

For some purposes the Irish Deer Society regarded itself as a Branch of the BDS, with which a fraternal relationship had existed from the start. Liam McGarry, IDS Secretary, officially represented that Society on the Council of BDS, whose meetings he attended whenever possible in the place of IDS founder Chairman (by this time President) Andy Morrissey.

One of the aims of the IDS was to establish a Branch in each of the four Irish provinces: Ulster, Leinster, Munster and Connacht. The Ulster Branch was the first to be created, and this catered not only for the whole of Northern Ireland but also for counties in the ancient province of Ulster, which are now in the Republic. Soon to follow suit was the Leinster Branch, most of whose members lived in and around Dublin. Further developments were obstructed by rival regional organisations such as the Kerry Deer Society which preferred to "go it alone" to allying themselves with a national body pursuing identical aims. Schism has plagued the IDS, and its brittle all Ireland potential coverage eventually suffered a further blow by the formation of an independent Northern Ireland Deer Society, albeit that some IDS members retained their allegiance to that body rather than going with the flow and the NIDS.

Notwithstanding such threatened disharmony, we in the BDS established firm friendships with our Irish fellow enthusiasts for doing the right thing for deer. "News from the Irish Deer Society" was a regular feature in Deer, and on a visit to Ireland in 1972 I persuaded Lt. Col. (Retd.) John Place, who lived in the Dublin area, to become our Irish Editor.

An exploratory meeting of 13 local members at Stan Armstrong's well known gun shop at Canton, just outside Nottingham, on 9 December, 1971 was followed on 9 January, 1972 by the inauguration at Wollaton Park, Nottingham of the East Mercia Branch of the British Deer Society, formed to serve Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Rutland and Lincolnshire. This was followed on 12 March by a field meet at Bradgate Park, Leicester, to see and learn about the red and fallow deer there.

The 1972 National AGM and Symposium were held at Perth in Scotland on the first weekend in March. Unsurprisingly, the theme of the Symposium was "Deer in Scotland", and the four contributions were preceded by a public lecture on "Red Deer in the Highlands" by the distinguished naturalist Sir Frank Fraser Darling, author of the pre war classic *A Herd of Red deer* and of *Natural History in the Highlands and Islands* in Collins's post war *New Naturalist* series. The meeting of National Council, which followed the Symposium, had an all time record attendance of 30. This figure was largely accounted for by a high level of Branch representation from Scotland as well as England, and also from Ireland notwithstanding the theoretical status of the Irish Deer Society as a wholly separate organisation. The meeting was little more than a formality, only 90 minutes being available for it before the Society Dinner.

In the early 1970s a West of Scotland Branch was formed to serve the counties of Argyll (excluding Morvern) and Dumbarton, and the Isle of Bute. After a long period of apparent inactivity revival was instigated at a meeting at Dunoon to decide the future of the Branch, which had been responsible in 1972 for organising a Scottish National Autumn Meet on the Hebridean Isle of Islay.

In 1972 Henry Tegner, M.A., was elected as a Vice President of the British Deer Society. During the same year a misunderstanding over a stalking matter in Scotland led to a suspension of the Vice Presidency conferred on G. Kenneth Whitehead early in the Society's history, a measure I personally opposed as casting a wholly unnecessary slur upon the standing and reputation of a man internationally recognised as one of the world's leading authorities on deer. This suspension was rescinded at the AGM on 2 April 1977.

Branches were increasingly sharing responsibility for organising meets and other events of importance to the Society as a whole. East Anglian Branch had already been particularly helpful in this regard, and over the weekend of 15-17 September, 1972 weighed in again with a Symposium at Pendley Manor, in Hertfordshire, on "Deer and their World", with contributions on different aspects from G. Russell Coope, Peter Delap, Michael Horwood, Charles Lucas and J. Robinson.

On 30 September the Branch network was further expanded with the launch at Carmarthen of our first Welsh Branch at a ceremony attended by 47 enthusiasts. The Cambrian Branch was intended to serve the southern counties of Wales, leaving the northern half of the Principality to be looked after by Midlands Branch until such time as more local arrangements might be made.

South West England Branch was tasked with organising the National Weekend Meet on 20-22 October 1972, based on the County Hotel at Taunton and focusing mainly on the Quantock Hills and their red deer. Talks on the history and wildlife of this Somerset shire area on the Friday evening preceded dawn forays on the Saturday, when only two of the four separate parties of would be deer watchers saw deer. A morning visit to the Forestry Commission's Quantock Forest preceded an afternoon trip to see red, fallow and sika deer in Melbury Park, west Dorset. Back at Taunton, Society Dinner guests were Quantock Staghounds Master W.R. Thrower and his wife, Ruth, who on the Sunday morning hosted us at the hunt kennels and explained the role of the hunt in conserving and managing the local wild red deer, at that time numbering some 400. Afterwards a round dozen of us went on to John and Joan Willett's new home at Court Hall, Hockworthy, on the Somerset - Devon border, to learn what was being planned there by way of deer conservation.

As already indicated, BDS (Scotland) was equally active organising meets of its own, both Area wise and at Branch level. A popular destination for meets lasting more than one day was the Isle of Rum with its red deer and the research being carried out there. The weather hazards of the crossing, presenting a challenge to those with weak stomachs, did little to limit enthusiasm for these Hebridean excursions.

Big events were beckoning nationally, and the significance of the now fast approaching year, 1973, had not been lost upon Jim Taylor Page and others at the helm of the still youthful and expanding BDS.

## 12. Celebrating a birthday

ON 24 FEBRUARY 1973 the British Deer Society was ten years of age. When it was launched a decade previously none of us could be sure it would be much more than a nine day wonder, let alone that within so short a time it would have more than 2,000 members served by Branches throughout Britain, while in Ireland a kindred Society looked to the BDS as its mentor. That fraternal respect and goodwill had been earned from other countryside organisations was made clear by the sheer volume of well wishing messages which flooded in from all quarters in time to be published in the Tenth Anniversary issue of *Deer*, which appeared during the month of our birthday and bore a special cover to commemorate the occasion.

Charismatic leadership can be crucial to the success of any voluntary organisation. We were well blest in that respect, by the calibre and personal qualities of our early Presidents and Chairmen and outstandingly by the energy, drive and inspirational dedication of our National Secretary, Jim Taylor Page.

Jim had a rare ability to communicate effectively with virtually everyone at all levels of society. His enthusiasm for deer was highly infectious, and his determination to do something worthwhile for them encouraged countless others to do the same. Without Jim to point the way and to confront challenging obstacles to the attainment of vital objectives, the British Deer Society might never have got off the ground in the first place.

Typical of Jim's organising abilities were the scope and scale of the preparations he initiated for marking the Society's tenth anniversary in what he deemed an appropriate manner. The principal celebration was arranged for 28 April at Woburn Abbey, where the BDS had been born on that February day ten years earlier.

After morning coffee in the Oak and Pine Room, the 190 members attending the celebration adjourned to the Sculpture Room for the 1973 AGM. This was supposed to have been preceded by a speech of welcome by the Duke of Bedford at 11 a.m. By 11.20 a.m. the Duke had not arrived and it was learned that he had misunderstood the timing of his address as being 12 noon and not one hour previously.

With Viscount Ridley (retiring President) in the chair and The Hon. P.C. Baillie (Chairman), Jim Taylor Page and John Hepper (Hon. Treasurer) alongside him on the dais, the meeting was opened by the President with a speech of welcome to our guests of honour for the occasion, Prinz and Prinzessin Reuss of the Austrian Wildlife Society. My diary reminds me that "the meeting proceeded smoothly without any untoward complications" and that at the instigation of the Ulster Branch (of the Irish Deer Society, whose President, Andy Morrissey, and Hon. Secretary, Liam McGarry, and their wives were among those present), the Duke of Abercorn was elected as an additional BDS Vice President. Lord Dulverton, who was unable to be with us, became our President in succession to Lord Ridley.

With the AGM concluded, George Stewart, Forestry Commissioner in charge of forest management, announced the presentation of the prestigious Balfour Browne Trophy for 1973 to J.S.R. (Jack) Chard, Conservator of Forests, North West England, who was shortly due to retire. Prinz Reuss made the presentation. In his speech of thanks, Jack Chard recounted how as far back as 1953 he had been exploring the practicalities of introducing to Forestry Commission properties much improved methods of controlling and managing deer, and that the opportunity came with the appointment in 1956 of Herbie Fooks as the Commission's first game warden. Jim Taylor Page was awarded the Society's Creighton Cup, donated a few years earlier by a Hampshire firm of game dealers, "for exceptional services to deer", and the retiring President was presented with a specially made shepherd's crook type walking stick as a token of our gratitude for his services.

To round off the list of presentations, a representative of Het Reewild (the Dutch Roe Society) awarded gold, silver and bronze medals to our Chairman, Peter Baillie, to Jim Taylor Page and to myself respectively (as editor of Deer) for our roles in promoting better appreciation of deer.

A personal letter from HRH The Prince of Wales expressed his gratitude for having recently been elected an Honorary Member of the British Deer Society. He referred to his special interest in deer and told how the previous autumn he had been "challenged" by an 11 point red stag. Somebody observed that, as a "royal", he had outclassed this potential rival.

John Willett showed a film he had made of the deer of Woburn, and then followed an "Introduction to Woburn's Deer" by A.R. Wiseman, Steward of Bedford Settled Estates, and Deer manager Dennis Talbot. We learned how the area of the Park available to deer had been reduced to accommodate "Woburn Wild Animal Kingdom", created as revenue earning public spectacle. The numbers of the two most common deer species, red and fallow had had to be drastically reduced because of this.

At the top table for lunch were Peter Baillie, Lord Ridley, the late arriving Duke of Bedford, Prinz Reuss, John Hotchkis, Jim Taylor Page, John Hepper and Mrs Hepper. At our table were Walter and Muriel Wince. Walter, founder Chairman of East Anglian Branch, was now the International Liaison Officer for the Society, and he expressed some surprise that a place had not been found for him at the top table.

After lunch we all set out on a deer park safari, travelling in procession at less than walking pace on tractor hauled trailers with straw bales as "upholstery". We passed within yards of nearly all the ten resident deer species and a variety of other fauna including American bison. We also saw one of the melanistic grey squirrels, which are not uncommon in this area.

We returned for tea to Woburn Abbey, where the Duke of Bedford helped Mrs. Braithwaite, wife of Cambrian Branch Chairman R.W. (Bob) Braithwaite, cut the large birthday cake she had baked for the occasion. I am sure we all went home satisfied that justice had been done to an important anniversary.



### **13. After the party**

OUR NATIONAL SECRETARY'S INTENTION that 1973 should be a whole year of celebration of our tenth anniversary was only partially fulfilled. It was probably over optimistic to expect the party spirit and its associated euphoria so fully displayed at Woburn on 28 April to be sustained throughout the year. Having passed that particular milestone, it was back to work as usual to resume our various tasks of spreading the word in appropriate quarters, maximising our influence and generally building upon success already achieved.

The 1973 CLA Game Fair was held in Scotland, at Abercairny, Crieff, Perthshire. We exhibited as usual at the two day event on 27-28 July, when BDS (Scotland) was given a chance to show its organising mettle. It rose triumphantly to the challenge, putting on a display, which proclaimed our aims in a clear and unequivocal way and attracted many potential new members.

Something of the party spirit was resurrected by Midlands Branch, who did us proud with the quality of the National Meet they organised for the weekend of 19-21 October 1973. The meet was based on the Midland Hotel in Derby, where Midlands Branch Chairman, Denis Murray, welcomed about 100 members and guests on the Friday evening. Local Forestry Commission Head Ranger Gerald Springthorpe then gave a talk on the distribution of deer in the Midlands.

J.C.Bamford, a Midlands Branch member and head of the firm, which manufactures JCB diggers, offered the facilities of his Wootton Lodge estate near Alton Towers in Staffordshire for the meet, and on the Saturday morning viewed an exhibition of deer heads at Cotes Farm, one of his properties. Next came an introductory talk by farm manager Roger Delf on the estate deer park, amounting to 240 acres and containing both red and fallow deer, which members went on to see. During lunch, enjoyed in the open by a large bonfire, members of Monchengladbach Jagdhorn Blaser corps from West Germany entertained members with a demonstration of German hunting fanfares.

A move was then made to the JCB factory at Rocester, where G.A. Sharman of the Rowett Research Institute at Aberdeen showed a number of films. A training film followed this on roe stalking in Germany. Afternoon tea preceded a talk on roe deer by the President of the Dutch Roe Society and a film depicting Irish scenery and wildlife. Guests of honour at the Annual Dinner held at the Midland Hotel in Derby, were J.C.Bamford and Mrs Bamford, who was presented with a bouquet in appreciation of help given by her husband and herself. Some 150 members attended the dinner.

A dawn foray in Cannock Chase on the Sunday gave members a chance to see the local wild fallow deer and items of related interest.

The death of Oliver Hook on 17 November 1973 at the age of 80 deprived the Society of one of its founding fathers. A persuasive and forceful speaker with an infectious interest in wildlife of many forms, Oliver was fortunate to survive a spell as pilot of an observation balloon spotting targets for artillery on the Western Front in the First World War. In the late 1940s he undertook a survey of the

mammals of the New Forest, where he lived. An active member of the original Deer Group, he served on the Council of the BDS from 1963 until 1965. He was much in demand as a lecturer and remained committed to a variety of interests throughout his life.

Despite the soon to be born BDS having detached itself from the Mammal Society a decade previously, relations remained cordial, co operation being given on all matters of common concern. One such was a Mammal Society symposium on "The biological basis of deer management" held in London on 24 November 1973 with some of our own members closely involved. This event was fully publicised in Deer.

Earlier in the year, largely through pressure from Norman Dewhurst and a few others, a new layer of bureaucracy had been added to the Society's administrative structure. On 25 March, 1973, at a meeting in Birmingham attended by a number of Branch representatives, an ad hoc English Area Council was set up under Norman's provisional chairmanship, with David Porter as provisional Hon. Secretary.

The reasoning behind this was that Scotland had its own Area Council, therefore England should have the same. The plain fact of the matter that Scotland is so distinctive, geographically and otherwise, from the remainder of Great Britain that an Area Council made good sense as a coordinating body for Society development and affairs in general north of the Border, and had amply proved itself as such, whereas England was at the centre and fully catered for by National Council and the English Branches. In the view of many of us this made Area Council superfluous as little more than a talking shop duplicating the functions of National Council and sometimes being at odds with that body.

However, one positive factor ensuing was that the numbers of those entitled to a seat on General Council could be reduced now that Branches could divert their representatives to meetings of English Area Council, which could thenceforth act in a filtering capacity for matters needed to be passed on to National Council for attention. At the same time, the business of National Council could be streamlined with fewer participants desiring to air their views, and meetings kept to a reasonable length as a result. This is more or less how it worked out, but the "talking shop" argument still has some force. In any case, English Area Council has been so much a part of the BDS scene for so many years that it is unlikely to be discarded.

## 14. Growing pains

Attendance at a meeting of National Council in London on 4 November 1973, with only nine members present, was the poorest I can remember. Much time was spent discussing financial matters. It emerged that the Society's nominal membership currently totalled some 2,100, but that 500 of these had not paid their 1973 subscription. Cash in the bank amounted to £2,000. This included £1,900 profit from a recent raffle, a yield which the Chairman, Peter Baillie, thought so disappointingly low that, if there were not a big improvement next time round he would probably resign the chair.

A further complicating factor was the unwelcome recent discovery that the Society is liable for Value Added Tax and that the current year's liability added up to £500. On top of this, the latest issue of *Deer* had still to be paid for. These matters notwithstanding, there was unanimous agreement to pay the editor of *Deer* a small honorarium in recognition of the time demanding nature of the job.

If some of these issues might fairly be categorised as growing pains to be expected in a still quite young Society, this applies equally to problems faced at a Council meeting, held the day after the National symposium, on 21st of March 1971. As an experiment, this Symposium and the 1971 Society AGM were detached from each other instead of being run consecutively, as had hitherto been the case. The Symposium's theme, "Can wild deer pay?" was tackled by six distinguished contributors under the Chairmanship of John Hotchkis, who provided an introductory essay to be published in *Deer* as a prelude to papers from individual speakers. The conclusion arrived at, broadly speaking, was that judicious exploitation as part of ongoing careful management could well make deer living in freedom very much less of a financial liability to landowners and others than would otherwise be the case.

The National Council meeting on 3 March 1971 dealt with a succession of thorny issues. The Irish Deer Society, represented at the meeting by its Hon. Secretary, Liam McGarry, announced its wish for the full autonomy implicit in its title as an independent organisation. Our Chairman said he was opposed to any form of fragmentation not self evidently essential for purely practical reasons, as this could escalate to a point where the British Deer Society as a whole might disintegrate.' There was already a degree of fragmentation in Ireland itself, where the Kerry Deer Society acknowledged no more than a friendly alliance between equals as the basis of its relationship with the all Ireland organisation, while the Ulster Branch of the IDS largely aspired to direct allegiance with the British Deer Society.

It then emerged that our Chairman and others had been in discussion about appointing a full time salaried Secretary. Jim Taylor Page had proposed himself as the obvious candidate, but on being told that his name would be included in a short list of applicants had said he would not so submit himself and had tendered his resignation, although he later withdrew this. The Scottish Area Chairman, Lord Burton, disagreed heatedly with the BDS Chairman, his younger brother, Peter Baillie, about what duties a paid Secretary should be expected to perform, his own view being that

secretarial work for the Scottish Area should be included among these duties.

At one stage the meeting seemed in danger of breaking up in disharmony, and perhaps the BDS with it. However, a diplomatic compromise proposed by Peter Baillie saved the day, National Council agreeing to the setting up of a special sub committee to consider all these contentious issues and to make appropriate recommendations.

These difficulties are recounted here to help dispose of any notion that differing opinions as to what decisions should be taken ever seriously questioned what route the Society should follow in its quest to achieve the very best for deer and for its members.

Our friendly relationship with the Dutch Roe Deer Society (Het Reewild) was further demonstrated during the weekend of 14-16 June 1974 when a small party of BDS Council members and wives were guests of Het Reewild members in eastern Holland. The purpose of the visit was to see some of the black roe deer, which are a feature of that region, and on two dawn forays, and one at dusk everyone saw black roe, some of them at very close quarters.

Cecil Kilpatrick, newly elected Chairman of the Irish Deer Society, flew over from Belfast to attend a meeting of General Council on 7 July 1974, at which he explained why the IDS felt the time had come for greater autonomy as a body independent of the British Deer Society. Council members took note of the fact that Cecil, an Ulsterman and a senior officer of the Northern Ireland Forestry Service, had been elected to represent the interests of IDS members on both sides of the Irish border.

It was with reluctance that our Hon. Secretary agreed to absent himself from the meeting room while discussion took place about his future and the possible merits of a Director being appointed as the Society's full time administrator. There was general agreement that Jim Taylor Page, for all his undoubted qualities as an inspirational leader, was not the right man to be Director. The need for a suitable person of the right calibre to drive the Society forward now it was in its second decade was considered important. Meanwhile a start would be made to scale down the duties of the Hon Secretary, who would nevertheless be guaranteed tenure of office for a minimum of two years.

Discussion also took place on the possibility of reducing expenditure on the Society's journal *Deer*, either by printing fewer pages or by publishing two issues annually instead of three, as at present. If economies had to be made to finance other BDS needs, I personally favoured the second option. Some time was also spent discussing conservation issues and the need to strengthen legislation on close seasons and deer poaching.

The weekend of 18-20 October brought members and guests from near and far to learn about the deer of Yorkshire at the English National Meet for that year. This event was arranged by our local branch and based on the Royal Spa hotel at Ripon, beginning on the Friday evening with a welcome by Dr. Ken Oldfield on behalf of the Yorkshire Branch and a series of talks by knowledgeable local members on the deer of their home localities. The general picture was of very small numbers of feral red and fallow deer and increasing southward spreading roe. Saturday dawn forays enabled some to see four red hinds and a single fallow deer, but there was no problem in seeing red, fallow and sika

deer in good numbers in Studley Royal Deer park, owned by West Yorkshire County Council and wardened by Ernest Kemp, a BDS member. Selections of Studley Royal antlers were also exhibited to the visitors. The Society AGM was held on the Saturday afternoon, and a Studley Royal red stag provided meat for BDS diners and their guests on the Saturday evening, when the meet officially ended. On the Sunday morning, however, some members stayed on to watch wild sika in the Lancashire border area under the guidance of Bill Mitchell, a sika enthusiast who had spent a great deal of time studying these animals in those areas.

On the following weekend (25-27 October) Scottish members gathered at Lockerbie, in Dumfries and Galloway, for a Symposium on "Red Deer in a woodland setting". Speakers were the local Forestry Commission Conservator, the Chairman of the Red Deer Commission and Ronnie Rose, chief game warden for the Economic Forestry Group, with a preliminary talk on the deer of southwest Scotland by local expert Ken MacArthur, B.E.M. In his summing up, South West Scotland Branch Chairman H.A. (Tony) Waterson acknowledged that red deer could present serious damage problems in commercial forestry plantations but urged that research should be directed to lessening these problems without drastically reducing the numbers of deer. The remainder of the weekend was devoted to such matters as the Scottish Area AGM, the Scottish Annual Dinner and a field trip to Eskdalemuir to see the work of Ronnie Rose and his colleagues on wildlife conservation for the Economic Forestry Group.

At the same time, Branches were busy as usual in their own right. Always thrustful and forward looking, Midlands Branch scored a "first" during 1974 by acquiring a caravan of its own. This was needed first and foremost for accommodation purposes when exhibiting at country shows and the like. Later in its history this Branch was to produce a printed insert to be circulated with deer especially for children, and kept this going for several years. Midlands Branch also launched on its own initiative a Deer Education Centre, which was made available to the Society as a whole.

Less happy news came from the Cambrian Branch when in the autumn of 1974, its founder Chairman, Bob Braithwaite, died. Bob had invested much time and energy in getting this Welsh Branch started, and his loss was a serious blow to it. It will be remembered that Mrs. Braithwaite baked a special birthday cake to help celebrate the Society's Tenth Anniversary the previous year, and Bill looked to be in good health then.

Another very small item of Branch news was a name change as from the beginning of 1975 for East Anglian Branch to "East Anglia Branch" spot the difference? Soon enough however, the original spelling was resumed, at least in Deer, in all probability due to an editorial oversight!

## 15. Going professional

AT THE SOCIETY AGM on 1 March 1975 Lord Dulverton, our President took the chair, launching at once into urgent business. He felt that to achieve any substantial further growth and influence the British Deer Society needed to "go professional" with a salaried Director. This might ideally be a newly retired Army officer or someone similar with administrative experience, suggested our Chairman, Peter Baillie, who had given me a lift to the meeting, held as usual in Middlesex Hospital Medical School in London. The Director's salary would need to be subsidised for the first year or possibly two years, in order to give the successful candidate time to generate his own income, and it was hinted that Lord Dulverton himself would provide this money.

Jim Taylor Page, up to this time Hon. National Secretary, would become Society Archivist and Education Officer under the proposed new arrangement. He would be made a Vice President in recognition of his distinguished service to the Society and to deer, and would continue to receive the honorarium of £300 per annum, which had latterly been paid to him in his secretarial role. He would also be a member of the special sub committee set up to select and appoint a Director. Jim acquiesced in these proposals, with which the Annual General Meeting voted unanimously in favour.

In place of an intended joint Symposium with the Fauna Preservation Society, on "Rare and threatened Deer", which had to be cancelled due to insufficient support, a National Council meeting originally scheduled for 2 March was brought forward to follow on the heels of the AGM. At it John Hepper our Hon. Treasurer, said the Society's financial position was "grim". He said we might just struggle through the current year but would be "in the red" next year unless extra sources of revenue were found. As a minor economy measure he suggested reducing the number of pages in the July 1975 issue of Deer.

A respite from these and other problems was enjoyed by ten of us from 4-9 May 1975 while on an organised visit to Denmark with our International Liaison Officer Walter Wince and his wife, Muriel. Our prime purpose was to visit the internationally famous Danish Game Research Station at Kalo, in Jutland, where Dr. Eèlmuth Strandgaard had carried out much important pioneering work on roe. Many of those we saw had been captured and collared to identify them individually, enabling their movements to be traced.

We also viewed an enclosed herd of fallow deer with antlers of exceptionally high quality at Wedellsborg on the bridge island of Fyn, red deer, roe deer and wild boar in Dyrehaven a fenced game reserve at Vildmose in east Jutland, and roe deer and blackcock on an Army firing range at Borris. We also saw sika and fallow deer, very tame, in a park at Aarhus, and a pair of white storks at their nest, a very rare sight nowadays in Denmark.

The number of local deer control societies affiliated to the BDS had been steadily increasing. Early in 1975 representatives of these societies held a meeting in London at which it was agreed to form a Federation of Deer Control Societies to deal with matters of common concern and to promote the deer control society concept in areas not already covered. The Federation was duly set up under the

chairmanship of John Hotchkis, BDS Vice-Chairman and Council member responsible for liaison with these bodies.

Following the decision at the AGM on 1 March to appoint a full time Director, the special appointment sub committee got to work without delay.

The post was duly advertised and more than 250 applicants responded. The successful candidate was indeed a retired Army officer, and on 4 June 1975 Major General G.C.A. (Glyn) Gilbert, C.B., M.C., was appointed Director of the British Deer Society. Glyn, as we at once got to know this genial new member of our team, was introduced to National Council at its meeting on 6 July, 1975 at the usual venue in London, to which I took him as a car passenger after picking him up at Fleet Service Station on the M3. He passed most of the journey enquiring in what particular ways he could be of help to me in my editorial capacity. The best off the cuff suggestion I could offer was that he might persuade one of his Army friends to sell advertisement space in Deer on a commission basis, an idea which sadly never bore fruit.

Having been asked by National Council to set out his thoughts on the Society's future after familiarising himself with its current situation, Glyn did this in an article in the November 1975 issue of Deer. His main points were the urgent need to place the Society's finances on a much sounder footing than at this time when bankruptcy seemed an imminent prospect, to centralise administration and sales items at a single location, to aim to increase membership to at least 4,000 by the end of 1976, and to maximise revenue from advertising in Deer and from a yearly raffle or similar as well as by raising subscriptions to a realistic level to offset galloping inflation. He also suggested attracting more young members by producing a Junior Deer, and Jim Taylor Page was looking into this possibility.

Deer Volume 3, No. 8, November 1975 also carried news of improved health by David Percy, who had rendered invaluable service as our journal's Assistant Editor from 1966 until 1974, when he and his family moved from Hampshire to Worcestershire where David took up a new post with the Forestry Commission. Shortly after moving he fell ill with a very serious spinal disorder. After a year in and out of hospital receiving radiological and other treatment for his crippling disorder, David was able to resume work, at least on a temporary basis.

At around the same time as David departed, David Davis, another professional forester, changed jobs and moved to the North of England, which meant that help he had been giving as Editorial Assistant was also no longer available. Roger Ireland, a Wessex Branch Committee member, stepped briefly into the breach, but soon had to give up due to other pressures on his time. This left me on my own at the centre of editorial operations, although I continued to receive first class support at a distance from Lea MacNally, Scottish Editor and John Place, the Irish Editor.

In 1974 a new Assistant Editor came to my help in the person of another retired Army officer, Lt. Col. C.G. (Cyril) Wright. Cyril lived quite close to me, in Hampshire, and proved a tower of strength from the outset, a man of sound common sense and cool judgment with a wide knowledge of deer and stalking. It was through Cyril Wright's initiative and patient perseverance, more than any other single factor, that stalker training was ultimately formalised and introduced as a vital service by the

BDS to its members and to the humane control of deer.

At the Society's AGM on 6 March, 1976 and held in the Edward Lewis Lecture Theatre at Middlesex Hospital Medical School in London, John Hepper announced his resignation as Hon. Treasurer, in which capacity he had served the BDS well in its formative years although there were now financial difficulties. He reported that the Society was currently overdrawn at the bank to the tune of around £900. The Director said an advance from the Dulverton Trust of £7,000 was being negotiated to tide the Society over its current predicament.

This somewhat gloomy news was in contrast with the undoubted success of the Symposium, which followed. This attracted at least 130 members and guests to hear half a dozen speakers on different aspects of "Watching and recording Deer", ranging from the techniques of watching and recording, censusing Scottish red deer, calling deer, recording deer by still photography, filming deer and sound recording them.

At the meeting of National Council the following day (7 March 1976) a Mr.T.U.(Theo)Taylor was elected Hon. Treasurer on the recommendation of the Director. Jim Taylor Page's career as Custodian of The Deer Museum at Low Hay Bridge, Bouth-by-Ulverston in the Lake District had been comparatively brief. Having retired from full time teaching at Varndean College, Brighton in order to take up this Custodianship in 1971, he soon found he was expected to play the part of general handyman in addition to his other duties. In 1973 Tissie Fooks and he parted company. Lord Lonsdale, our founder President, came to the rescue with the provision of a cottage at Whale Moor Head, on the Lowther estate. Jim fairly soon moved from this to the more convenient Forge Cottage in the picturesque Lowther estate village of Askham, near which he was also furnished with premises for a residential outdoor studies centre for visiting parties of schoolchildren. Here he remained until advancing years obliged him to move to sheltered accommodation in nearby Penrith. We owe a considerable debt of gratitude to Lord Lonsdale for the generous help he gave our founder Secretary in the evening of his life.

At a National Council meeting in London on 4 July, 1976 Glyn Gilbert, our Director, presented a much rosier picture of Society finances than almost anyone had thought possible after recent anxieties on this score. We were told we were now in credit at the bank to the tune of about £9,000 in addition to the loan from the Dulverton Trust of £7,000. Glyn said that if all BDS members covenanted their subscription, the Society could enjoy an additional income of £3,000.

IN THE JULY 1976 ISSUE of Deer (Vol.3,No.10 p.519) Lt.Col.C.G.(Cyril)Wright, by that time Chairman of the Society's Publications Panel as well as being Assistant Editor of our journal, raised the controversial question as to whether a stalkers' competence examination might be desirable and acceptable. For some years previously stalker training had been done on an ad hoc basis by B.D.S Branches and others in response to demand from members and other interested parties, and as far back as the early to mid 1950s the St. Hubert Club of Great Britain had run formalised training courses for its stalker members wishing to qualify as deer managers or as trainers in their own right.

Having been involved with game management in the British occupied zone of post war Germany, where tests for stalkers were routine, Cyril Wright highlighted potential benefits of a recognised



British counterpart, and invited comments from readers. Most of these were favourable but a significant minority was emphatically opposed to any kind of examination, which they looked upon as a likely stepping stone to obligatory testing. Even now, in the twenty first century, when much water has flowed under this particular bridge and testing has long been taken for granted by most stalkers, a vociferous few are still implacably opposed to what they regard as an encroachment upon individual liberty.

Stalker training was stepped up anyway, and from 1977 German born Dieter Dent, of Test Valley Game Produce Limited ran a series of three day and five day residential courses at Stockbridge in Hampshire for the British Deer Society. A panel of specialist lecturers, of whom I was one, dealt with individual subjects and was paid a fee for so doing.

Under Cyril Wright's chairmanship the Training Committee worked on the finalisation of a testing procedure for stalkers. This eventually crystallized as a part written, part practical examination with the granting of a Woodland Stalker's Competence Certificate to successful candidates. This was later broadened to cover hill stalking and the word "Woodland" changed to "National" on the pass Certificate.

Demand for places on the courses run at Stockbridge amply proved the need for such training, and the courses themselves were a training exercise on how best to conduct such training. At the beginning courses were focused on providing a basic grounding on the essentials of deer stalking. At a later stage, at different venues, training was more directly concerned with equipping students with the necessities for passing the recognised test of stalker competence.

Cyril Wright remained a very active Chairman of the Training Committee until 1985, during which time a swelling number of BDS members and others passed the stalker training test. He was succeeded for a short time by another ex-Serviceman, L.A. (Larry) Watts, who also served briefly as Wessex Branch Chairman. When Larry resigned the Training Committee chair in 1986 yet another old soldier, John Childs, stepped very actively into the breach. John's chairmanships lasted until 1995, when James Cordery of Sparsholt College in Hampshire succeeded him. Next came P.J.D. (Peter) Donnelly, who was succeeded in his turn by Nigel Pickering, Chairman of the Training Committee at the time of writing.

During all these years stalker training had been kept constantly under review, refinements being added and modifications made as and when the need arose. A major development during the last decade of the twentieth century was pressure from another and much larger organisation to take over the testing procedure lock, stock and barrel from the British Deer Society. After prolonged discussion a completely new format was agreed upon, whereby testing was upgraded and basic stalker training targeted upon the attainment of Deer Stalking Certificate 1 (DSC1), this being envisaged as a stepping stone to the more advanced DSC 2, which involved, inter alia, candidates demonstrating to the satisfaction of a suitably qualified observer their ability to stalk, shoot, gralloch and proficiently handle the carcasses of three individual deer. Administration of these tests was to be shared on an equal basis between the BDS and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC).

As the importance of stalker training came to be widely recognised, the needs of professional deer managers, ranging from estate factors to gamekeepers, began to be catered for by some of our leading agricultural colleges. The BDS had a role in this, more particularly through the efforts of Wing Commander A.J. (Andrew) de Nahlik, a member of our Training Committee, to stimulate wider awareness of the importance of such training.

Sound judgment of how to act in individual situations plays an important part in good deer management, and the exceptionally hot, dry summer of 1976, with prolonged drought conditions causing deer to go short of feed in the worst hit areas, called for particularly fine judgment how best to deal with resultant suffering while keeping within the law. In at least one well known deer park the owner had to choose between paying astronomically high bills for supplementary feeding, or drastically reducing the number of deer mouths to be fed. He opted for the latter and culled all the hind calves of the year during what would normally have been the female deer close season, an action our then Chairman, Peter Baillie, thought amply justified by the circumstances.

## 16. Royal Patronage

IT CAN HARDLY HAVE BEEN a source of surprise that members of our Royal Family should have expressed an interest in deer well above the average when one recalls how many deer they have as neighbours at Balmoral. Her Majesty the Queen displayed a lively curiosity about a map depicting the known distribution of avian TB in free ranging deer and its effects on antler formation, which she was photographed being shown by Dr. A. (Archie) McDiarmid, our Hon Veterinary Adviser at the time, at the Institute for Research on Animal Disease at Compton in Berkshire on 26 May, 1972.

At the 1976 Game Fair, held on 30-31 July at Glanusk Park, Crickhowell, Powys, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales spent some time on the BDS stand, chatting to members and examining the exhibits. In 1978 the Society was honoured by the Prince's acceptance of an invitation to become our Patron.

Exactly how these things are arranged I do not know, but clearly our President Lord Dulverton, our Chairman Peter Baillie, and our Director Glyn Gilbert all had some input into it. Behind the scenes diplomacy likewise facilitated a formal Reception for the Prince in the stately setting of Fishmongers Hall in the City of London on the evening of 15 May 1978. Arranged jointly by the British Deer Society and Findlater Mackie Todd & Co., the Reception was attended by some 300 guests who were received by Lord and Lady Dulverton and by Mr. J.R. Robb, Chairman of Findlater Mackie Todd & Co, and Mrs. Robb.

During the evening our Patron presented retiring BDS General Secretary Jim Taylor Page with a framed print of the Raoul Millais painting "The Royal Procession". Our founder Secretary now became the Society's Education Director and Archivist.

Lord Dulverton made a presentation of The Stalking Letters and Sketches of V.R. Balfour- Browne to our Patron on behalf of BDS members.

The same issue of Deer (Vol.4,No.6,July 1978) which gave an account of this reception also reported the presentation to John Hotchkis of the Balfour-Browne Trophy for exceptional services to wild deer conservation during the years when he was Vice Chairman of the British Deer Society, an office from which he retired at the AGM on 1 April 1978. John Mackie, Chairman of the Forestry Commission,made the presentation.

A particular irony of the time was that the Reception which marked so significant a moment in our history was reported in an issue of Deer slimmed down drastically in size and content to save money at a time of financial crisis for the Society. What, if anything, our Patron made of this I have no idea, but I was gratified to be told by His Royal Highness that Deer was one publication among the mass of periodical literature addressed to him which he made a particular point of reading. Sadly, when I asked him some years later if he was still receiving our journal, he appeared to have lost track of it, or perhaps his staff had not passed it on.

## **17. Business as usual**

HARKING BRIEFLY BACK TO the mid-1970s, a good example of the initiative and enterprise increasingly evident in Branch programmes was a Symposium arranged by North West England Branch on "The red deer of Furness - their history, ecology, status and future". Held at The Theatre in the Forest at Grizedale in the Lake District on 1-2 November 1975, contributing speakers included J.S.R.(Jack)Chard, Peter Delap, V.P.W.Lowe and A.S.Gardiner (who contributed jointly), and Grizedale Chief Forester Bill Grant, M.B.E., all of them leading authorities on different aspects of their subject.

A reminder that international liaison was alive and kicking in more than one pair of capable hands was a second visit to the Netherlands by a party of BDS members from 20-30 May, 1976 at the invitation of Het Reewild, the Dutch Roe Deer Society, who were celebrating their 25th Anniversary. They included Peter Baillie, who was more than happy to take with him a roe head of great size and monstrous appearance, which he had secured in southern England and which, he visualised as a probable world record. Offered as an exhibit at the World Hunting Exhibition staged in Bulgaria in 1981, it was rejected as a freak. In Holland the visiting party were shown roe trophies from various parts of that Country many of them of good quality but none even remotely comparable to Peter's outsize head from Hampshire.

Later that summer the BDS helped arrange a visit to Britain by a party of 19 Swedes interested in various aspects of country life, including deer. At the Game Fair they met Prince Charles, whom one of them tried to tempt to sample a pint of extra strong Swedish ale.

A tally of local deer control and management societies that year listed a score who had agreed to operate within guidelines agreed between them and the BDS. A numerical high point in the development of these bodies and of the Federation to which most of them belonged. At around this time a change of emphasis from "Control" to "Management" was beginning to come to the fore in these organisations.

## 18. So far so good

EN ROUTE TO a meeting of General Council at the Duke of York's Headquarters in King's Road, Chelsea, on 5 December 1976 I joined Glyn Gilbert at Fleet Service Station on the M3. Glyn had with him our new Treasurer, Theo Taylor, who turned out to be an accountant by profession and therefore well qualified to put our finances in better order. We learned that membership currently totalled 2,350, and could well exceed 2,500 if outstanding subscriptions were paid. Theo Taylor stressed the importance of members covenanting subscriptions to maximise their value to the Society. The main items of business were courses for stalkers and the possible creation of a Service Branch of the BDS to accommodate Services personnel and Ministry of Defence staff involved in deer management on M.O.D. land, a suggestion of Glyn Gilbert's which was to prove highly successful and beneficial to all concerned when it subsequently materialised. Jim Taylor Page felt the Society was becoming too much like a commercial enterprise rather than a voluntary organisation. John Hotchkis thought too many BDS members were "in it for themselves" rather than for the good of the cause, and that perhaps the time was approaching when another Vice Chairman should be sought. Glyn Gilbert responded that it was still not too late for him to withdraw as Director if that was thought advantageous to the Society, whereupon the matter was dropped.

Following the Society AGM on 2 April 1977, the Annual Symposium, titled "Measuring up to Deer", included Lea MacNally, J.S.R. (Jack) Chard, Dr. Oliver Dansie and Dr. P.S. (Paul) Bramley among its contributors. Particularly memorable, however, was a contribution from W1.L. (Bill) McCavish from Kielder Forest on the Scottish border, who amazed his audience with a demonstration of the little known art of "Deer dowsing". The purpose of this was to locate a particular deer by finding a "trace" where it had recently passed, collecting a handful of fresh fewmets (droppings) and holding a straightened wire coat hanger or similar piece of flexible wire in front of him in the other hand. As the dowser follows the deer's trail the wire turns in his hand to point out the route taken by the deer.

Bill told us he had used this technique successfully in the course of his work as deer warden... It could also be used to track down humans by holding in one hand a piece of personal property carrying the scent of the individual concerned, and Bill demonstrated this with a volunteer from the audience. For fuller information readers are referred to Bill McCavish's- article "Dowsing and Deer" in Deer Vol.4,No.3(July 1977)pp.138-9.

Piloted through the House of Lords by Lord Northfield, a Labour peer, a new Deer Bill for England and Wales passed through all its Parliamentary stages during 1977, but only at the price of provisions for banning the use of shotguns being watered down to such an extent as to make this intention virtually impossible to ensure. Objections came from the National Farmers' Union, who wanted to reserve the right for all species of deer to be shotgunned whether or not damage was being caused, and from the British Field Sports Society, prompted by the Devon and Somerset Stagholders, who up to this time had persisted in using shotgun drives against red deer hinds to supplement the cull achieved by hunting. The BDS, through its President Lord Dulverton, and its

Scottish Area Chairman Lord Burton, among others, had given such support to this Bill as it could.

On 26 September, 1977 the Sheffield and Hallamshire Branch of the BDS was inaugurated to serve the area around Sheffield and nearby parts of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire not well served by existing Branches. The founder Chairman was Lord Riverdale, who continued to play an active part in Branch activities throughout the rest of his long life.

The unhappy history of the BDS in Wales was underscored by the omission of an entry for the Cambrian Branch from the section headed "Branch News from England and Wales" in the February 1978 issue of Deer. Launched with a flourish a few years previously as the only BDS Branch ever to get off the ground in the Principality, this westerly BDS outpost suffered a grievous blow from the untimely death of Bob Braithwaite, its founder Chairman. Efforts were made to keep things going, but after a lengthy spell with no news from the Branch its demise had to be assumed.

Just in case this assumption was premature, space was again allowed for a possible Cambrian Branch entry two issues later, but this precaution finally ceased in the July 1980 issue of our journal.

Meanwhile, on 21 October 1978 what had developed as the Berkhamsted Group of the East Anglian Branch split off to become the Chilterns Branch. Chaired initially by W.G. (Walter) Buckingham, the new Branch served Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire west of the A1, and Oxfordshire but continued to be focused mainly on the Berkhamsted area including Ashridge and its deer. This measure reduced the once large East Anglian Branch area to a much less unwieldy size.

When General Council met at the Duke of York's Headquarters in London on 3 December 1978 members were surprised at the appearance there of George Logan, founder Secretary of BDS (Scotland), after a long absence from such meetings. He said he had come to save the BDS in Scotland, and further surprised us by proposing John Hotchkis as the Society's Scottish Chairman as a replacement for Lord Burton, the current Scottish Chairman. Yet more surprising was John Hotchkis's acceptance of this proposition. Lord Burton joined the meeting at lunchtime, and the matter was carried no further.

Glyn Gilbert announced his impending retirement as BDS Director, to take effect from next April, when he planned to take up a new appointment in Bermuda. He brought with him Brigadier G. (Geoffrey) Proudman C.B.E., whom he introduced as his successor. Geoffrey, a near neighbour of Glyn's in the Wyllye Valley, Wiltshire, inherited from him the secretarial services of Rita Gray, a soldier's wife, who served both Directors with a quiet efficiency above and beyond the call of duty which benefited in many ways the Society as a whole.

The departing Glyn was a diplomatist who came across as "Mr. Nice Guy" but who pulled no punches in taking decisions essential for the Society's good, and we were sorry to see him go after so short a term in office. Pipe smoking Geoffrey, an ex paratrooper, was steel thinly sheathed in velvet: a man with decided views of his own who was unwilling to suffer fools gladly.

The Edward Lewis Lecture Theatre at Middlesex Hospital Medical School was barely one third full for the Society A.G.M on 7 April 1979 but virtually full to capacity for the National Symposium, entitled "A new look at roe deer", which followed. Making his final appearance as Director, Glyn

Gilbert was thanked for all he had done for the BDS and was presented with a thumb stick topped by a roe antler as a memento of his services to deer. Geoffrey Proudman was warmly welcomed as his successor. Lord Burton's resignation as Scottish Area Chairman was noted. John Hotchkis duly succeeded him, as proposed earlier by George Logan. A roebuck carved in walnut by Patrick Delap and a cheque subscribed to by BDS members was presented to Jim Taylor Page in appreciation of his dedicated service as Society Secretary, and a fruit bowl carved in wood was presented to Norman Dewhurst in gratitude for his work as English Area Chairman before he succeeded John Hotchkis as Society Vice Chairman. Lord Dulverton, who took the chair, recounted the chain of events which led to the new deer Bill, mentioned earlier, failing to reach the statute book, and said he was determined to see an appropriate Bill passed in the next Parliamentary session. Photographic competitions had developed more or less spontaneously as part of the Society's service to its members, and under its Chairman, John K. Fawcett, the Photographic Committee announced new competition arrangements to cater for deer photographers.

Designed to reflect new thinking on roe, the Symposium featured contributions from Frank Holmes (author of *Following the Roe*), Raymond Chaplin, Hugh Insley, Andrew Loudon and Bill Grant, M.B.E., and stimulated much discussion. There was also a presentation by Chris Knights, a member of the I.T.V. "Survival" film team who produced a film on Thetford roe called "A Deer in Hiding". This included mention of the fact that descendants of an original stock of only six beasts now numbered at least 1,000.

At a General Council meeting the following day arrangements for closer liaison with the Game Conservancy on matters of common concern were announced, and Captain Peter Lenthall, representing the M.O.D., reported good progress towards the formation of a BDS Services Branch, which would be fully operational before the end of the current year. This new Branch was largely the brainchild of Glyn Gilbert, who was among us for the last time at this meeting, as was his successor, Geoffrey Proudman. The meeting venue, once again, was the Duke of York's Headquarters in London.

A meeting of General Council, again at the Duke of York's Headquarters, on 1 July, 1979, was largely devoted to discussing what action to take about possible inhumane treatment of deer by deer farmers, the harvesting of antlers in velvet being cited as one matter worthy of closer scrutiny. Dr Archie McDiarmid, our Hon Veterinary Adviser, expressed concern about a number of named deer parks where deer management and the general health of the deer was unsatisfactory. Geoffrey Proudman suggested that the Society should prepare and publish policy statements on all welfare issues concerning deer. It also emerged at this meeting that the recent change of Chairman of BDS (Scotland) was the outcome of bitter top-level disagreement as to how the Society north of the Border should be run, and that the election of John Hotchkis as Chairman was an interim measure intended to last no longer than one year. As Alex Allison said, being present to represent Scottish interests BDS (Scotland) had a right to make its own decisions as to how things should be run, without any outside interference.

We learned at this meeting that John Parr, M.P., having drawn tenth place in the Private Bills ballot on 21 June, 1979, had agreed to pilot afresh through the House of Commons the much delayed deer

Bill which our President, Lord Dulverton, had vowed to see made law at the earliest possible opportunity after more than one false start.

The next meeting of General Council was held on 2 December, 1979 again at the Duke of York's Headquarters. It was preceded by an Extraordinary General Meeting to approve an all round increase of subscriptions with effect from 1 January next. As it happened, none except members of Council attended this meeting, which followed an even briefer one on training. Pat Wilson attended in his new capacity as Chairman of BDS (Scotland). His Vice Chairman, Ken MacArthur, B.E.M., was also present, as was Andy Morrissey, Irish Deer Society President. The most noteworthy developments at today's meeting were a motion forced through by Pat Wilson limiting the term of office for a Scottish Area Chairman to not more than two years at any one time, and news that Archie McDiarmid would succeed Peter Baillie as Society Chairman in July, 1980. Pat Wilson's motion was thought to reflect difficulty in otherwise resolving vital differences of opinion over future policy between individual Scottish council members.

At the Society's AGM in London on 12 April, 1980 Lord Dulverton confirmed his willingness to serve as President for one more year. Peter Baillie would retire as Chairman on 26 July 1980 and was elected as a Vice President with immediate effect. He was recently appointed representative Verderer for the Forestry Commission on the New Forest Court of Verderers. Jim Taylor Page, alongside whom I sat at the AGM, retired as BDS Education Director. Norman Dewhurst appealed for better support for the Lonsdale Trust and the 400 Club. The latter was launched in the 1970s to - raise more revenue from up to 400 BDS members who might like to enjoy a small "flutter" while also benefiting the Society by becoming subscribing Club members. A set proportion of Club income was set aside as draw prizes for members, the remainder being used to boost Society revenue. Geoffrey Proudman now combined the roles of Director and Treasurer. Lord Northfield retired as an Honorary BDS member but would pilot the reactivated Deer Bill through the House of Lords, it was learned. Hosted by BDS member (Baron) Fred Ratky Hungarian roe expert Dr. Istvan Beroti would visit Britain that summer to demonstrate how to call roe during the rut, it was also learned.

A sculpted roe head simulation was presented to Peter Baillie in gratitude for his long and dedicated service as BDS Chairman, a period when a succession of difficult problems which could easily have daunted a less determined individual had been successfully surmounted. In many ways Peter was a model Chairman and exactly the right man for the job at the right time.

Demands from the British Deer Farmers Association for special exemptions for its members from various clauses in the Deer Bill at present before Parliament were considered unacceptable. In all other respects the Bill could almost certainly be enacted "as is" with minimal delay.

John Fawcett projected winning entries in the Photographic Competition for members of General Council to see.

"A new look at fallow deer" was the theme of the Annual Symposium, which followed the AGM This began with a "Popular Lecture" by Arthur Cadman, given by him while sitting in an easy chair because he had recently been "gralloched as he referred to surgery he had recently experienced. Now resident in the, Scottish Highlands, he said he had seen only five or six fallow deer since



leaving the New Forest, where he was Deputy Surveyor (chief executive), 11 years ago. Much of his talk dealt with forestry damage caused by these deer. Five other papers, which followed, dealt with a wide range of other issues concerning fallow deer.

The Zoological Society's Council Chamber at Regent's Park in London was the venue for the General Council meeting the following day. No one from Scotland attended, and Scottish Area Council was criticised for inviting our Patron to attend one of their events without prior reference to General Council. In fact their invitation was declined. We learned that two West Country Deer control societies had contributed £200 to a special purposes fund launched by the Society, now totalling more than £2,000, of which some £900 had already been spent. It was suggested that Annual Symposia should 'be replaced by Study Days, seen by some as one more step towards the "de personalisation" of BDS gatherings which to some extent has become inevitable due to the growth of membership which otherwise had been so desirable to enhance the Society's status and influence.

Other matters exercising minds in the BDS at this time included the formation of two new bodies a F.A.C.E. U.K. Committee and the British Shooting Sports Council, which combined forces to produce a Shooters' Manual covering all aspects of sport shooting including stalking. In conjunction with other bodies such as the Forestry Commission and W.A.G.B.I. now the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) they were also working on voluntary tests of competence for shooters, and the BDS Training Committee had joined forces with them to formulate tests for stalkers.

Ways of combating deer poaching and the cruelty it involves have received a great deal of attention from the British Deer Society. One measure adopted was the publication in *Deer* of what we called a deer poachers' black list, giving details of people convicted of poaching offences. Members were asked to check their local newspapers for reports of relevant court cases and to send cuttings of such reports to *Deer* for earliest possible publication.

In the interests of economy, *Deer* Vol. 4, No. 9 had been another "slim line" issue which nevertheless contained full reports as usual of Society affairs in Scotland and from the Irish Deer Society, with patterns of meets and other events which broadly mirrored those in England, but which limitations of space have largely obliged me to omit from this potted history.

One item of news from Ireland was the sudden death in hospital at Omagh, County Tyrone, on 4 June 1979 at the age of 75 of the Duke of Abercorn, thus depriving the BDS and the IDS alike of one of their Vice Presidents. John McCurdy's obituary reminded us all that the Duke had devoted his life to public service in many spheres as well as to the care of his family property at Baronscourt, noteworthy as the haunt of a sizeable free living herd of sika deer and location of the Baronscourt Deer Centre, opened by the Duke in the presence of BDS Chairman Peter Baillie on 30 June, 1973. The Duke was succeeded by his son, the Marquess of Hamilton.

## 19. Into the 1980s

PREPARATIONS FOR FORMING a Services Branch of the BDS having been under way for the past year, the new Branch held its first general meeting on 20 April 1980. Membership being open to all Services personnel and M.O.D. employees, 90 existing BDS members had already signified their desire to join the Branch, and another 200 individuals had made enquiries about what was to develop into one of the Society's strongest and most active Branches, which had been largely inspired in the first place by Glyn Gilbert.

In late June 1980 I was one of two BDS members who joined a small party from the Mammal Society on a visit to Bialowiecsa Forest in eastern Poland, where the Director and staff of the Mammal Research Station looked after us. High points of our visit were a close quarters view of wild European bison in the forest and of a European beavers' lodge on a river near Bialystok.

July 1980 duly brought the retirement from office as BDS Chairman of Peter Baillie and his replacement by Dr. Archie McDiarmid, D.Sc.,PhD.,M.R.C.V.S.,F.R.C.Path.,F.R.S.E. combining his new responsibilities with his pre-existing ones as the Society's Hon. Veterinary Adviser.

After much hard work by Lord Northfield and John Parr, M.P., in particular, the much delayed Deer Bill became law on 8 August 1980, albeit in somewhat attenuated form, as the Deer Act, 1980. Its main thrust was to make life much more difficult for deer poachers by outlawing trespass in search of deer with malicious intent, forbidding the sale of deer or venison to anyone other than a licensed game dealer, and requiring game dealers to keep a proper record of every transaction involving deer carcasses. John Hotchkis of the British Deer Society had made strenuous and prolonged efforts behind the scene to secure the passage into law of this Bill, applicable only to England and Wales.

Range shooting has developed as a major Branch activity with quality prizes including stalking rifles being competed for. Awards included, in the case of Yorkshire Branch, the David Bunyan Trophy, a bronze effigy of a stag, competed for annually by Branch members and held in 1980 by Chris Jenkins.

On 23 October, 1980 a small party of BDS National Council members including our President Lord Dulverton, gave a short briefing to our Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, on matters of particular concern to the Society at this time. The briefing was hosted by Findlater Mackie Todd and held in their London boardroom, their London Director and his assistant also being present. Subjects dealt with were, red deer and forestry, problems relative to the movement of deer and deer farming. The Prince was given luncheon and presented with a print of a roe head by Brian Rawling before departing soon after 2 p.m. to fulfil another appointment. Presented to our Patron by Lord Dulverton, BDS President, in 1979, a promising red deer stag from Glenfeshie, Inverness shire, was released into Windsor Great Park to join the herd being re established there. Benefiting from the Park's rich pasturage, one year later this stag had grown spectacularly in size and antler development, amply demonstrating the extent to which a wild stag from the Scottish Highlands can

respond favourably to conditions in the South.

The moribund Cambrian Branch was formally disbanded by a resolution of National Council with effect from 7 December, 1980. Until such time as a viable Branch in Wales could be reconstituted, it was hoped that the sparse and scattered membership in the Principality might be serviced by Midlands Branch (North Wales) and in the case of South Wales by the Gloucestershire and Avon Branch, which had been formed on 8 October 1978 following a day meet at Whitcliffe Park, Berkeley, to see its large herds of red and fallow deer.

The year 1980 had seen the death, on 22 April, of one of our most distinguished older members Henry Tegner. An enthusiast for roe stalking in Dorset in pre war years when nearly all roe were shotgun quarry and close seasons were undreamed of, Henry's Monograph *The Roe Deer: Their History, Habits and Pursuit*, published in 1951 and not long ago reprinted, is one of the classics of deer literature. An all round field sportsman, Henry Tegner's love of wildlife and the countryside was reflected in more than 30 other books and in numerous articles. With Viscount Ridley and others he helped form what is now our North East England Branch and served on its Committee for many years.

A weekend meet on the estate of Sir William Benyon at Englefield, Berkshire, on 4-5 April 1981 gave members an opportunity to see and learn about the deer of Englefield Park. We also attended a National Symposium devoted to various topical issues legal restrictions on drugs used for narcotic darting of deer, police responsibilities for deer, tagging deer carcasses as an aid to verifying their origin, and comparing the behaviour of captive muntjac with wild ones. The resident agent for the Englefield estate was Kenneth McDiarmid, son of our Chairman, Archie McDiarmid, and a family connection, which made it possible for meetings of the National Council to be held at Englefield Estate Office instead of in London.

Contrary to what the Deer Acts have to say upon such matters, the Forestry Commission has had recourse to night shooting by spotlight from vehicles in order to try to complete its culls of female deer in particular, especially in Galloway, south west Scotland. This had attracted very strong criticism from the British Deer Society and from correspondents in continental Europe, who suggested that failure to complete these culls by daylight within the prescribed open seasons was due to failure to plan forests with deer management in mind and to employ sufficient trained staff to effect these culls in the manner and time laid down by legislation. *Deer* Vol. 5, No. 5 contained a paper by Lea MacNally and Ronnie Rose, M.B.E., suggesting how these problems might be overcome in a Scottish context.

Sadly, shooting by night and in close seasons still goes on, under licence from the Deer Commission for Scotland, as a means of completing difficult culls and countering serious deer damage problems.

Planning of voluntary tests for stalkers had reached a stage by early 1981 where it was possible to arrange a "trial run". This took place at Bulford in Wiltshire on 29 March, with 25 Services Branch members submitting themselves as "guinea pigs" for the purpose, resulting in what was considered to be a successful exercise although vehement opposition to stalkers' tests of any sort was still

voiced in some quarters.

More than 60 participating countries ensured that Expo 81, the World Hunting Exposition hosted by Bulgaria in the summer of 1981, would be a spectacular event although it may not have been financially successful. I went to Bulgaria in March of that year with other journalists to obtain a foretaste of what was in store, and again while the Exposition, held at Plovdiv, was in full flow. The British exhibit, manned by enthusiasts from the B.I.D.S. and the St. Hubert Club of Great Britain including Fred Marshall, George Stefanicki, Mike Newton, Larrett Neal and Ken MacArthur, was impressive by any standards, with an array of quality roe trophies plus a few of red, sika, fallow deer and muntjac. The Bulgarian Ambassador in London hosted an Embassy reception for British medal winners on the evening of 8 December 1981. One exhibitor, Michael Langmead, was awarded a gold medal for what was judged to be the fourth best roe trophy in the entire exhibition, where the U.S.S.R. and other members of the Communist bloc were lavishly represented by comparison with many other exhibiting countries.

The engagement of our Patron to Lady Diana Spencer and their subsequent marriage in 1981 were marked by the Society with a greetings telegram and the gift of a gralloching knife respectively.

Scottish Council's previously expressed desire to be visited by our Patron was gratified on 10 July, 1981 when the Prince flew in by helicopter to Clatteringshaws, on the road between Newton Stewart and New Galloway, where about 1,000 people greeted him. Here he met Tom Kennedy, a past Chairman of South West Scotland Branch, who just prior to the Patron's arrival had been presented by our President with a Certificate of Fellowship in appreciation of his outstanding services to the Society. The Prince also met Archie McDiarmid, Ken MacArthur, H.A.(Tony)Waterson, who had organised the visit, Geoffrey Proudman and local Forestry Commission Conservator John Davies before visiting the Forestry Commission's Deer museum at Clatteringshaws.

Our Patron was then taken by helicopter to see the Economic Forestry Group (E.F.G.) plantations at Eskdalemuir, where the BDS Scottish Chairman, now Captain A.A.C.Farquharson of Invercauld, the E.F.G.'s managing director and representatives of the various Scottish Branches of the BDS. He also heard a forceful address on local wildlife management policy by Wildlife Manager Ronnie Rose of the E.F.G.

Our Parliamentary guru John Hotchkis kept a close eye on the on the passage into law of what was to become The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which received the royal assent on 30 October that year. Through his contacts in both Houses of Parliament John was able to ensure that sections of the Bill relevant to deer were tightened up in important respects to provide the maximum possible benefit for the welfare of these animals. However, this still left the way open for smooth bore weapons to be used against deer in specific circumstances, subject to cartridges loaded with rifled slug or AAA shot being exclusively used for the purpose.

The March 1982 issue of Deer reported the deaths of two BDS stalwarts. One was Major C.W. (Charles) Hume, O.B.E., M.C., B.Sc., who, as founder and Secretary of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (U.F.A.W.), had played a leading role in making The Deer (England and Wales) Act 1963 a reality a the first ever piece of protective legislation to enhance deer welfare in these

countries. He had also been a close and valued ally of the original Deer Group and of the BDS in its early formative period.

The other stalwart was Larrett Neal, who actively combined a love of stalking and the countryside with a desire to promote the well being and development of the BDS in any way he could, including the organisation and manning of our exhibits at EXPO 81 in Bulgaria. Larrett retired from his managerial post with the Coal Board in the spring of 1981 at the age of 65 and died on 6 November the same year.

In January 1982 The Deer (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the House of Lords by Lord Glenarthur and on 23 April to the House of Commons by Sir Hector Monro. This successor to The Deer (Scotland) Act 1959, The Deer (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 1967 and The Sale of Venison (Scotland) Act 1968 sought to extend the powers of the Red Deer Commission to include responsibility for sika deer and possibly also for other deer species as the situation might demand. The new Bill's other main provisions were designed to update financial penalties rendered inadequate by inflation and to revise Scottish legislation on deer matters generally in the light of experience gained from the application of earlier legal measures.

Guidance on the Bill was given by our Patron and our President, and Lord Dulverton added a highly effective voice to debates and discussion of the proposed new legislation, about which Scottish Council and the Legislative Review and Advisory Panel, set up by General Council at its meeting on 6 December 1981, were kept fully informed. Despite fears that pressure on Parliamentary time when the Falklands crisis was at its peak would seriously delay the passage into law of this measure, the Bill received the royal assent on 28 June, 1982.

Chatsworth in Derbyshire, the seat of the Duke of Devonshire, was the venue for a National Meet on 3-4 April 1982, the first day being devoted to the Society's Annual General Meeting and National Symposium. The latter covered subjects ranging from the National Trust in Derbyshire and the Peak District, Scottish Highland wildlife and voluntary tests for stalkers to ongoing work on red deer and forestry by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology and Chatsworth's deer and their management. Tractor hauled trailers with straw bales as seats took members on the Sunday morning to within yards of Chatsworth's red deer, lured within easy camera range by food handouts from head keeper J.L. (Dick) Norris. The fallow deer were less obliging, but no one complained about that after being taken so close to the red deer.

Such forays, and the close contact with deer which they made possible, helped reinforce members' enthusiasm for continuing to work individually and collectively to achieve the Society's objectives. This being the case, it may appear a touch ironic that one of the aims most loudly trumpeted at the birth of the BDS could not in fact be directly pursued - campaigning for changes in the law to benefit deer in significant ways. In our early days it was recognised that charitable status would confer many advantages, not least financially through being able to recover Income Tax paid by members on covenanted subscriptions. On the other hand, a Registered Charity may not advocate changes in the law, although it is free to offer advice to those who seek it on legislation proposed by others. This has been done and the advice given and usually followed, on many occasions.

An especially pleasing item of news for British Deer Society members was the inclusion in the Queen's Birthday Honours for 1982 of a well earned award of the M.B.E. for our founder Secretary, Jim Taylor Page, B.Sc., M.I.Biol. F.Z.S. Jim went to Buckingham Palace to receive his award from Her Majesty on 23 November 1982.

The death from a road accident of Donald Ivan Chapman deprived the Society of an active and prominent member who had caught the "deer bug" in his early life while living near Epping Forest and getting to know its fallow deer. For a time he worked in close co-operation with Raymond E. Chaplin and in deer circles the Chapman and Chaplin team became well known for breaking new ground with their studies. Donald's detailed account of "The Deer of Essex" was published in 1977 and with his wife Norma, he coauthored a monograph on Fallow Deer, which was reprinted in 1997. Donald and Norma coauthored many other booklets and papers, including a booklet Fallow Deer published by the BDS in 1978.

The 1983 New Year's Honours included the award of the O.B.E. to W.A. (Arthur) Cadman, a former Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest and past member of BDS Council, who had done much good work for deer during his tenure of office at Lyndhurst.

When possible BDS handbooks or booklets were being discussed, it had been agreed that the practicalities of stalking Highland red deer were a vital subject to be covered. Our Scottish Editor, Lea MacNally, was accordingly asked if he could tackle this. He readily agreed and at once applied himself to the task. His text, however, was criticised on the grounds that it assumed a do it yourself approach to stalking rather than one in which the "rifle" would be guided throughout by a professional stalker, who would undertake most or all of the hands on work, with which the "rifle" need hardly concern himself'.

Lea felt that his work, carried out in good faith at the request of others was likely to have been a waste of effort. Recognising its undoubted worth, I published it in full in Deer as an 11 page illustrated feature, thus saving it from unwarranted oblivion.

## 20. Twenty years on

A CELEBRATORY DRAWING of Britain's six wild deer species by artist member Michael Clark decorated the front cover of Deer Vol. 5, No. 10, our Twentieth Anniversary issue published in March 1983. To mark the occasion further, I persuaded three of our older members as well as a relatively young one to tell us how well or otherwise they felt the Society had acquitted itself thus far. All responded with kind words but were by no means entirely uncritical, which added value to what they said by way of ideas for the future.

There was no special anniversary gathering, although the events of our AGM Weekend, held at Badminton, seat of the Duke of Beaufort on 23-24 April, was a celebration in most respects. The Duke and his heir, Mr. David Somerset, welcomed us personally on the Saturday when the AGM and Symposium were held. The Symposium spilled over to the Sunday, with a talk given in the courtyard of Badminton House in the presence of His Grace, by Arthur Witchell of our Somerset and Avon Branch. His subject was Badminton Deer Park, its history and management, on which he spoke with authority as the man responsible for its management. We then toured the park to see the deer for ourselves.

Two radical changes to our journal were made in 1983. The first was a change of format from quarto size two column pages to three columns A4 size. This required deeper bookshelf space for back numbers and bound volumes, which caused a few complaints from members. Quarto, however, was fast going out of fashion as a page size and being replaced almost universally by A4. We had little choice but to do likewise.

The other innovation was our use of colour, long fought shy of by many publishers because of its much higher cost than black and white for illustrations. Our first and only use in Deer of black and white photographic reproduction for a front cover illustration was so unsatisfactory that the Director promptly authorised extra expenditure for colour, introduced with Vol. 6, No. 2. For a long time, however, colour was confined to the front cover and to occasional back cover illustrations and advertisements.

On 16-17 June 1983 the BDS played host to the International Sika Society, at its Third Conference, the theme of which was "Sika Deer in Europe". Nine papers were presented and were published in Deer Vol. 6, No. 3. During their visit members were interested to note the high quality of sika trophies from the New Forest and from Wareham Forest in Dorset. They also saw the herd of Formosan sika bred by John Willett on his farm at Hockworthy in Devon.

Wednesday, 22 June saw the BDS and the Nature Conservancy Council get together at the London headquarters of the Royal Society of Arts for a joint Symposium entitled "Some Research on Deer and its Relationship to Management".

Contributors to the morning session, which was chaired by the Viscount of Arbuthnott, included Dr. J. Morton Boyd, Dr. T.H.T. Clutton Brock and Mr. R.J.T. Wheeler. Lord Dulverton chaired the

afternoon session, at which speakers included Dr. Brian Staines, Mr. Stephan Harding, Mr. R.C. Steele, Dr. Andrew Loudon, Dr. Josephine Pemberton, Mr. Innes Miller and Dr. Archie. McDiarmid.

Work by the Training Committee under the leadership of Cyril Wright on perfecting testing procedures for the Woodland Stalking Competence Certificate had reached a point by now at which it was deemed timely to arrange a Press conference to announce it to the public at large. This was held one day in July 1983 at Frilsham Manor in Berkshire, where we were generously hosted by Mrs. Susan Bertie and her daughter at what was judged to have been a highly successful event. For the first time ever a recognised method was now available for stalkers and would be stalkers, regardless of whether or not they were members of a specific organisation, to demonstrate their proficiency to the satisfaction of others.

By the early 1980s the work of the Federation of Deer Management Societies had developed to such a degree that it was felt necessary to enlist the services of a voluntary Coordinator. In the November, 1983 issue of *Deer* Rosa Young, Hon. Secretary of the Federation, announced the appointment of Jim Absalom a retired prison governor to fill this post.

Members of General Council attending a meeting of that body at Englefield at around this time, were taken to view a stable block located at Ufton Nervet, on the Englefield Estate, which was available for conversion as a permanent Headquarters for the British Deer Society. The proposal was to re equip part of it as office accommodation, another part as a library and a third part as a museum. This was by no means the first such offer to have been made. One was of premises at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, as suitably central a location as could possibly have been wished for, had there been the will to follow it up. Another extremely generous offer was of a house at Tewin in Hertfordshire, where artist member Michael Clark lived, but this also was not followed through. Efforts were also made at one stage to persuade the powers that be at Windsor to allow the use of premises in Windsor Great Park as our headquarters, but nothing came of this. In the meantime, BDS Headquarters at any one juncture, was wherever the then Secretary or Director happened to live.

In its unimproved state, the stable block at Ufton Nervet was visually unimpressive. A lot of work would clearly have to be done, and a lot of money spent, to transform this sow's ear of a building into the silk purse that was envisaged. This at least was my own reaction knowing almost nothing about such matters though, I kept my thoughts to myself while listening attentively to the enthusiastic comments of some of my fellow Council members. To look this apparent gift horse in the mouth seemed somewhat churlish. Anyway, it was decided to take up the offer, and the die was cast accordingly. Donations from members towards the cost of the enterprise were invited and some Branches offered financial help from their own resources.

In the midst of all this excitement came news that Geoffrey Proudman would cease to be BDS Director as from 30 March, 1984, on which date the Society's headquarters, to be known as The British Deer Society Centre, would be relocated to Green Lane, Ufton Nervet the erstwhile stable block duly refurbished and reborn with a completely new identity.

Our new Director was to be Norman John Foll, B.Sc. (Agric.), who had spent his professional life in



various executive positions on the fringes of agriculture with animal food manufacturers and other commercial organisations. Aged 59 and divorced, with two grown up sons and a daughter, John Foll, as we knew him, skippered sailing craft as a hobby, and was about to sail the Atlantic when news reached him of his BDS appointment.

Another new appointment, dating from 1 January 1984, was of Richard Prior as Technical Adviser, a post in which he was well equipped to offer an informed opinion on practical matters of all descriptions concerning deer. One such was a draft Order dated 8 February, 1984 by the Secretary of State for Scotland amending close seasons in Scotland for sika and roe deer and introducing close seasons, for the first time, for hybrid red/sika deer. The BDS was given an opportunity to comment on these proposals, which emanated from the Red Deer Commission. They were intended to bring close seasons for sika stags, and the new ones for red/sika hybrids, into line with those already existing for red deer, and to shorten by one month the respective close seasons for roebucks and roe does to allow more time for essential culling. The changes embodied in the Order were due to come into force on 1 May 1984.

Education has always played a vital part in the work of the BDS and has been dealt with by different people in different ways at different periods. After retiring as General Secretary, Jim Taylor Page was in his element as Director of Education, running residential courses designed especially for young people, in the field and in accommodation provided for the purpose near where he lived in the Lake District. When he gave this up in 1980 Raymond Chaplin B.Sc replaced him. In 1983 Jeanette Lawton, of the Midlands Branch, took over responsibility for the Society's Youth Education Programme, a task she pursued with vigour and for which she recruited a team of helpers. For many years she was active in this and in various other fields as one of those dedicated individuals on whom all successful voluntary organisations primarily depend for pursuing and attaining the objectives they set themselves.

## 21. Ufton Nervet

MOVING IN DAY at Ufton Nervet, 30 March 1984, marked a watershed in our history. John Foll then formally took over the reins from Geoffrey Proudman as our Director, his first task being to oversee the transfer of BDS property from his predecessor's home, near Warminster in Wiltshire, to the erstwhile stable block in Berkshire which was to be our base from now on and upon which high expectations were placed.

The events of 30 March and its immediate aftermath were graphically recorded by John Foll in an illustrated article in *Deer* Vol. 6, No. 4 (July, 1984). He and his all female staff moved into a building where conversion work was by no means complete. There were still windows and doors to be fitted and heating arrangements were hardly equal to the needs of a chilly April.

Having worked with two Directors as Secretary and general factotum, Rita Gray extended her nine years of service to the British Deer Society for the extra time necessary to settle in at the new Deer Centre. With Rita came her daughter, Heather Whitmore, who had worked hard for five years as Membership Secretary, seeing membership increase by more than one fifth and persuading many to sign deeds of covenant, thereby increasing the value of their subscriptions to the Society. Both shivered in freezing temperatures during their first two weeks at Ufton Nervet.

Staff recruitment locally proved difficult because of prevailing high salaries and full employment, but eventually Mary Edwards joined the strength as Director's Secretary, Jenny Evans as Membership Secretary and Annette Watkinson as Sales Manager, all of them on a part time basis.

Early teething troubles notwithstanding, a mood of optimism not far removed from euphoria prevailed. John Foll embarked with obvious gusto on his new career with the BDS, and if this was tintured with anxiety for any reason whatsoever, he took exceptional pains to conceal it. Money from members was still flowing in to help fund the new Deer Centre, and there remained plenty of scope for its use.

The last weekend in April brought members to Petworth in West Sussex for the 1984 AGM and related events. Our hosts were Lord and Lady Egremont, whose deer manager, Richard I.B. Price, made sure there was plenty to interest us. On the Saturday, 28 April there was a Symposium on subjects ranging from the National Trust, our Society's role in education and the particular contribution made to this by the Midlands Branch to internal parasites in deer and management of the deer at Petworth. We were shown some of the exceptionally high quality trophies produced by Petworth fallow and roe deer, and saw numerous Petworth Park fallow in the flesh.

In an article for *Deer*, Cyril Wright confirmed arrangements whereby BDS Branches would be responsible for undertaking tests for stalkers and John Childs would act as Secretary on behalf of the Training Committee. From 1 August 1984 testing would be open to all and no longer restricted, as hitherto, to members of the BDS, BASC and the Game Conservancy. The magazine *Guns Review* had adopted a hostile attitude towards testing and correspondence between Cyril Wright and *Guns*

Review Editor Cohn Greenwood had failed to resolve this disagreement.

Troubles much more serious than any differences of opinion about offering tests for stalkers were looming menacingly, however. Doubling as the Society's Treasurer, the Director had hardly settled in at the new Deer Centre with his staff when he took a good look at the books and was gravely concerned by what he found there. He conveyed his misgivings to the Chairman and produced figures which made it clear that the BDS had overstretched itself and was heading for financial disaster unless steps were urgently taken to put matters right.

An emergency meeting of General Council on 12 August hears from our President, Lord Dulverton, of the financial crisis that had arisen. "A serious error of judgment" over the Society's ability to meet the cost of conversion work at the new Centre had put us firmly in the red. We therefore had to decide whether to press on with the still incomplete conversion or "to cut our losses and move out".

Arising out of the discussion which followed, an emergency Committee under the Chairmanship of Cyril Wright was appointed to arrange Budgets for the remainder of 1984 and for 1985 and to consider and make recommendations about the future of the Deer Centre, bearing in mind the need for the Society to have a Headquarters of its own.

On 15 October the President reported to General Council that Budgets had been drawn up and that an independent survey of the building at Ufton Nervet made it clear that much greater expenditure than was earlier anticipated would be needed to make it suitable for our purposes and that this cost would be well in excess of our total resources. Alternative accommodation would therefore have to be sought.

An extraordinary meeting of General Council at Lord Dulverton's home on 4 November approved the Budgets and the formation of a new Management Committee comprising the Society Chairman, the Area Chairmen of Scotland and England, a Financial Adviser and the Director, empowered to take executive decisions and responsible to General Council. Although General Council was ultimately responsible for having decided to go ahead with the ill-fated Deer Centre, the Society Chairman and Vice Chairman felt they had a particular individual responsibility and had resigned. This was accepted with reluctance, and a replacement Chairman was needed.

The President having written to all the Vice Presidents inviting their suggestions as to how the crisis should be resolved, Sir Dudley Forwood, Bt., had responded offering whatever help he could. This timely offer being gratefully accepted, Sir Dudley was appointed acting Chairman pending the next AGM, and he set to work straightaway helping to steer the Society out of troubled waters to a happier and safer future.

On a happier note, in the November, 1984 issue of Deer John Childs, Training Committee Test Secretary, was able to report a total of 94 people who had so far successfully passed the qualifying test for the Woodland Stalker's Competence Certificate.

A sad item of news in early 1985 was of the sudden death in February that year of David Percy, one of those who had worked so hard for the BDS in its formative period. He rendered sterling service as Assistant Editor of Deer, was Chairman of Wessex Branch in its early days and was also

a member of General Council.

A strong man in more ways than one, David was struck down in his prime by a crippling spinal disorder, which reduced his physical stature by several inches. David and his wife, Marion, suffered a grievous loss with the death from leukaemia of their son Robert in his early 'teens, and not long afterwards had a third daughter. David retired as a Forestry Commission forester two years before his death at the age of 62.

Deer Vol. 6, No. 7 recorded the recent deaths of three other deer world notables: Andy Morrissey at the age of nearly 80; Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Wallace widow of world traveller, sportsman and author H. Frank Wallace; and H.B. Salter, a Devonian, one of whose chief delights in life was watching the roe deer on his farm east of Exeter. "H.B." joined the original Deer Group after reading about its activities in a local paper in 1955, and used to turn up; leather helmeted, on his motorcycle combination, at meets all over Britain, including Scotland. He was a one-off character of the kind without which no Society is complete. Almost a centenarian, Mrs. Wallace hosted many a Midlands Branch meeting at the home which has been in her family for nearly 400 years and from which she and her husband had adventured near and far from the pre World War I period until Frank's death in 1962.

Andy Morrissey was very much a one-off character himself. At the age of 16 he commanded the Cork Brigade of the I.R.A. and during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) he served in an Irish unit fighting on the side of General Franco. His greatest passions were game shooting and stalking. Working in close collaboration with the BDS, he founded the Irish Deer Society and served at different times as its Chairman and its President. He also worked hard to secure the passage through the Dail Eirann of the all-important Wildlife Act of 1976, giving legal protection to deer and much other Irish fauna.

Creating and maintaining links with appropriate bodies and individuals overseas kept the BDS International Liaison Committee busy in several ways simultaneously. One of these was arranging trips abroad for organised parties of BDS members, while another was hosting visitors keen to learn about deer in Britain. In April 1985 it fell to the lot of Peter Baillie to lead a party of some 140 French sportsmen and their ladies on an organised tour of some of the highlights of the deer scene in southern England. Visits were made to the New Forest, deer country in Dorset, Warnham and Petworth Parks in Sussex and Woburn Park in Bedfordshire among a number of other places where local experts were wheeled out to share their knowledge with the Continentals, Peter's franglais being ably supplemented by Eric de Wykerslooth, a Belgian who spoke good French and was pressed into service as a translator. Much was learned by the organizers, which was to prove of future value.

## 22. Child Beale

JOHN FOLL, OUR DIRECTOR, put a brave face on his interpretation in July 1985 Deer of what he hoped were future prospects for a British Deer Society badly traumatized by recent events. Much of his purpose was clearly to help sustain the morale of members at critical point in BDS history by giving emphasis to factors which hopefully promised better things. Indeed, his carefully worded report was freely peppered with the word "hopefully" and one could understand his caution.

It seems that the Englefield Estate and its managing agent Ken McDiarmid in particular, spared no effort to help find solutions to the Ufton Nervet problem, which would not necessitate the Society packing up and pulling out. The die had been cast however, and the difficult decision had been taken to cut our losses in the wake of what was seen as a disastrous error of judgment.

The search for other accommodation was begun without delay. At the same time efforts were made to reduce expenses wherever possible, including the cost of printing our journal. A favourable quotation from a printer at Callington in Cornwall resulted in Deer being printed there as from the March 1985 issue.

The search for a suitable new home eventually led us to the Thames side property of the Child Beale Wildlife Trust at Lower Basildon, near Pangbourne, west of Reading. Here a scenic pleasure park drew visitors from many miles around and the World Pheasant Association had its international headquarters. A building of Swedish pine in which the World Pheasant Association's offices were located also contained spare accommodation available to the BDS and it was agreed to take advantage of this fortunate offer of premises so short a distance from Ufton Nervet and from the homes of Society staff.

At our much delayed 1985 AGM Sir Dudley Forwood, Bt., was voted into office as BDS Chairman and Major Hugh Oliver-Bellasis as Vice Chairman, possibly as an interim step towards his later becoming Chairman, as was visualized at the time. Having left the Army eight years previously and worked for two years as a wine salesman, HOB, as we came to know him, joined his brother to help run their large family farm at Manydown, west of Basingstoke. An energetic, forceful and influential man in the farming world, our 40 year old new Vice Chairman had decided views of his own on how the Society should develop, one of these being to aim for a substantial increase in membership to increase our influence nationally and help finance important projects such as extended deer research. Hugh was a shooting acquaintance of Cyril Wright, and it was Cyril, who was well aware of Hugh's talents and drive, and had persuaded him to offer himself as a candidate for the Vice Chairmanship of the British Deer Society.

After packing up all our possessions at Ufton Nervet on 8 July 1985 the move to Lower Basildon was made the following day and on the morning of 10 July our new Headquarters were opened for business. Revenues were just about equal to keeping us going for the remainder of the year, a generous donation from the Dulverton Trust having done much to stave off threatened bankruptcy.

A substantial legacy from the late Mrs. D.G. Johnstone, widow of Gerald Johnstone who had been one of our Vice Presidents, had also helped to keep us afloat financially at this time.

There was no National Symposium in 1985, but on 25 May a Wildlife Photographic Symposium was held at Court Hall, Hockworthy, Devon, by courtesy of John and Joan Willett.

The November 1985 issue of *Deer* recorded the death on 1 September that year of Judith Rowe, D.Sc.Dip.Cons., M.I.Biol. Head of the Forestry Commission's Wildlife Branch, a research unit based at Alice Holt in Hampshire. Born in 1938, Judy's death from cancer after a two year battle against the disease was a shock to her many friends in the BDS and elsewhere who had learned to respect her incisive intellect and her wide ranging knowledge of deer and other mammals which was so freely dispensed to our members on many occasions.

Four of us travelled to Switzerland to attend the biennial meeting of the International Sika Society from 4-8 September 1985. The meeting was based on a village near Schaffhausen, close to the German border in an area colonised by sika which have spread there from south west Germany. We saw specimen heads of sika and other deer species at a trophy exhibition held in a village just inside Germany, listened to papers on various aspects of sika natural history and saw red deer, chamois and marmots in the Swiss National Park.

The year 1985 was one of those rare periods when spontaneously contributed articles for *Deer* needed supplementing. I therefore invited nine stalker members to write on their personal choice of stalking rifles and why they made their particular choice. The resultant articles helped fill a gap and, I hope, provided some worthwhile reading.

The March 1986 issue of *Deer*, with its encouraging report from our Director on progress and prospects at our new Thames side Headquarters, was overtaken by an event, which shocked and dismayed us all. One day in early March John Foll met me off a train at Mortimer station, south of Reading, and drove me to Callington in Cornwall for a discussion with our new printers. All went well, and I was driven back that evening to be dropped off at the same station to complete my journey home by rail.

Two days later John Foll telephoned to ask if I had suffered any ill effects from the lunch we had both enjoyed in Cornwall as guests of the printers, he having had a major upset the previous evening which had caused him to pass out in the toilet. I had had no cause to regret my lunch, but John quickly ended up in hospital. A malignant brain tumour was discovered and a course of radiation therapy embarked upon.

In view of the serious circumstances at a critical juncture for the Society, John Foll resigned as our Director. By a stroke of luck a successor was found in the person of Lt.Col. Charles Blandy, who had just retired from the Army and was able, to take over at once as Director. However, his tenure of office was brief. He decided he was unsuitable for the requirements of the post, and resigned with effect from 3 October 1986. The Management Committee decided not to appoint another Director, for the time being at least, and to leave it to Headquarters staff to run the office.

John Foll recovered his health sufficiently to write an account for *Deer* of preparations he

had instigated to accommodate a small deer collection at Child Beale. I called upon him at his home near Maidenhead and found him keen to resume work for the Society, at least on a part time basis, but the Management Committee decided not to re engage him as Director, at least until it became clear how long lasting his health improvement was likely to be.

Meanwhile, at the AGM on 12 April, 1986 Sir Dudley Forwood relinquished his brief occupancy of the Chair and was succeeded, as had been foreseen, by Hugh Oliver-Bellasis. The following day took BDS members to Windsor Great Park to see the recently re established herd of red deer, entirely of wild Highland origin and responding well to a kindlier southern climate and habitat. Hugh lost no time in beating the drum for the substantially increased membership he saw as essential for the sponsorship of scientific research to seek solutions to management problems. His reports in *Deer* were pithy and always very much to the point, with no words wasted on putting a gloss on whatever message he wished to convey.

"Wildlife and its Environment" was the theme of the 1986 Nuremberg Exhibition of hunting, which Peter Clarke of our International Liaison Committee reported for *Deer*. He compared the magnificence of displays put on by many European countries from the Communist bloc and otherwise, with the poverty of that from Britain, where BASC mounted a modest exhibit but the BDS was not represented. He felt our financial problems should not have stood in the way of our presence, and that our international standing was the poorer for our absence.

In the spring of 1986 the South West England Branch of the BDS was invited together with representatives of other relevant organisations including the League Against Cruel Sports, to participate in a debate on whether or not the hunting of red deer with hounds should be permitted to continue on land owned by Somersetshire County Council in the Quantock Hills. It was pointed out that the BDS as a Registered Charity, was debarred from advocating changes in the law or involving itself in political matters generally. However, in a paper published some time previously the South West England Branch had stated its view that it saw no reason to change the law on hunting, bearing in mind that all methods of deer control essential for preventing deer from increasing to a level where they caused unacceptable damage to human interests, were liable to cause a limited amount of suffering. Our Chairman subsequently visited the stag hunting areas of north Devon and west Somerset to check out the position for himself, and found no reason to dissent from the views expressed by our local Branch, subject always to keeping the matter under review in the light of developments.

*Deer* Vol. 6, No. 10 recorded the tragic death from a car accident of M.J. (Morley) Penistan who, as Assistant Conservator of Forests in South-West England in our Society's earlier years did much to demonstrate that deer and trees can coexist and that deer have a rightful place in our forests. Morley Penistan also helped to organise some of our most successful field meets. A particular memory of my own is of Morley's comment on the fact that roe from a recent reintroduction were now spreading into a hitherto roeless Wales. He said: "I wish people wouldn't do this sort of thing", well knowing, I suspect, who was responsible on this occasion.

With the expansion of the Society to a point where its administration could no longer be handled solely by volunteers, employed Headquarters staff has played a vital role in this sphere. In

autumn 1986 there was a Headquarters staff of three. Patricia Steele, a former nurse, worked two days a week handling sales. Annette Watkinson, a young mother with an Honours Degree in Social Sciences from Southampton University, worked mornings only updating membership records, which were now computerised, and Gillian Murray, who had worked in Switzerland and France as a bilingual secretary, was at the office four days a week as Personal Assistant to the Chairman. Gillian served for a number of years as a crucial cog in the machine of office management and general administration.

The position of Hon. Veterinary Adviser having become vacant following the resignation of Archie McDiarmid as BDS Chairman in 1985, in 1986 V.J.A. (Victor) Manton, M.R.C.V.S., F.I.Biol. Curator of Whipsnade Zoo, kindly agreed to take over this responsibility for the British Deer Society.

In the Queen's Birthday Honours for 1986, Lea MacNally our Scottish Editor was awarded the B.E.M. in recognition of his work for Scottish wildlife and its conservation. This award was widely welcomed as being richly deserved by a man who, through his books, articles, lectures and thorough hard work, had done so much to focus public attention upon the wildlife wonders of the Highlands and their need for suitable management.

Preparations for the deer Collection at Child Beale having been completed, the first deer to arrive were some muntjac caught up for the purpose by BDS Wessex Branch members. These were followed shortly afterwards by red and fallow deer kindly donated to the Society by well-wishers, and the Collection became a popular attraction with the visiting public.



## 23. Happier times

THE 1987 AGM WAS HELD at Castle Douglas in Dumfries and Galloway, and was arranged highly efficiently for the weekend of 4-5 April by our South West Scotland Branch.

The chief business of the weekend was the relinquishment of office as BDS President by Lord Dulverton and the election in his place of Lord Ramsay (now Earl of Dalhousie in succession to his father), a major Highland landowner and deer forest proprietor. Lord Dulverton had undoubtedly saved the Society from bankruptcy and probable dissolution by his intervention at the time of the 1985 financial crisis, for which thanks and appreciation were widely expressed by members.

Lord Ramsay, "Jamie" to those around him spoke of the warm hospitality he had already received from members, his trepidation about stepping into the Presidential breach and of his wholehearted support for the Society's ongoing work for the welfare of deer throughout the country. He impressed members from first acquaintance by his unassuming manner and his down to earth approach to his new responsibilities.

Another development was the voting into office as BDS Vice Chairman of Jeanette Lawton, a relatively new star in the Society's firmament who, along with her Midlands Branch colleagues, had set up for the Society an educational programme with very little outside help.

At a meeting of General Council, which followed the AGM, the Management Committee's term of office was extended for a further year, and we were informed that BDS membership was now in excess of 4,000.

The Symposium produced two major contributions on the problematical red deer of Galloway and another on the Red Deer Commission and its work. All were closely and personally involved with their subject.

The Society Dinner on the Saturday evening began ceremonially with the piping in of the haggis. Tony Waterston, Chairman and Hon. Secretary combined of the BDS in Scotland, made an eloquent speech of thanks to Lord Dulverton, who was accompanied by Lady Dulverton, for his outstanding service to the British Deer Society, and presented him with a Caithness Glass bowl engraved with the figures of the six British wild deer species. Also suitably engraved were the brandy decanter and six brandy glasses, which formed another part of the Society's gift to its retiring President, with a book on shooting and conservation to follow when published later.

Before heading for home on the Sunday we did a whistle stop tour of Galloway, visiting Clatteringshaws Deer Museum and viewing red deer and wild goats enclosed for the public to watch at close quarters.

A sad blow for many people was the death in the early hours of 31 May 1987 of Lt.Col. Cyril Wright, who had been my Assistant Editor since 1975 and had also rendered outstanding service as Training Committee Chairman, in which role he had been primarily responsible for the framing, introduction

and general acceptance of voluntary stalker training and testing. Quiet-spoken, diplomatic and a man of supreme common sense and patient determination to overcome obstacles and to find solutions to difficulties, Cyril could always be relied upon to offer wise counsel and support, for which I had frequent cause to be grateful.

Born in 1916 in Bedfordshire, where he was educated, Cyril knew his wife, Millicent, almost from childhood. At the outbreak of World War II he joined the Army, serving in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, and travelled to various parts of the world including the Far East, Ceylon, Canada and the United States. At the end of his Service career he trained in management and moved into commerce from which he took early retirement following a serious ankle injury which crippled him permanently. He later endured heart bypass surgery and a spinal condition, which caused him much discomfort, mitigated as far as possible by Millicent's care as a trained nurse. At Cyril's funeral in Aldershot there was standing room only for many who attended, including myself.

For several years prior to Cyril's death I had a second Assistant Editor, a much younger man, Simon Rallison, who was employed in Oxford by a scientific publisher. Editorial meetings mostly took place at Cyril's home, which was most convenient for all three of us. However, Cyril sometimes motored down to bring completed work to me, and on the day before his death he phoned to apologise for not feeling well enough to make one of these journeys, which was typical of the gentleman that Cyril was.

Apropos of tests for stalkers, Tony Waterson informed readers of Deer Vol. 7, No. 3 of proposals by Scottish Area Council to introduce a Hill Stalker's Proficiency Test to operate in parallel with the test for the Woodland Stalker's Competence Certificate, and were making good progress, drafting it and ironing out various problems, which had cropped up along the way. There had been resistance however, from professional stalkers of long experience who feared that failure to acquit themselves creditably in such a test might jeopardise their continued employment as professionals. Similar resistance had been encountered and largely overcome when introducing the test for woodland stalkers, it is worth noting.

Moving on from deerstalking to deer management in the widest sense, Wing Commander A.J. (Andrew) de Nahlik of the BDS Training Committee was directing his efforts at this time to persuading agricultural colleges and other appropriate centres of learning to offer courses on the management of deer, which would equip students to integrate this with other aspects of estate management in general. He was having some success despite crowded syllabi making it difficult for some agricultural colleges to expand their academic capacity.

At the Royal Show, Stoneleigh in Warwickshire on 7 July 1987 our new President, Lord Ramsay and our Chairman, Hugh Oliver Bellasis were among guests present at the presentation by Sir David Montgomery, Chairman of the Forestry Commission, of the Balfour-Browne Trophy, awarded annually by the Forestry Commission in consultation with the BDS for outstanding services to the conservation of wild deer, to our Past President Lord Dulverton. On receiving this prestigious award, Lord Dulverton recalled how his father and the wildlife artist "BB" (the late Denys Watkins Pitchford) were fellow undergraduates at Oxford where "BB" had sketched wildlife in his notebooks while attending lectures. One of "BB's" drawings, later rescued from oblivion, formed the basis

of the model of the red deer stag which was the centrepiece of the Trophy bequeathed by Vincent Balfour-Browne via his sister for the purpose described above.

As a strong organisation in its own right while also an integral part of the BDS, the Services Branch held an annual weekend gathering at Bovington Camp, in Dorset which combined its AGM, a Symposium and field excursions on Ministry of Defence land in that neighbourhood. The 1987 Symposium, held in the Carver Hall at Bovington, produced two talks on deer management and another on the handling of venison, the substance of which was later published in *Deer*.

On 30 January 1988, at the Sue Ryder Home at Nettlebed in Oxfordshire, the death occurred of our late Director, N.J.Foll at the age of 63. He was diagnosed just over two years previously as suffering from a malignant brain tumour. This obliged him shortly afterwards to resign his Directorship when he had just been getting into his stride following the financial crisis of 1985, about which he warned General Council before its magnitude was fully realised. The Society was represented at a memorial requiem mass for John Foll at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Maidenhead on 4 February.

The Society's 25th Anniversary, on 24 February 1988, passed unnoticed by almost everyone until I reminded members of it in the March issue of *Deer*. Will our Golden Jubilee be allowed to slip by, unremarked at the actual time like its Silver predecessor? Somehow I think not.

March 1988 *Deer* was also the last for which Simon Rallison was able to help me as Assistant Editor before taking up a new career in the U.S.A. By great good fortune I found a worthy successor in the person of Michael Baxter Brown, a Lowland Scot who seemed determined to martyr himself by taking on ever more spare timework for the BDS. He was already deer Correspondent for the Training Committee, no sinecure as I can testify from my own experience, and Chairman of our South East England Branch, in addition to which he had volunteered himself as Co coordinator for a Park Deer Symposium organised jointly by the BDS and Manchester Polytechnic's Department of Biological Sciences and due to be held on 6-7 April 1988. He was also employed as Superintendent of Richmond Park and Bushy Park with their respective herds of deer.

I was also glad to welcome back Lt.Col.J.W.(John) Place as Irish Editor, having recruited him to help in this way in 1972 while I was on a visit to Ireland. John had taken a rest from the job after eight years, having been succeeded by Tony Dempsey, Liam Nolan and R.C.G. Clotworthy for varying periods over the following eight years, during which time the Irish Deer Society had maintained itself and its Branches with reasonable success as the all Ireland body to which to refer all matters concerning deer.

The Hartnoll Country House Hotel in the Exe Valley north of Tiverton was the venue for the Society's 1988 AGM weekend, which took place in late March. The AGM itself was held on 26 March, one of the principal items of business being a new BDS Constitution, presented by J.H.B. (Pat) Blackett as Chairman of the Working Party charged with its drafting and final preparation. The new Constitution's main purpose was to validate the functions of the new Management Committee to the satisfaction of the Charity Commission.

General Council would be slimmed down and meet once annually unless additionally convened and

would be empowered to delegate day to day management and decision making to the Management Committee while retaining overall control of Society affairs.

The new Constitution was approved by unanimous vote with one abstention (John Hotchkis, who felt too much power, would be devolved from General Council by the management structure being altered as proposed.) At the meeting of General Council, which followed the AGM, John Hotchkis announced his resignation from the Committee on which he had sat prior to the formation of the new Management Committee, and this was accepted.

On the Saturday afternoon talks were given by Yves Lecocq, Secretary General of the Federation des Associations des Chasseurs de C.E.E. (F.A.C.E.), by E.R. (Dick) Lloyd, Chairman of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, and David Stewart of the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation's Deer Panel. All three were Guests at the Society Dinner that evening, at which local venison was on the menu.

Dick Lloyd conducted a Sunday morning motor safari on a scenic tour of Exmoor, which gave us excellent views of red deer without once setting foot on the ground. Another popular outdoor venue was John Willett's home at Hockworthy, where Formosan sika, hog deer, muntjac and Chinese water deer could all be seen in the deer enclosures, while his ungulate trophy museum was a further attraction.

On 23 March 1988 the death occurred at Reindeer House, in the Cairngorms, of Dr. E.J. Lindgren Utsi at the age of 83. Dr. Ethel Lindgren and her husband, Mikel Utsi, were co founders of The Reindeer Company of the United Kingdom and were responsible for reintroducing reindeer to Scotland after World War II following 800 years of absence. She was one of those larger than life individuals who will never take "no" for an answer if it can possibly be helped. The flourishing reindeer herd in the Highlands, successfully established after a host of initial problems, are a living tribute to the achievements of a strong willed woman and her husband. Ethel Lindgren seemed full of vitality when I had lunch as her guest in Cambridge only a short time before she died.

The BDS Photographic Committee had been promoting deer photography by members for many years, in particular by an Annual Photographic Competition with different classes for various types of work, and quality prizes have been offered for winning entries. Chairmanship of the Photographic Committee has been in a number of different hands, most recently those of John Willett. Having served in this capacity for several years, he felt that the time had come for a change. His successor Ron Perkins, stepped into his place with equal enthusiasm for encouraging good photography, backed up by many ideas of his own as to what the key constituents are.

As well as administering the WSCC tests which were attracting increasing numbers of candidates, the Training Committee, now with John Childs as Chairman, had recently piloted an Advanced Stalkers' Test, and of 25 "guinea pig" entrants for the first trial run, 17 were successful. A number of criticisms were made. These would be studied and modifications made where considered advisable.

Held on the Floors Castle Estate, near Kelso in the Scottish Borders, the 1988 CLA Game Fair was the wettest ever obliging visitors to slosh their way around in mud and water almost up to their

knees. Spread over three dismal days in late July, this annual jamboree included a BDS exhibit professionally designed by Raymond Chaplin to publicise the Society to the best possible advantage.

The principal prize in the BDS Raffle was a stalking rifle donated by Sir Malcolm Guthrie, Bt., together with a scope sight generously provided by John Brinkley, U.K. Sales Manager for Swarovski.

The Duke of Roxburgh, whose family own Floors Castle, drew the prize winning raffle tickets.

Two notable awards in 1988 were to two Forestry Commission men who had rendered outstanding service to the conservation and management of wild deer. F.A. (Fred) Courtier, who had succeeded Herbie Fooks as the Commission's Game Warden for England and Wales and had trained many Wildlife Rangers in the finer points of deer management, was the recipient that year of the Balfour-Browne Trophy, presented to him by Forestry Commission Director General Gwyn Francis to mark Fred's retirement at the age of 60. In the Queen's Birthday Honours Senior Ranger Eric Masters, based at Wareham in Dorset and with an unsurpassed knowledge of sika deer, was awarded the British Empire Medal at the age of 62 for his work with these and other deer species.

Within the Society, in accordance with a decision at the AGM, General Council had instituted the award of Fellowships of the BDS to members who had rendered long and exceptionally valuable service to the society. The first recipients of this award were Lord Dulverton, Major W.G. ("Sandy") Gordon and Ken MacArthur, B.E.M. It is worth noting that this development had been recommended originally by Sandy Gordon, a past Chairman of Scottish Area Council, who resigned his previously awarded Vice Presidency on being so honoured a practice now universally followed by subsequent Fellows. The award of Fellowships was intended to supersede the creation of new Vice-Presidents.

A man who came to deer and stalking through an earlier passion for wildfowling in his native Cumbria was Alec Rogers, who later lived at Scarborough and became well known for his interest in the roe deer of that part of Yorkshire. He also served as Secretary of the BDS Yorkshire Branch at a time when the branch was experiencing financial and other difficulties. His early death on 1 July 1988 at the age of 59 was mourned by many who had known him as a driving force for good deer management and appreciation of these animals.

The BDS was one of the chief sponsors of a research project on red deer and forestry, an all-important subject about to be looked into at this time by Dr. Tim Clutton-Brock of the Large Mammals Research Institute at Cambridge. The study was to be conducted over a period of 18 months.

The growing burden of administrative work for the BDS Scottish area having been seen as requiring the services of a paid part time Secretary, the vacancy was advertised in *Deer*. The successful applicant was Major Hugh Rose, who, having retired from the Army was appointed to the post on 14 September 1988 and remains our Scottish Secretary at the time of writing.

Four papers from the Symposium on Management and Conservation of Park Deer, staged at Manchester Polytechnic on 6-7 April, 1988 were published in *Deer* Vol. 7, No.7 in November, 1988.

At its September meeting the Management Committee set down rules for "Deer Control Societies and Deer Management Groups" wishing to affiliate to the BDS. These included an annual subscription of £25.00, encouragement for stalkers and other members to become members of the BDS and that their Secretary should submit to the BDS National Secretary the names of all Accredited Stalkers, a map of the area covered by the Control Society or Group, and the name, address and telephone number of the Secretary himself. Control Societies and Groups "should be an integral part" of their local BDS Branch and be represented at its meetings. In return, Control Societies, and Groups could be more promptly informed of control measures sought in their areas by enquirers to BDS HQ and could have access to the Technical Adviser to the BDS.

This directive from the fledgling BDS Management Committee bypassed the Federation of Deer Management Societies set up a few years earlier largely on the initiative of John Hotchkis, a former BDS Vice Chairman to monitor and co ordinate the operating methods and general activities of BDS affiliated Deer Management Societies and to act as a conduit between them and the BDS itself. No reference was made in the directive to any subscription that might be paid already by individual Deer Management Societies to support the work of their Federation, or indeed to anything else pertaining to the Federation and its pre-existing functions. If the Federation was deemed to be moribund or otherwise no longer relevant, it is curious that its representation on General Council continued to be noted, without being questioned, in our journal until March 1993.

The importance of increased membership to help fund increased research and training was the main theme of the Chairman's Report in March 1989 Deer. He criticised members who make no apparent effort to lend their personal support to the achievement of Society aims, emphasising that standing still, in membership numbers or otherwise, is a route to slow and certain death for an organisation like our own. On a happier note, he congratulated Hugh Rose and Richard Prior on being awarded Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowships, in Hugh's case to study wild deer control techniques in New Zealand and German forests and in Richard's to study roe deer in the Soviet Union and Poland.

Elsewhere in the same issue was news that Rex Whitta, Head Ranger of Thetford Forest's 7,000 mainly coniferous acres in East Anglia, had been made an M.B.E. This well merited award, announced in the Queen's New Year Honours, was in recognition of Rex's outstanding work on positive, modern deer management in the Thetford area over a 30 year period, exactly half of Rex's lifetime.

Another important matter dealt with in the March 1989 issue of Deer was The Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988, which tightened up restrictions on the ownership and use of rifled weapons following the so called Hungerford massacre a short time previously.

The BDS had been criticised by the "gun lobby" and some others for not upholding the continued use of semi automatic and pump action rifles under the new legislation. Our answer was that self loading rifles were not strictly necessary for shooting deer and that the use of them by ablebodied stalkers encouraged wasteful, inaccurate shooting. The Society had suggested to Government that an exception might be made in the case of disabled stalkers whose performance might be handicapped by having to reload a single shot rifle by using a bolt. However, this was not proceeded with, and the Society felt it unwise not to make some concession to public feeling on a highly

emotive issue.

Under John Childs's hands on Chairmanship, the Training Committee was kept increasingly busy administering, monitoring and publicising courses for stalkers, deer managers and range officers. A Hill Stalking Test had been devised and Hill Stalking courses run in Morvern, Argyllshire by Lt Cdr I.P.H. Meiklejohn were proving popular. The widespread acceptance of the Woodland Stalkers' Test was confirmed by the fact that by early spring 1989 some 600 people were holders of the Woodland Stalker's Competence Certificate.

A matter creasing many a brow in the BDS at this time was the threat from Brussels to introduce a new Game Meat Regulation, binding upon all member states of the European Union, tightening up hygiene requirements to an extent impossible for most stalkers to achieve. This found support in the U.K. from some public health departments, notably that of Arun District Council in West Sussex, which sought to promote far more stringent standards for the handling and storage of all game meat, including venison, than had hitherto been required. The BDS was holding meetings with other interested bodies in an effort to find a practical solution. The July 1989 issue of Deer (Vol. 7, No 9) contained an article by John Adams, Meat Inspector for Arun District Council, describing a study in which he had been involved on behalf of Arun Council in conjunction with the Forestry Commission into the health of deer culled over a period of years to determine their fitness for human consumption, and the resultant measures deemed necessary to safeguard the health of consumers.

Based on Stone House Hotel on the fringe of The Potteries in Staffordshire, the 1989 AGM Weekend was organised by the Midlands Branch with the efficiency we had come to expect from that quarter. At the business meeting on the Saturday morning Nigel Pickering, who had recently succeeded his brother John Roll Pickering, as Society Hon. Treasurer, gave a cautiously optimistic appraisal of our financial situation and immediate prospects.

After a break for coffee Midlands Branch Chairman Jeanette Lawton spoke of the education programme she had initiated locally with support from the superseded Manpower Services Commission. One of her team, Fran Parry, notably described the work she was doing but conveyed to her audience something of her special skill in communicating with the children who will be tomorrow's conservationists. Our Technical Adviser also presented a report. In the afternoon we visited Trentham where wild fallow watched us warily as we walked an area where 28,000 young trees has been planted through an initiative supported by Midlands Branch. More wild fallow were seen in the grounds of Shugborough Hall, where hard economics was balanced against the needs of conservation determining wildlife management policy.

At a Sunday morning meeting of General Council we learned that Jeanette Lawton's hard work for deer was to be recognised by her being awarded the Balfour-Browne Trophy this year. In the afternoon she led some of us on an unsuccessful wallaby watching walk in the Pennines on the Derbyshire Cheshire border, Peter Davenport led another party on a search for elusive red deer on high ground in Cheshire.

Wessex Branch organised the BDS exhibit for the 1989 Game Fair held at Stratfield Saye, the Duke of Wellington's home in north Hampshire. The Duke accompanied The Queen when she visited our

stand on the Friday, and Andrew de Nahlik explained our Exhibit to Her Majesty. We had many visitors to our stand and the sales team were kept busy throughout the three days of the event.

We learned that a generous grant by the Dulverton Trust to our Education Programme would enable the services of Fran Parry to be retained for a further year. A substantial monetary gift from Group Captain W.S.G. (Dick) Maydwell also gave a significant boost to our financial stability, we were told at the AGM. The BDS Game Fair Raffle also added usefully to our revenue, as did a Charity sales evening at Sotheby's, in which we participated in partnership with the Game Conservancy.

The BDS Services Branch Symposium, held as usual in the Carver Hall, Bovington Camp in Dorset, produced four excellent papers on various aspects of deer management, which were published later in *Deer*. These Branch Symposia became an important item in the calendars of a number of BDS members besides those in the Services Branch, well meriting being recorded in our journal.

The death of L.J. (Louis) Petyt on 6 December 1989 deprived the BDS of one of its most influential friends and members in continental Europe. Louis, a Belgian national, spoke and wrote faultless English, having learnt the language in early life as a child refugee during World War I. In World War 2 he served with the Belgian artillery and was wounded. After the military collapse he joined the Belgian Resistance. His passion for stalking brought him many times to Britain. He also owned a rural retreat and a hoofed game shoot near Liege in the Belgian Ardennes, to which many of his British friends were invited. After retiring from business he served as Secretary General of F.A.C.E., a position held later by Yves Lecocq.

The live capture of wild deer for commercial purposes is ethically unacceptable to some, but had nevertheless been increasingly practised in the case of red deer hinds and calves, mainly by the deer farming industry. On 11 December, 1989, at the Countryside Commission for Scotland's headquarters at Battleby, BDS (Scotland) organised a fact finding conference on the subject which speakers with practical experience on live capture from various angles presented their findings to an equally diverse audience.

When this conference was advertised, there was strong opposition from some members to the Society involving itself at all with so contentious a matter but Scottish Council decided that this was far too important an issue for BDS to ignore. As well as describing their own experiences, speakers emphasised precautions taken to ensure that minimal stress was caused to captured animals. Scottish red deer in the wild had to endure harsh Highland winters with indifferent quality grazing, often resulting in significant mortality, whilst those on deer farms, although they had lost their liberty, were well nourished, healthy, often playing among themselves, something almost never seen among red deer in winter.



## 24. The early 1990s

ONE OF THE FIRST EVENTS of note in the 1990s was a weekend Seminar on Training Education, and their interlocking importance as responsibilities to be shouldered by the British Deer Society. Organised by Training Committee Chairman John Childs, this was held at Larkhill in Wiltshire on 17-18 March and was a highly successful event. Another development at this time involving John Childs and his Committee was the merging of the Hill Stalker's Test with the one for stalkers, the combined test being targeted on the attainment of the National Stalker's Competence Certificate (NSCC). Testing would be relevant to whether an individual candidate would primarily be stalking on low ground or hill.

The Game Conservancy headquarters at Fordingbridge in Hampshire was the location for our AGM and associated events on the weekend of 31 March-1 April. At the business meeting we learned of heightened activity by the Society on a variety of fronts, both Europe wide and domestic. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food had taken careful note of our views on the proposed new version of the Game Meat Regulation and its implications for effective deer management, and it was hoped that a practical compromise would emerge. BDS membership had plateaued off at around 4,000 and strenuous efforts to increase this were continuing.

Then followed a meeting of General Council, and members not involved in this took the opportunity to enjoy a stroll around the riverside grounds of Burgate Manor, the Game Conservancy headquarters building.

After lunch Dick Potts of the Game Conservancy and some of his research team spoke on their work for deer and game management. This evoked some criticism by members who felt that the BDS should not concern itself with matters other than those concerning deer. Some viewed the entire weekend's proceedings as a not so subtle move towards some degree of union between the BDS and its current host organisation, not altogether without reason, as events was to prove. Several Game Conservancy personnel were guests at the BDS Annual Dinner.

Members who did not have to leave early enjoyed a Sunday morning walk in brilliant spring sunshine over nearby Martin Down National Nature Reserve, an expanse of unspoilt chalk country with a resident roe population and where fallow deer are not unknown.

During the weekend Raymond Chaplin's work for the BDS in various fields was recognised by his being made a Fellow of the British Deer Society, and BDS member Robin Williams was presented by our President Lord Ramsay, with the Dulverton Trophy, a beautiful piece of Caithness glassware awarded annually to a photographer, in this case for an article entitled "Photography without hides" in the November 1989 issue of Deer.

The serious overpopulation of red deer in the Scottish Highlands having caused concern for many years, a school of thought had arisen maintaining that drastic action was needed to counter resultant environmental damage. To safeguard the interests of deer forest owners while also

imposing an essential heavier cull, Scottish Landowners' Federation Chairman, Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington wrote to the Secretary of State for Scotland putting forward various proposals as to how this might be achieved to the satisfaction of all concerned and copied his letter to the BDS and others. Captain D.S. (David) Bowser, BDS Scottish Area Chairman, replied to this letter pointing out possible pluses and minuses of the S.L.F. proposals.

In his report for November 1990 Deer, BDS National Chairman Hugh Oliver-Bellasis was at pains to highlight the difficulties faced by deer managers in upland areas popular with walkers, who at present enjoyed unrestricted access throughout the year. He said a proliferation of National Parks, of which there had been rumours, would seriously exacerbate this problem.

HOB also noted that fewer people than usual had visited the stand, which the BDS experimentally shared with the Game Conservancy at the 1990 CLA Game Fair, but poor siting of the joint exhibit, could have been partially to blame.

Following the introduction by the Training Committee of Advanced Stalkers' Courses a matching Competence Test was devised, available only to W.S.C.C. holders and to stalkers whose basic experience and competence can be vouched for by an employer or other appropriate individual. Two five-day courses at the BDS Deer Management Centre in Stockbridge were geared to preparing candidates for the Advanced Stalker's Competence Certificate Test, and relevant Tests had since taken place.

A surprise move in 1990 was the closing down of the BDS Stalker Training Centre at Stockbridge, managed and run so efficiently for so many years by K.D. (Dieter) Dent, at whose hands and those of his team of knowledgeable lecturers very many of our members had been schooled in the basics of stalking and deer management. The Training Centre was relocated at the Sheaf of Arrows Hotel in Cranborne, Dorset, with our Technical Adviser Richard Prior, in charge of training. Almost simultaneously with this development we learned that Richard Prior would serve for only one more year as BDS Technical Adviser.

At the same time, Branches were being encouraged to organise their own stalker training and testing, training packages being available from the Training Committee for their guidance. Courses preceding tests and certification for range officers, essential for those in charge of target shooting on M.O.D. Ranges, and training courses for dogs used for following up wounded deer and their handlers were also publicised by the BDS Training Committee.

The BDS Services Branch, chaired at this time by Sir David Ramsbotham Adjutant General, who served as Chief Inspector of Prisons after retirement from the Army, held its Annual Symposium on 9 June, 1990, as usual at Bovington Camp in Dorset, six papers from it being published in Deer (Vol. 8, No. 4, March, 1991).

The same issue included seven papers from the Irish Deer Society's Conference '90, held on 29 September 1990 at Avondale Forestry Centre, Rathdrum, County Wicklow, and the former home of Charles Stuart Parnell. The Conference included three guest speakers from overseas: Helmuth Strandgaard from the Game Research Centre at Kalo in Denmark; Ronnie Rose, M.B.E. Senior

Wildlife Ranger for the Economic Forestry Group at Eskdalemuir in Dumfries and Galloway; and Richard Prior from England. I also attended as an invited guest of Liam Nolan, Irish Deer Society Chairman, and reported the Conference in Deer.

Three hundred delegates representing every facet of life in the Scottish Highlands assembled on 22 November 1990 to hear speakers on an equally diverse range of topics at the third of a biennial series of Conferences arranged jointly by the British Deer Society and the Red Deer Commission. The title of the Conference, "Deer, Mountains and Man", explained itself, each presentation being devoted to staking a claim for recognition of some special interest, its needs and objectives. Some of these interests being mutually antagonistic, discussion ranged around ways of achieving a compromise in such cases. BDS President Lord Ramsay explained some of the problems of maintaining a viable private estate in the Highlands, and the importance to a deer forest owner of keeping on his ground a sufficient stock of red deer to produce an adequate income from stalking tenants, while also recognising the problems of overpopulation by deer in terms of environmental impoverishment, high winter mortality and quality deterioration by undernourished stock.

The Crest Hotel at Taunton in Somerset was the venue on 8 March 1991 for a very similar exchange of views, the Conference organisers in this case being South West England Branch of the BDS and the subject the red deer of Exmoor and the Quantocks and their future. Their survivability should stag hunting cease, remains an ongoing Cause for concern to the Society and others.

Early 1991 saw the passing of two prominent BDS members. Founder member Helen ("Tissie") Fooks, widow of Herbie Fooks, the Forestry Commission's first Game Warden, died on 22 February at High Hay Bridge, her secluded south Lakeland home, at the age of 86. Apart from the support she gave to Herbie through difficult times, she was one of the stalwarts who worked tirelessly for our North West England Branch from its early days. A New Englander by birth, Tissie devoted herself to the welfare of the deer on her Lakeland property and her hospitality to kindred spirits was legendary.

As founder Treasurer of the BDS, John Rylstone Hepper played a vital role in helping steer the Society safely through its vital formative years of rapid growth, and became a Vice President in 1981. His death on 6 March from cancer at the age of 66 came as a considerable shock to his friends in the Society and elsewhere. As senior partner in the Yorkshire firm Hepper and Sons, Chartered Surveyors (later Hepper Watson) established in 1820, his was the sixth generation to serve in the family business and he played a leading part in the civic affairs of Leeds for many years. Deerstalking with his son Richard was his chief recreational pleasure.

The weekend of 13-14 April 1991 brought BDS members in strength to the Scottish border forest of Kielder for their AGM weekend. The AGM itself and the General Council meeting, which followed were held at the Percy Arms Hotel, where the meet was based in Otterburn. In nearby Kielder Forest members were greeted by Forest District Manager Dr. Bob McIntosh and his team of Wildlife Rangers. The visitors were introduced to a mainly coniferous forest planted on once bare sheep ground which was acquired for afforestation by the Forestry Commission in the 1930s and had since been populated by significant numbers of roe deer requiring careful management. During the weekend another party paid a visit to Chillingham Park, noted not so much for its

deer as for its ancient herd of wild white cattle, owned nowadays by the Chillingham Wild Cattle Association, of which the Hon. Ian Bennet was President at the time of the BDS visit. The weekend's events were organised by North East England Branch of the BDS.

Progress with courses and tests for stalkers had reached a point by April 1991 when our President, Lord Ramsay, was able to present the 1,000th W.S.C.C./N.S.C.C. Certificate, suitably framed to mark the occasion, to the successful candidate Charles Wilson, of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The presentation was made at the Society AGM at Otterburn. Mr. Wilson won his coveted spurs after attending an N.S.C.C. Course run by the Services Branch at Longmoor Camp in Hampshire a few weeks earlier.

At the Royal Show on 3 July, Richard Prior became the first person to hold the Balfour-Browne Trophy for a second time. The previous award had been made by the Forestry Commission, by whom he was then employed, in 1976. The present one, by the BDS, was a mark of appreciation for his work for the Society and its members in his role as Technical Adviser and otherwise. He received the Trophy from our Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, in the presence of our Chairman, Hugh Oliver-Bellasis.

A reminder that others besides the BDS supported stalker competence training and testing was a redesigned National Stalker's Competence Certificate on which a special BDS logo at the top was complemented by logos of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), the British Field Sports Society (BFSS) and the Game Conservancy along the bottom.

Deer poaching continued to be a source of considerable concern, in view particularly of the cruelty inflicted on their victims by individuals who cared for little except making a quick profit from the illegal sale of venison through the back doors of the premises of unscrupulous restaurateurs. Reports of court cases involving deer with names and addresses of persons involved had appeared regularly in *Deer* for a number of years as well as articles on how best to combat poaching.

With the coming into force on 1 January, 1991 of the new Food Safety Act making it a criminal offence to sell, or offer for sale, any food later judged to be unfit for human consumption, the Forestry Commission and the British Deer Society jointly promoted a video for the guidance of Wildlife rangers, stalkers and others on the hygienic handling of venison at every stage and the careful inspection of deer carcasses for any sign of disease.

This video was intended to be used in conjunction with a book entitled "The Culling and Processing of Wild Deer" by John Adams, Meat Inspector for Arun District Council in West Sussex, and Norman Dannatt, Conservator of Forests in East England for the Forestry Commission. In a short article in *Deer* (Vol. 8, No 4, March, 1991) it was emphasised that penalties for offences under this Act could include limitless fines and imprisonment for up to two years.

John Adams and local Head Ranger Roger North joined forces to demonstrate how the requirements of the law should be met by stalkers and others during the course of a one day seminar laid on by the Forestry Commission in the spring of 1991 for members of East Hampshire Deer Management Society as their guests.

Following the retirement of Lord Dulverton as our President and his subsequent ill health, we were reminded by HOB that our concerns were being watched out for in the House of Lords by Lord Pearson. Of particular concern at this time was a proposal to consolidate all existing legislation affecting deer in England and Wales into a single Act, a measure that would exclude the possibility of any major alteration to the provisions of current Acts.

Having been given the opportunity to study proposals by the newly formed Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) as to how its conservation purpose might best integrate with existing patterns of land use, BDS Scottish Council, through its Chairman, David Bowser, responded appropriately, the main thrust of its comments being that SNH should operate in such a way as to win the confidence from the start of all concerned. On points of detail, Scottish Council thought it should be

made clear that proposed Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) would not, by their nature, be National Parks, and that fragile habitats should be safeguarded by exercising careful control over public access. Account also needed to be taken of the importance of deerstalking to the Highland economy and, hence, of the need to maintain viable stocks of red deer while at the same time recognising the vital role of Deer Management Groups (DMGs) in keeping red deer populations at acceptable levels. The dangers of misusing the term "parks" for areas unsuitable for large-scale public access were also pointed out.

We learned that in October 1991 the Society had signed a 30 year lease on a new and larger building for our Headquarters at the Beale Centre in Berkshire at what the Chairman described as a very competitive price of £4.50 per square foot for the first ten years and that this money had already been paid out of funds set aside for the purpose. The new premises would not only enlarge our office facilities in general, but would enable a start to be made with the setting up of a library, for which a collection of valuable books on wildlife and the countryside had already been purchased. Michael Baxter-Brown had agreed to consider and recommend how best to develop and utilise the library.

Following the proven worthwhileness of having appointed a Scottish Secretary as a part time member of staff it was agreed to appoint an English Secretary on a similar basis, and the post was advertised in the November 1991 issue of Deer.

The death of Lord Dulverton in February 1992 at the age of 76 deprived Britain's deer of one of their most formidable champions, and the British Deer Society of a sage counsellor and generous benefactor whose decisive action and generosity in the early 1980s saved us from threatened bankruptcy and consequent collapse. Tony, the second Baron Dulverton, had wide ranging interests connected with the countryside and its welfare, trees and deer being chief among these. He planted up thousands of acres of formerly bare ground in his Inverness shire deer forest, Glenfeshie, and improved the quality of the red deer there by a combination of careful management and improved grazing on the lower ground. As an enthusiastic and dedicated forester he also deployed his skills to good effect along the banks of Loch Eu, near Inverness, and on his estate at Batsford, in north Gloucestershire.

The March 1992 issue of Deer was accompanied by some light hearted relief in the form of an insert titled Oh Deer! a fun sheet targeted at the younger generation, and designed to stimulate curiosity leading on to serious interest in our cervids. Designed and produced by our Midlands based Education Committee under its chairman Jeanette Lawton, it was to circulate with each issue of our journal for many years, reviled by some as unfittingly superficial and ill conceived but hopefully entertaining for some while also performing a useful service in the field of education.

Deer Management Groups in Scotland having evolved Independently of Deer Control Societies affiliated to the BDS and carefully nurtured in many cases by John Hotchkis, and encouraged by him to become members of the Federation of Deer Management Societies, it came as no surprise to learn that an Association of Deer Management Groups (DMGs) wholly independent of the BDS, had been created at this time.

Working in close co-operation with the Red Deer Commission, individual DMGs functioned as groups of adjacent landholdings whose owners agreed on a common policy of deer management, preferably within discrete geographical areas.

Trentham Gardens, near Stoke-on-Trent in north Staffordshire, were the venue for the Society's AGM on 25 April 1992, when Nigel Pickering was succeeded as Hon. Treasurer by John Thomas. After coffee BDS Education Officer Frances Parry led a party of members on a walk around the grounds of what was once the palatial home of the Dukes of Sutherland, members of the Leveson-Gower family who were descended from a wool merchant. After lunch members were led by Jeanette Lawton and Fran Parry on a visit to the BDS Education Centre to see recent developments there.

Proposals to update The Deer (Scotland) Act 1959 originally drafted for consideration by interested bodies had appeared to suggest that little change was needed except the inclusion of measures to accommodate and safeguard Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). However, it soon became apparent that detailed revision was needed. The views of Scottish Branches and of many others were duly sought and submitted. BDS Scottish Secretary Hugh Rose went through these proposals and the original Consultation Paper line by line to prepare a BDS Response, which dealt with all the issues arising. The resultant submission was acclaimed by a number of interested bodies as constructive, apposite and timely.

Among those consulted about this proposed new legislation was our Scottish Editor, Lea MacNally, whose health had recently deteriorated, and it was agreed to award Lea the Dulverton Trophy for 1992-93.

Generous sponsorship by Parker-Hale Limited of Birmingham enabled a BDS exhibit to be mounted at the ASDA Festival of Food and Farming, held in London's Hyde Park from 15-17 May 1992. Despite competition for public attention from live deer on a deer farming exhibit and from camels, and notwithstanding various hitches when setting up, plus a somewhat disappointing attendance overall, the Society's contribution was considered to be a publicity success by at least one of the team of four who manned it, the indefatigable Jeanette Lawton.

Pleasing news for the many friends of Rex Whitta, M.B.E., Head Ranger of the Thetford Forest District in East Anglia was that he had been chosen to hold the prestigious Balfour-Browne Trophy for 1992-93 in recognition of his pioneer work for deer conservation and management in his area over many vital years. He was presented with the trophy by Sir Hector Munro, Minister for the Environment, at the Royal Highland Show in June.

June 1992 also marked the signing by the Council of Agriculture Ministers of the European Community of the Wild Game Meat Directive which had hung like a menacing dark cloud over landowners, deer managers and game dealers for so long a time. From 1 January 1994 this would require, in the case of deer, the submission of offal along with the carcass for veterinary inspection. Except where chilling facilities are otherwise available, carcasses would need to reach a registered game dealer within 12 hours of being shot. Limited local sales would be permitted provided the purchaser's premises conformed to standards of hygiene laid down by food safety regulations. As we were reminded by our Chairman, the Directive could have been quite needlessly much more stringent, but for timely representations and much hard work by the British Deer Society.

Two regular helpers on the BDS stand at the CLA Game Fair ever since it started had been the late W.F. (Bill) Land, a garage proprietor and keen amateur photographer many of whose photographs of BDS events have graced the pages of *Deer* and his wife Gladys, who plied everyone with fresh hot cups of tea at frequent intervals. By chance it was discovered that their wedding anniversary always coincided with the Game Fair, so a surprise was prepared for their 44th Anniversary, in 1992, which fell as usual during the Game Fair.

Jeanette Lawton organised a "whip round", which enabled a crystal rose bowl to be purchased and appropriately engraved. When it was presented to Bill and Gladys, now both deceased, along with a case of wine and an Anniversary cake baked by Richard Prior's wife Sally, the delightful elderly couple expressed themselves as being "flabbergasted". Toasts were drunk by everyone present.

November 1992 was a critical time for the writer personally. Two years earlier the warning signs of a serious eyesight problem had first made themselves apparent, but not until the autumn of 1992 was my ability to cope with editing *Deer* called into question because of this. After spending most of the morning reading my regular Sunday newspaper, in the afternoon I went out stalking. On my return I picked up the paper to carry on reading, but the small print, with which I had earlier had no difficulty, defeated me.

A meeting of General Council was looming. After discussing the situation with Michael Baxter-Brown, my Assistant Editor, I bit the bullet and telephoned the Chairman. My news clearly struck him like a bolt out of the blue, and he was excusably not best pleased at having to add my impending resignation to be dealt with under "Any Other Business" at the General Council meeting at such short notice.

Luckily, however, a major crisis was averted by my Assistant Editor's willingness to step into my shoes which, having taken early retirement some time previously from his post as Superintendent of both Richmond and Bushy Parks and then moved to the Surrey countryside, he now had the time to

do the work. I never doubted his ability. Michael's dexterity with the English language had impressed me from the time when a few years earlier, I had reviewed his book *Richmond Park: The History of a Royal Deer Park*, which was published by Robert Hale.

The November 1992 issue of *Deer* had presented various problems requiring a visit to the printers at Callington in Cornwall. I had been able to deal with these just before my eyesight problem took a turn for the worse, but the concluding issue of Volume. 8, published in March 1993, were dealt with almost in its entirety by Michael.

Early in 1993 Lea MacNally B.E.M., F.R.Z.S., and I had been looking forward to a "crack", as Lea liked to call informal conversation, at the Society's 30th Anniversary AGM. Living at opposite

ends of Britain as we did, my Scottish Editor Lea and I had all too few opportunities to meet, and this particular meeting was not to be. Lea's health had been poor for some time past, his heart having probably been overtaxed by the sheer physical strain of working in such a harsh and rugged environment as Torridon, in Wester Ross, where he was Warden Naturalist for the National Trust for Scotland on one its principal reserves.

Lea MacNally's sudden death on 15 February deprived me of a highly valued editorial colleague whom I held in the highest possible respect for his expertise of Highland wildlife, for his judgment on how it should best be managed, for his fluency in writing about it for the benefit of non-Highlanders, for his skills as a wildlife photographer supreme, and for his qualities as a man. Very rarely are so many fine things wrapped up in a single small human package, and when I heard about Lea's death I felt he could never be replaced.

As well as his numerous articles in *Deer* and various national magazines, Lea wrote a number of books. His last book, *Torridon*, describing his final place of employment and its wildlife, was completed shortly before his death, 12 days before what would have been his 67th birthday. Having retired at the age of 65, he returned to his native Inverness-shire, where prior to the summer of 1969 he had been employed for many years as professional stalker at Culachy. He left a widow and two sons, Lea and Michael.

*Deer* vol. 8, No. 10 announced a forthcoming conference on the ecology and management of muntjac, being organised jointly by the Forestry Commission and the BDS and due to be held on 9 October, 1993 at New Hall, Cambridge. The announcement included the following passage as an ominous sounding portent of the way this conference was probably heading: "They" (muntjac) "are causing concern to forestry, horticulture and nature conservation interests, as well as being interesting creatures about which little is known". Might the Society be called upon to rethink its declared policy of commitment to the welfare of all six wild deer species in Britain?

Members with Scottish interests were invited in the same issue to comment on a paper from Scottish Natural Heritage entitled "Enjoying the outdoor life: a consultation paper on access to the countryside for enjoyment and understanding". The reaction of those who owned land which was subject to constant disturbance at all times of the year by a freely wandering public, making planned



deer management almost impossible, are not difficult to imagine.

Proposals and plans for the planting of new forests, primarily for environmental and recreational enhancement, have involved the BDS in ongoing discussions with the Forestry Authority, the Countryside Commission, English Nature and other bodies having an input to the development of these schemes. Guidelines for various aspects of planning these forests have been carefully studied and comments submitted, with provision for deer welfare and good deer management always emphasised. Andrew de Nahlik, as well as our Chairman and our Technical Adviser devoted a great deal of their time to this, and Andrew reported on progress in a series of updates in Deer.

## 25. Our fourth decade

A DECISION TO CELEBRATE the 30th Anniversary of the British Deer Society in a particularly special way was taken long before the event. Blair Castle at Blair Atholl in Perthshire, seat of the Duke of Atholl, who happened to be one of our members, was made available as the principal venue for the celebration. The weekend of 16-18 April 1993 was selected as appropriate, and arrangements were made accordingly, with Hugh Rose, our Scottish Secretary, being primarily responsible for planning the many details.

Thursday, 15 April, saw a goodly gathering of members, who spent much of the evening renewing old acquaintances and forging new friendships. My son, Richard, and I, were most generously invited by Michael and Sandra Baxter-Brown to share the holiday home they had booked for themselves at nearby Pitlochry, and we were particularly grateful for this very hospitable gesture.

The programme centrepiece on the Friday was what was called The Stalkers' Reunion Range Day. Shooting took place on a Range at Blair Atholl where competitors were confronted with a variety of testing circumstances firing from different positions, at differing ranges and targets and within a limited time frame. Swarovski, the optical goods specialists, donated a number of valuable prizes which were keenly competed for by among others, BDS Patron HRH The Prince of Wales, whose attendance had been signalled over the grapevine well beforehand.

In the early afternoon Mrs. MacNally, Lea's widow, arrived from Inverness with her son Michael and his family to be presented by Prince Charles with a Certificate of Fellowship on behalf of her late husband as well a merited honour as any ever bestowed by the BDS. My 30 years as editor, first of Deer News and then of Deer, were similarly recognised, in addition to which the Prince presented me with the Balfour-Browne Trophy for 1993. John Willett was also made a Fellow as too, during the weekend, was Wing Commander A.J. (Andrew.) de Nahlik. Whereas Major W.G. (Sandy) Gordon had relinquished office as a Vice-President on becoming a Fellow of the BDS, John Willett remained a Vice-President.

David Rose, son of the Scottish Secretary, "piped away" Prince Charles and his protection officer with a creditable performance on his bagpipes when the pair finally departed, with the Prince at the wheel of his 4WD.

Saturday morning saw us all assembled in the Ballroom of Blair Castle for the Society AGM, at which the Chairman charted what he saw as the way ahead for our organisation, a future much dependent upon a substantially increased membership if we were to attain our full potential. A meeting of General Council followed. After lunch we reassembled to hear three fascinating papers from Duff Hart-Davis, Dr. Tim Clutton-Brock and Magnus Magnusson.

Magnus was guest of honour at the Society Dinner that evening, a grand occasion indeed at which we were piped into Blair Castle's stately ballroom by the Duke of Atholl's personal piper. While most

male diners made do with lounge suits, always deemed adequate in the past, others honoured the occasion by wearing a black bow tie and tails, a departure with portents for the future.

Venison was served, wine flowed and the Duke's piper was served a traditional dram by His Grace at the conclusion of a further bagpipe performance for the diners. Neighboured on the top table by Jeanette Lawton, the Duke of Atholl fitfully dozed when the meal was over and speechmaking commenced. He joined those of us on the Sunday who enjoyed a coach excursion over the pass into Inverness shire, where we visited the Highland Wildlife Park Kincraig in the Spey Valley and the reindeer at Aviemore, where these animals had been marshalled at a lower altitude for our inspection.

## 26. Thirty years on

Having retired as journal editor, I ceased to have a seat on General Council and so can no longer dig into personal recollections for more than very occasional snippets of detail to complement publicly available information about the Society as from the start of its fourth decade. Early in the 1990s I had put in a two year stint as Wessex Branch President, by no means a sinecure with Robert Underhill as Branch Chairman and the indefatigable Dorothy Ireland as Branch Secretary, but of course that was now ancient history. It was time now to sit back and look in at the BDS as best I could.

Under Michael Baxter Brown's editorship, the July, 1993 issue of *Deer* not only started a new volume of our journal but also reflected the fact at once that a new hand was at the tiller. The bold black headings in capital letters I had always favoured, having first noted their effectiveness in *Country Life* and other prestigious periodicals, were replaced throughout by rather more delicate upper and lower case italics. There had also been some minor rearrangement of regular features, with "Readers' Letters" now near the beginning instead of being tucked away, rather shamefully, towards the end of the magazine.

Other than that, to give all due credit to my talented successor, he had followed much the same pattern as had served me so well for so long. Having known almost nothing about print, about such things as the sizing and cropping of illustrations or about the complexities and headaches of planning page layouts when he first joined me as Assistant Editor, Michael was now moving towards a printing world dominated by the computer, of which I confess knowing very little.

The BDS Chairman announced in July 1993 *Deer* that reports from the Regional Secretaries would be a regular feature in future issues of the journal. In the following issue English and Welsh Regional Secretary Mike Squire reported good progress being made towards the setting up of an Exmoor area deer forum, enabling interested parties to facilitate coordinated and adequate deer management, along similar lines to the forum already active in the Quantocks. Following representations from the BDS and others, M.A.F.F. had declared a moratorium on night shooting of deer by licence on and around Exmoor, where Jochen Langbein, who had studied under Professor Rory Putnam at Southampton University, was seeking funding for a comprehensive research project on red deer.

The muntjac conference held at New Hall, Cambridge on 9 October 1993 and jointly sponsored by the Forestry Authority Research Division, Forest Enterprise and the BDS attracted a full house of 140 delegates. Its purpose was to review current knowledge of these deer in Britain, to provide management guidance and to highlight future research proposals. The general impression gained was that knowledge and management knowhow were very limited and that the scope for research was wide.

In December, 1993 the death occurred at the age of 80 of one of the pioneers of modern, humane deer management in Britain, J.S.R. (Jack) Chard, whose meeting with Herbie Fooks at a deer Group gathering in 1956 led to Herbie's appointment as the Forestry Commission's first Game Warden. Following this development, Forestry Commission Warreners and Keepers were trained in the use of rifles rather than inhumane shotguns and snares for controlling deer numbers, a change of great significance for the future. Born in Kent, Jack graduated in forestry at Edinburgh University in 1934. After the Second World War he conducted a census of surviving timber in our forests, during which process he learned much about the extent of wild deer distribution. He later became forestry Commission Conservator for North West England. As one of our founder members, he gave us ungrudging support in our vital early years. Jack was awarded the O.B.E. in 1971 for services to forestry and wildlife conservation.

Following surgery that went wrong, members who recall the genial presence of Gladys Land with her husband, Bill, on the BDS stand at Game Fairs for so many years were sorry to learn of her death in January, 1994. As "tea lady" and much, much more, Gladys provided invaluable support to others on the stand. She attended regularly at Midlands Branch events and shared with her husband a deep love of wild nature in all its forms.

In his report to March, 1994 Deer, Scottish Secretary Hugh Rose devoted his space to suggesting ways in which the Society could greatly broaden its input into research by harnessing the expertise and knowledge gained by members in the course of their field excursions and stalking forays. Hiring professional help for specific in depth research was very expensive and the Society could best contribute to this in partnership with, as was now happening as participants in the Quantocks Deer Forum. General Council annually budgeted £10,000 for research and the Management Committee was responsible for allocating this. In his report from the English Region, Mike Squire said funding had now been arranged for a three year research project by Dr. Jochen Langbein from Southampton University on Exmoor red Deer, to which the BDS was contributing.

The Chairman said several people had approached him expressing concern about the hunting of roe deer with hounds, which had recently started in some parts of the West Country. He reminded members that the Society's charitable status debarred it from criticising legal field sports, of which roe hunting with hounds was clearly one. The hunts should not allow roe to be savaged by the hounds, should avoid hunting pregnant does or those with dependent young, and were required, like everyone else, to observe legal close seasons.

Also in March 1994 Deer was a detailed report from the Scottish Secretary on the updated survey of deer distribution in Scotland carried out by the BDS with financial support from Scottish National Heritage (SNH) and support from the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (ITE) at Monk's Wood. Records from the previous survey were carefully checked and new records added to cover the presence or absence of deer of all four Scottish species in all 10km grid squares throughout the country, details being noted and validated by Recorders from all six BDS Scottish Branches.

The 1994 AGM Weekend was organised by South East England Branch and based on Cisswood Hotel

at Lower Beeding in West Sussex. At the AGM itself, held on Saturday 1st May, Richard Prior retired as Technical Adviser and the retirement of David Bowser as Scottish Area Chairman was also announced. The Chairman announced that he would not be offering himself for re-election in 1995. I proposed David Bowser for election as a Vice President, but the President, who took the chair, said future policy on Vice Presidents would be dealt with as part of a detailed review of the Society's future, a subject on which he had prepared a paper for consideration by General Council.

At the General Council meeting which followed the President's paper was duly presented. It was primarily concerned with the fact that financial projections for the next several years indicated an ongoing excess of expenditure over income which could no longer be funded by the Lonsdale Trust, which was not a BDS subsidiary and had other demands on its resources. It was therefore vital that the Society should be restructured so as to live within its income. A Study Team consisting of the President, the Treasurer and the English Secretary had been appointed at the AGM to consider what changes were necessary and to report back in the autumn.

At the AGM Dr. Yves Lecocq of FACE and John Swift, Director of BASC, had been present as guests. John Swift spoke on the benefits to all concerned of working together on stalker training, on which a Joint Statement by BASC and the BDS had been prepared. This Statement was signed by the BDS Chairman and by John Swift after the latter had finished his address.

The President's paper was dealt with at length by the English Secretary in his report for the July 1994 issue of Deer. He also mentioned the static state of BDS membership, currently just above 4,700.

Mike Squire reported that at the last meeting of English and Welsh Area Council (EWAC) John Dryden had retired as Area Chairman and had been succeeded by Robert Underhill, with Paul Leadbeater as Vice Chairman. John Dryden's retirement was marked by the presentation to him of an engraved plate.

In his report the Scottish Secretary said that although 70,000 red deer had been culled in 1992-3, the 1993-4 cull had been less satisfactory, partly because on some Highland estates it was mistakenly thought that too many hinds had been culled the previous year. The current summer being a good one, with a sizeable drop of red deer calves, an extra effort would be needed to maintain the much desired general reduction of red hind numbers during the season now approaching.

There were promising signs of an amicable and positive relationship between the BDS and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), who were preparing a statement of policy on red deer, which would be published in the very near future.

Stalker training in Scotland had so far tended to be organised along traditional lines, with courses held as and when a local demand was deemed to exist. The Red Deer Commission had now launched an initiative whereby employers and others would be asked to submit their own ideas based on their own particular needs. The Scottish Secretary stressed the need to train stalkers not

only how to operate against red deer on the open hill but other deer species in woodland.

Much of Deer Vol. 8, NO. 4 was devoted to papers and articles on muntjac based on contributions to the Muntjac Symposium at New Hall, Cambridge on 9 October, 1993 and the BDS Service Branch Symposium at Bovington Camp in Dorset on 18 June, 1994.

The November 1994 issue of Deer reported the handing over by our President to the editor of the journal of a computer donated to the Society by South East England Branch to enable the journal to be produced by modern technological methods. This would facilitate the speeding up of production at considerably reduced cost to the BDS, thus signing us up to the printing revolution and its benefits which were sweeping the land at this time. A photograph by Hugh Rose recorded the handing over by Lord Ramsay, with South East England Branch Chairman John Johnson standing alongside a very happy looking Michael Baxter-Brown.

To all recipients of this issue came a copy of the President's paper on the proposed restructuring of the British Deer Society, thus enabling every member to be aware of changes suggested and to submit their views on these should they so desire.

Not for the first time, the Chairman commented on the strains imposed upon a numerically small Society having to shoulder all the burdens of a national organisation with corresponding responsibilities. He expressed his gratitude to members and staff that had shared some part of this burden and so enabled the Society to keep abreast of demands upon it.

He also reported a stag hunting incident which had attracted adverse publicity and which had resulted in the setting up of a committee of enquiry of which he had been a member along with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Quantock Staghounds and the Chairman of the Tiverton Staghounds under the overall Chairmanship of Lord Mancroft, a Deputy Chairman of the British Field Sports Society (BFSS). After viewing a video of the incident filmed by a member of the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS) and forwarded to the British Deer Society and taking evidence from individuals concerned, the committee of enquiry reprimanded the joint Masters of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds and suspended the pack from hunting and from membership of the Masters of Deerhounds Association from 14th October until midnight on 18 November, 1994.

Following representations from the LACS about his use of the term "legal terrorism" when commenting in print about methods sometimes employed by opponents of hunting to further their cause, the BDS Chairman published an apology for this.

In the March 1995 issue of Deer, the English Secretary said the first draft of the President's paper on proposed structural changes to the BDS had attracted critical comment from a number of members. Some were dismayed at what they perceived as a probable two tier Society in which stalkers and deer managers would take precedence over non stalkers i.e. photographers, naturalists, deer watchers and so on.

It had also been suggested by some that the real purpose behind the paper was to end the Society's

independence and to amalgamate by stealth with some organisation as yet unidentified.

Both allegations were strenuously denied, not only by the English Secretary but also by the President himself in a revised draft of his paper sent out to all members in the spring of 1995 to be studied and noted upon at the forthcoming AGM. The President emphasised that it was entirely up to members to decide what changes, if any, should be made to the way the Society was run, and it was in furtherance of the need to put members fully in the picture as to what changes were being proposed and to obtain feedback on what members wanted that a meeting had been held at Penrith in Cumbria, to which Chairmen of all BDS Branches or their representatives were invited and which formed a crucial element of the consultation process.

Virtually every aspect of the Society's organisation had been critically scrutinised and appropriate alterations suggested, with particular emphasis on the need to boost revenues and to obtain the best possible value for all moneys expended. Performance targets played an important part in this. Society administration would revert to a restructured General Council, membership of which would be confined to a relatively small number of key officials.

The importance of retaining a broad based membership representing every type of interest in deer was fully recognised and there would be no change in this. At the same time it had been noted that the number of new members interested in stalking and deer management outnumbered all other categories put together, a fact which needed to be reflected in the ways that the Society arranged its priorities and allocated its resources.

The paramount need to save money on overheads meant that shared accommodation with another suitable organisation had focused attention on the Game Conservancy Trust at Fordingbridge, in Hampshire, as a possible body with which to negotiate such an arrangement. An exploratory meeting had been held at which it was learned that the Game Conservancy could provide a service of this kind on an agency basis.

Headquarters Secretary Gillian Murray and her colleague Patricia Steele, had given notice of their intention to resign with effect from the forthcoming AGM, and the Membership Secretary had already resigned. The Society would therefore need to recruit replacement staff, or otherwise make arrangements to fill the staffing gaps thus created.

Members were able to bid farewell to Gillian and Patricia and to thank them for their very hard work for the Society at the 1995 AGM weekend held on 22-24 April. Based on the Majestic Hotel at Harrogate, the meet was organised by the BDS Yorkshire Branch and was very much a working one. At the meeting of General Council which preceded the AGM a strategy was agreed for the presentation to members of proposals for change arising from the President's paper and related investigations.

The need for management continuity at a vital period in the Society's history had led to Hugh Oliver-Bellasis agreeing to remain as Chairman for one more year, a development members were happy to endorse at the AGM when electing officers for 1995-6. In his report to the AGM the Chairman highlighted the introduction of a course for professional deer managers at the Royal Agricultural



College, Cirencester, as one of the major events of the year. This followed much hard work by Andrew de Nahlik on behalf of the BDS. Another event of special importance was the impending launch of the Deer Initiative at the Royal Show, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire on 3 July. Sponsored by the Forestry Authority in association with other bodies, this would provide for England and Wales a counterpart to the Red Deer Commission for Scotland, what could develop into a regulatory authority for the management of wild deer and a reference point for all matters relating to this. The core of it being a mechanism for setting up deer management groups with a measure of financial and administrative support with countervailing responsibilities for satisfactory performance.

The Hon. Treasurer said the Society's financial position was much better than had been forecast a year ago. BDS Sales and Services Limited, set up specifically to deal with this aspect of the Society's activities, would be responsible for such matters as the insurance package it was hoped to offer as a special service to stalker members. This was in place of a Stalkers Club, which would not now be proceeded with, in view of fears that it might result in the BDS being perceived as a two tier Society rather than a cohesive organisation catering for all who are interested in deer on an equal basis.

The President's paper was presented to members with three amendments:

- (1) General Council in future to be known simply as Council,
- (2) Regional Secretaries to remain in office for the time being, and
- (3) A quorum for Council to be at least 50% of voting members.

Mike Squire was at pains to emphasise that the Stalkers Club idea was now a definite non starter and that amalgamation of the BDS with the Game Conservancy or with any other organisation was not on the agenda despite suspicions by some to the contrary. It made very good sense, however, to make such use as we could of services and facilities available from the Game Conservancy at the earliest possible opportunity. Perhaps most important of all was that our membership records would go on to the Game Conservancy computer.

Should a new Director be appointed? It was decided anyway to appoint a General Manager to be in post by 1 January 1996 and to leave the Director issue open for the present.

It was resolved to amend the constitution to bring it in line with the restructuring of the Society voted into effect at the AGM in light of the recommendations made in the President's paper.

Should voting by proxy be allowed for? A member put forward a proposal on this question which would be discussed by Council at its meeting in August 1995.

Relief from the weekend's labours came with the Annual Dinner, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding were on the menu as well as venison. A witty after dinner speech by James White, M.R.C.V.S., and musical interludes by Diane Robinson helped complete an entertaining evening.

Led by Dr. Jochen Langbein, the Exmoor and Quantocks Red Deer Research Project was developing satisfactorily. A number of deer had been radio collared. Subsequent movements of collared hinds had rarely exceeded 1,000m where these had been monitored. A number of enclosures had

been made to monitor natural regeneration inside and out of these fenced areas. Following an incident in which a darted deer had been shot by an Exmoor warden who mistakenly supposed it to be injured, the LACS had withdrawn its support from the study, although other sponsors remained committed to it.

In mid June 1995 the BDS Headquarters office at the Beale Centre was burgled, and among the items stolen was the computer on which the Society's membership records were still stored at this time.

Members learned from the July 1995 issue of *Deer* that future issues of the journal would be quarterly instead of thrice yearly, as hitherto. The extra cost would be partly offset by reducing the number of pages per issue from a normal maximum of 72 to 64.

In the same issue of *Deer* the Scottish Secretary reported that following absorption of the Countryside Commission for Scotland (CCS) into SNH there was better mutual understanding. It was to help foster a similar relationship with bird enthusiasts that a joint Conference at Inverness on 20 October, 1995 by the BDS and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was being arranged. It was hoped to attract at least 300 delegates.

The Scottish Secretary drew attention to the increasing number of Highland estates being purchased by conservation bodies for whom the maintenance of a substantial red deer population might not merit high priority among their aims overall. This was bound to react on deer populations in contiguous deer forests.

In the following issue of *Deer* (October, 1995) the Scottish Secretary was able to inform members that agreement on the S.C. Wild Game Meat Regulation had at long last been arrived at, and that advice from the BDS had been a key factor in a practical solution being concluded and given legal effect in Britain as from 20 September 1995. On the other hand the Food Safety (General Food (Hygiene)) Regulations 1995 still needed clarification in some respects.

The English Secretary reported dissatisfaction by many stalker members that a Stalkers Club would not now be formed by the BDS. He appeared to disregard the arguments against such a club as a BDS facility because of its potentially divisive effect and the strong probability that it would jeopardise the Society's status as a Registered Charity. Nevertheless, stalkers and non stalkers alike could benefit from the wide range of items that would in future be available at discounted prices from BDS Sales and Services Limited.

The English Secretary also reported a high degree of hostility by some stalkers to the Deer Initiative concept, and was at some pains to explain its benefits to those who feared it would undermine their personal freedom to manage deer as they thought best in their own individual circumstances.

Mike Squire took the opportunity to announce that those who had passed the WSCC or NSCC Test now numbered more than 2,000.

On 8 November 1995 Frederick James Taylor Page, M.B.E., B.Sc., M.I.Biol, F.Z.S., known to everybody as Jim, died in hospital at Penrith at the age of 86. Thus ended the life of the man who,

more than any other single individual, had been responsible for the formation, first of The Deer Group and later of the British Deer Society. His dedication to deer was immense, both as a scientist and a conservationist. He brought these two vital aspects together in his vision of what was needed to give deer in Britain a vastly better deal than they had previously enjoyed as important members of our fauna.

Born at Diss in Norfolk, Jim was the second of three sons of a Methodist minister. A first class degree in biology at Leeds University paved the way to a teaching career, at first in the Midlands. In 1949 he returned to his native East Anglia to teach biology at City of Norwich Grammar School for Boys. As Secretary of Norfolk Naturalists' Society he became interested in deer. Motivated by a wish to determine the significance, if any, of the presence of the fungus ergot as an important factor for roe when seeking where to site their rutting rings, Jim embarked upon a study of this subject in Thetford Chase. He also sought the views of others, including myself, thus developing a circle of correspondents, which became the nucleus of The Deer Group, founded in 1953.

This in turn provided a membership core for the British Deer Society when this was born as an independent body ten years later, with Richard Fitter as founder Chairman and Jim Taylor Page as Hon. Secretary. Jim's leadership and driving force helped propel the Society forward from modest beginnings to the internationally recognised organisation it later became.

After teaching biology for several years at Varndean Grammar School in Brighton, Jim retired in 1971 and became Director of Hay Bridge Deer Museum in the Lake District. In 1972 he moved to Whale Moor Head and later to the picturesque village of Askham on the estate of the Earl of Lonsdale, where for a number of years he ran a residential field study centre. In 1974 he was awarded the Balfour-Browne Trophy and in 1982 was made an M. B.E. in recognition of his work for deer.

In 1978 Jim retired as BDS Secretary to serve as Director of Education. In 1989, at the age of 80, Jim moved from his cottage at Askham to sheltered accommodation in Penrith, where I last called upon him in 1993. During his latter years he went on cruises around the world and to Norway and Spitsbergen. He also wrote his autobiography and many long letters to old friends, including myself. He left a substantial legacy to the British Deer Society, which I represented at a memorial Service to Jim arranged by relatives of his at a village church near Leicester in January 1996.

In the January 1996 issue of *Deer* the English Secretary reported satisfactory progress with the Exmoor Red Deer Research Project, now in its final year. The effects of browsing and grazing on natural regeneration are already shown to be significant, and the next task is to quantify responsibility for this as between deer, sheep and rabbits before recommending preventative measures.

Members were also reminded of the study being undertaken on behalf of the National Trust by Professor Patrick Bateson of the Department of Zoology & Cambridge University into the behavioural and physiological effects on red deer of being hunted by hounds and being culled by other means, with a view to measuring levels of stress thus imposed. This would be co-coordinated, where

appropriate, with the existing red deer research project.

The same issue of our journal carried a report by David Kyle on the joint BDS /RSPB Conference held at the Eden Court Theatre, Inverness, on 20 October 1995. A good attendance representing a wide range of interests, heard papers from speakers with correspondingly diverse views on the Scottish Highlands and their future. Contentious issues such as public access, optimum deer numbers in relation to other priorities and predator control were not exempted from discussion, and the Conference was considered to have made a useful input into creating better mutual understanding and in reducing potential friction between different conservation bodies.

In early 1996 two BDS notabilities died within a few weeks of each other. As John Hotchkis, a former Vice Chairman, had predicted a few years previously, giving up smoking too late in life was perhaps the main factor in ending it. He died at his cottage home in Biddenden, Kent, on 26 January at the age of 79. Born in 1916 in Taunton, Somerset, John Percy Hotchkis displayed an exceptional talent for music early in life. Having been an Honorary Music Scholar at Sherborne School in Dorset, he devoted a distinguished professional life to composing, conducting and performing at numerous venues in Britain and abroad.

John joined The Deer Group in 1959 and it was at a weekend field meet in Dorset in 1960 that I first met him. Wildlife and the countryside were abiding passions with him. He helped found the Weald of Kent Preservation Society and became its President.

As a BDS founder member, John played an important part in Society affairs from the beginning. He became a member of Council and from 1966-78 he served as Society Vice Chairman, being awarded the Balfour-Browne Trophy in the latter year. He was also elected a Vice President. Coauthor with the late H.A. (Herbie) Fooks of the first edition of the BDS handbook *deer Control in Woodland Areas*, he helped frame the rules for local deer control Societies, which wished to affiliate with the BDS. He worked hard to promote such bodies and at a later stage became Chairman of the Federation of Deer Management Societies.

John Hotchkis's expertise in Parliamentary and legislative procedures enabled him to help frame deer legislation, and from 1986-88 he was the Society's official "guru" on these matters. He was also Chairman of our Conservation and Control Committee and BDS representative to the British Field Sports Society (now the Countryside Alliance) at different periods as well as serving on a number of working parties. At one stage John seemed a likely candidate for the Chairmanship of the BDS. A brilliant brain went with a meticulous regard for accuracy and detail which did not always endear him to the less tidy minded among us, but that was part of the price of his particular genius.

The death of George Ian Murray, tenth Duke of Atholl, on 27 February 1996 was caused by a stroke. Less than three years previously the Duke, a long established BDS member, had hosted us at Blair Castle for our Thirtieth Anniversary AGM and Society Dinner, the latter having been a particularly memorable occasion. He also accompanied us on a Sunday coach trip to see the reindeer herd at Aviemore.

Born in 1931, the late Duke succeeded to the title in 1957 as a descendant of the third Duke, who

died in 1805. Although not born in the Highlands, the tenth Duke adapted to Highland life and got to know by name all those who lived on the Atholl estates, which total some 120,000 acres and include several well known deer Forests. The Duke was a keen deerstalker. From 1969-83 he was a Red Deer Commissioner and was also President of the Scottish Landowners' Federation from 1986-91. The dukedom was inherited by John Murray, a distant cousin, who was living in South Africa but the estates passed to the newly created Blair Charitable Trust to secure their continuity.

## 27. A new era

THE REMOVAL of the Society's Headquarters from the Child Beale Trust on the bank of the Thames at Lower Basildon in Berkshire to Burgate Manor on the bank of the Avon at Fordingbridge in Hampshire marked the dawn of a new era for the British Deer Society. It coincided with the departure of Gillian Murray and Patricia Steele, who had kept the Society's wheels turning with great efficiency at Child Beale, and the arrival on the scene of our first General Manager, Sarah Stride. A graduate in Agriculture from Wye College, London University, Sarah had had a varied career in management in Britain and abroad. She acquired a wide range of commercial and administrative experience before taking up her employment with the British Deer Society.

A number of other important changes took place at the 1996 AGM, held at the Marquis of Granby Hotel in Hope Valley, near Sheffield, on Sunday 12 May, as part of a weekend programme arranged by Sheffield and Hallamshire Branch.

The AGM was followed in the afternoon by a meeting of Council called to review the overall position of the Society, receive reports of all specialist committees instituted by the Council, and any other general business of the Council.

The social part of the weekend programme was held on the Saturday 11 May. Optional lunch at the Marquis of Granby Hotel was followed by departure for Chatsworth to visit the house and the gardens, followed by a tour of the deer park by tractor hauled trailer to view the herds of red and fallow deer. The Society Dinner was held at the Marquis of Granby "dress to be smart - Black tie/military uniform/ highland dress optional". The after dinner speaker was to be Peter Mackenzie Phillips, Stalker, Game fisherman and Country Gentleman.

The new Chairman, in his notes in July 1996 *Deer*, appealed for volunteers to help spread the Society workload. He also said he hoped Society policy on a variety of welfare and other issues could be formally agreed and published for the guidance of those who are authorised to speak on behalf of the BDS. He intended to give special attention to putting into effect the changes proposed in the President's paper for the purpose of streamlining administration and reducing costs.

Rosemary Bethell introduced herself in the same issue as being of long established West Country farming stock, the widow of a psychologist and herself a former social worker who had also been a primary school teacher. Family links with Exmoor had given her a particular love for deer, both red and roe. Although neither a hunter nor a stalker, she had taken and passed the NSCC examination including the shooting test, and was looking forward to giving what support she could to the new Chairman.

One of Hugh Rose's subsidiary responsibilities as Scottish Secretary is maintaining a record of deer related research and of applications for financial support for such projects as well as giving practical help where possible. One such request for help involved a drive to Balmoral to extract carcasses of red deer buried in an avalanche, the bones of which were required by a Cambridge laboratory for

teaching purposes. Hugh described his related adventures in one of his Scottish reports for deer.

Appropriate presentations and expressions of gratitude for service willingly given marked the departure from office of the Society's Chairman, Hugh Oliver-Bellasis, and Vice Chairman Jeanette Lawton. Mike Squire was elected as the new Society Chairman and Rosemary Bethell, a Society stalwart and Branch Chairman for South West England, as Vice Chairman. Presentations were also made to Gillian Murray and Patricia Steele, who attended the Society Dinner as guests. The AGM also marked the retirement of Wing Commander Andrew de Nahlik, who had masterminded the Woodland Deer Management Course which is now part of the curriculum at Cirencester Royal Agricultural College. He was replaced in this role by Dominic Griffith.

In his address to the meeting, the retiring Chairman voiced deep regret at the recent failure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) to consult the BDS or other appropriate bodies before granting two permits to shoot deer by night in the West Country, and had taken steps to try to avoid a recurrence of this. He also outlined the general purpose of the Deer Initiative, which so far, in his judgment, had had little impact. He felt that if it was to be merely a talking shop, then there was no place for it, a view he had expressed to Richard Smith, a Forestry Commission Conservator the Forestry Commission being centrally involved in launching the Deer Initiative nationally.

The retiring Chairman said that the Exmoor research project being undertaken by Jochen Langbein was producing useful information. He had some critical words for the Community Forests project. Although this had access to Millennium and Lottery funding, provision for managing immigrant deer, the arrival of which was inevitable, was almost totally lacking, which was bound to cause problems sooner or later.

The Treasurer pointed out that the retiring Chairman had not only given his time freely to the Society but had subsidised it at his own expense, a fact which was not likely to be possible in the future under a different regime.

The BDS injected as much advisory input as was within its power into what passed into law as The Deer (Scotland) Act 1996. Among wide ranging provisions for the better management of deer as part of Scotland's natural heritage, this Act gave increased authority to what was now known as the Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS), formerly the Red Deer Commission. This now assumed authority for sika, roe and fallow deer as well as red deer. Powers to issue licences permitting the shooting of deer at night and during close seasons when deemed necessary to prevent or stop serious damage to farm or forest crops were also vested in the DCS. Additionally, the Secretary of State for Scotland was empowered to alter close seasons on the recommendation of the DCS after consultation about so doing, although the DCS Chairman thought it unlikely this would happen in the short term.

Numbering nine to twelve in all, the DCS Commissioners would be chosen by the Secretary of State from nominees recommended for the purpose as being knowledgeable about deer management, forest and woodland management, agriculture including crofting, and the natural heritage. A quarter

of them would be chosen from nominees of deer management interests.

The Act aimed to ensure a balance between deer, their habitat and their welfare. Writing for *Deer* as Chairman of the Deer Commission for Scotland, Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington thought the many references in the Act to the natural heritage reflected a major change of attitude by landowners and lawmakers alike.

A new Directive by the European Commission decreed the setting up in the U.K. of arrangements for randomly testing deer carcasses for the possible presence of drugs or other agents injected illegally to promote rapid growth or for some other purpose and which may render the meat unfit for human consumption.

Following unconfirmed reports over a fairly lengthy period of the occurrence of muntjac at large in Scotland, the Scottish Secretary recorded the shooting of two individuals near Forfar in Angus and of another near Portpatrick in Wigtownshire. While accepting it as inevitable that muntjac would eventually colonise all suitable habitat in Britain, Hugh Rose hoped this would not be accelerated and that muntjac might be placed on Schedule 9 of the Countryside and Wild Animals Act.

In his report for the November, 1996 issue of *Deer* the Society Chairman said a founder member and former Scottish Secretary, George Logan, had written a letter complaining that too large a proportion of the articles in *Deer* recently had been shooting related.

Mike Squire made the point however, that welfare issues were by no means neglected by the Society. One such was a recent Channel 4 TV debate on the feasibility or otherwise of controlling deer numbers by administering oral contraceptives as an alternative to shooting. This had been pioneered in the U.S.A. and a speaker from "over the pond" explained to viewers how it was done. The BDS Chairman, the Scottish Secretary and a few other members took part in the debate, having first obtained the programme producer's assurance that a balanced discussion would be screened and then spent many hours "boning up" on the subject. Several other organisations were invited to participate, but none did so.

In the event, what our Chairman described as "creative editing" resulted in a very lop sided version of this important debate being broadcast. From the Society's point of view the entire exercise was a major disappointment, but at least the effort had been made to address a serious welfare issue.

The BDS was one of many organisations represented on 16 November 1996 at a one day Conference provocatively entitled "Deer or the New Woodlands?" and devoted to managing deer in Community Forests and the urban fringe. Held at Sheffield Hallam University, the Conference was organised by Sheffield Centre for Ecological and Environmental Management, and attracted some 80 delegates and featured an in depth examination of likely problems arising from the virtually inevitable colonisation of these intended new woodlands nationwide by deer. Contributions included papers on deer control by BDS Chairman Mike Squire, and on new urban woods and rising deer populations by David Stewart of Northumberland Wildlife Trust. Whilst taking timely cognisance of the need to plan well ahead for deer management the general view of the Conference was that deer were likely to



prove to be an expensive liability, which the new woods would be better off without.

In the January, 1997 issue of Deer Mike Squire paid tribute in his Chairman's Notes to Andre Childs, the wife of John Childs, who died in December 1996 following a serious illness. As BDS Training Officer her husband, John, had a heavy load of responsibilities which entailed frequent meetings at his home on the Wiltshire downs near the Porton Ranges, where before her illness Andre enjoyed playing host to his many visitors. John Childs and Andre were among those hard working husband and wife teams upon which relatively small organisations like the BDS depend so heavily for their ultimate success.

The third in a series of symposia organised jointly by Manchester Metropolitan University (formerly Manchester Polytechnic) and the British Deer Society was announced to be held on 9-10 April, 1997 at Manchester. The intention this time was to "bring together all aspects of deer population, ecology and management" and thus to appeal to researchers, conservation organisations and land managers, among others. Professor Rory Putman, organiser of the Symposium, had asked the BDS to contribute a paper on the possibilities of immunocontraception as a method of controlling deer numbers. Some members had suggested we should decline, but the BDS Chairman took a different view, feeling that this is a concept likely to receive increasing attention as a means of limiting populations of wildlife in general where this is felt to be necessary, and that the BDS should not lag behind in addressing itself to the subject.

The Scottish Secretary devoted most of his report in April 1997 Deer to the serious under culling to which all wild deer in Britain were currently subjected. He warned that a deer population explosion and resultant greatly increased damage to farm and forest crops and native flora could result in demands for mass slaughter by whatever means were available including shotgun drives and even snaring, undoing all the good work by the BDS to ensure humane deer management methods. The answer was for all, deer managers to step up culls to appropriate levels before the problem deteriorated further.

In the same issue the BDS Chairman announced his intention of visiting Scotland to attend a conference and to hold discussions with the DCS. Like many another before him, he thought deer management in Britain as a whole would be better served by the harmonisation of deer law in England and Wales and, in Scotland, and implied that this was one of the matters he planned to raise with the DCS.

Meanwhile, there were warning signs of a fundamental change of attitude in Britain towards wild deer and their conservation. The continuing increase in range and numbers of all species was alarming those concerned about the impact this would have on native wild flora, if unchecked a fear enlarged upon by various contributors to Deer in the April 1997 issue and others. Particular hostility was directed against introduced species, with muntjac heading the list of species environmentalists thought should be much more heavily culled. The fondness of muntjac for browsing bluebells was thought to exemplify the problem, since these indigenous British wild flowers had not evolved in an ecological situation which required them to develop defences against browsing pressure from any

source.

In 1997 the Joint Nature Conservancy Committee, recommended the inclusion of muntjac on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, forbidding their release into the wild except on licence from the Department of the Environment (DofE) for approved research purposes. Any such muntjac would have to be taken from one of the 12 "core counties" of muntjac distribution and released close to their point of capture.

The Invercauld Arms Hotel at Braemar Aberdeenshire, was the base for the Society's 1997 AGM weekend, held on 10-11 May with a programme organised at short notice by North East Scotland Branch. Field trips were arranged for the Saturday to local places of special deer interest, and the after dinner speaker that evening was Dick Balharry of SNH, who lived up to his reputation for producing controversial ideas to stimulate fresh thinking by his audience.

At the AGM itself on the morning of Sunday 11 May, the BDS President Lord Ramsay, said he had now returned to Scotland to live. He suggested that in view of this it might be time to consider appointing a new President. He had a possible successor in mind but the person concerned was not at present available.

The Chairman's and Hon. Treasurer's reports spoke of a busy year settling in at Fordingbridge, where hard work by Sarah Stride General Manager, and her assistant Sue Varvill, had helped over initial problems and smoothed the way for all concerned. Excellent relations had been established with Game Conservancy staff, one of whom Margaret Bellingham had been particularly helpful in sorting out early difficulties with our computerised membership records. Despite our close working relationship with the Game Conservancy there was no intention, now or later to amalgamate with that organisation or any other.

The Hon. Treasurer, John Thomas, said he had been persuaded that many benefits would accrue to the BDS from becoming an incorporated body, a path followed by a number of other charities. The Society would thus become a limited company governed by a Board of Directors, who would in effect be those who are at present members of Council and their successors. Full democratic rights would be retained, with Directors being elected annually as Council members are at present. Council would discuss this at its meeting following the AGM hopefully setting the wheels in motion for completion of the change by the end of 1997.

Victor Manton, Curator of Whipsnade Zoological Park, having tendered his resignation as Hon. Veterinary Adviser to the BDS, was warmly thanked for the many ways in which he had helped the Society during his lengthy term of office. He was succeeded by Peter Green, B.V.S.CO, Cert. Ed., M.R.C.V.S.

Hugh Oliver-Bellasis, Richard Prior, Jeanette Lawton and G. Kenneth Whitehead were elected Fellows of the British Deer Society in recognition of their exceptional work for deer. All except the first named received their framed Certificates of Fellowship from the President, Lord Ramsay, at the Deer Fair held in Cornbury Park, Oxfordshire, on 21-22 June 1997.

Following the AGM, English and Welsh Area Council (EWAC) was represented on BDS Council by Paul Leadbeater, who earlier in the year had succeeded Robert Underhill as Chairman of EWAC which Mike Squire served in a paid capacity as Secretary in addition to his honorary Chairmanship of the BDS. Mike Squire devoted his Chairman's notes in July, 1997 Deer to the report by Professor Patrick Bateson of Cambridge University on the study he had undertaken on behalf of the National Trust of the traumatic effects on Exmoor red deer of being hunted by hounds on the one hand and being shot by rifle on the other. Conclusions arrived at from the study were less favourable to hunting as a method of controlling deer than to shooting with a rifle, although this interpretation of the relative degree of stress caused to deer by being hunted rather than shot was strongly contested by hunt supporters, who proffered evidence purporting to demonstrate hunting in a much more positive light. The BDS Chairman had been asked by a number of people to come out on behalf of our Society either in support of staghunting or against it, depending upon the petitioners' preference, but had resisted doing so. Meanwhile, pressure was mounting nationally for legislation to ban hunting.

In his notes as EWAC Secretary, Mike Squire reminded readers of the limitations imposed by new legislation on the ownership and use of firearms following the Dunblane massacre, and of the effects of this upon deerstalkers. He also mentioned the encouragement given by the Deer Initiative to the formation of further deer management groups and the financial help available for this purpose. Another item of news was that the Conseil Internationale de la Chasse (CIC) had now authorised the official measurement of deer trophies by approved individuals rather than solely at international exhibitions. National Trophy Commissions would administer the process including medal awards, where appropriate. Official measurers in Britain were Tom Troubridge, Commission President, G, Kenneth Whitehead, Richard Prior, Dominic Griffith and Alan Allison.

The Scottish Secretary in his report paid tribute to the effectiveness of BDS courses for stalkers the shooting element in particular, in upgrading standards of humane deer management. A retired professional stalker had told him how at one time he could be reasonably sure of winning a valuable prize for accurate shooting whenever he took part in a competition. Now, though, he found it much more difficult because the standard of shooting had improved so greatly. At the same time, instances of deer being wounded and not recovered he believed to be now much rarer than was the case a few years ago.

On the other hand, in the view of Hugh Rose, the Bateson study of relative stress levels suffered by Exmoor red deer as a result of hunting and shooting indicated an unacceptably high proportion of shot deer not being killed outright by a single bullet.

As had become a regular practice, the BDS had a stand at the 1997 CLA Game Fair, manned this year by East Mercia Branch members backed up by staff from Headquarters and the usual band of stalwarts from around the country. The three day event was held at Castle Ashby, near Wellingborough in Northamptonshire, where the opportunity was taken to invite the Marquess of Northampton to present Hugh Oliver-Bellasis with his Certificate of Fellowship and John Childs with the Balfour-Browne Trophy for the current year. John's was an exceptionally well merited award. Throughout the years when he served as BDS Training Officer, heading a Committee whose

members included leading authorities on deer management, John Childs dedicated himself one hundred per cent to the task of arranging training of the highest possible quality for deer managers and stalkers.

In 1997 this work was largely taken over by a newly created body, Deer Management Qualifications Ltd. Chaired by a member of the Deer Commission for Scotland, DMQ Ltd had as members the BDS, BASC, the Scottish Association of Deer Management Groups, North West England Association of Deer Management Groups, the Forestry Commission and Professor Brian Staines (who also represented Deer Management on BDS Council, on which P.J.D.Donnelly briefly represented Training concerns).

## 28. Changing times

BDS MEMBERSHIP AT THIS TIME was around 4,500. At a later stage it would sometimes top 5,000, but despite everyone's best endeavours it was clearly never going to rise to levels long since reached by organisations like for example BASC and the RSPB which served a much wider range of interests than our own. Recruitment of new members, however actively pursued, could do little more than offset natural wastage through non renewal of subscriptions for whatever reason. Every upward adjustment of subscriptions increased the number of non renewals for the year concerned, a fact of life far from unique of course to the BDS and one requiring an extra push to the drive for new members to recoup losses.

With neighbour organisations much more powerful than our own and with ambitions of their own to provide for the needs of stalker members in terms of training and otherwise, it was probably inevitable that stalker training would eventually cease to be a virtual BDS monopoly. The most important thing was to ensure that our very considerable experience in this field could still make a full contribution to stalker training and testing under whatever new regime might later emerge. This was achieved by our becoming members of DMQ Ltd.

Directors of DMQ Ltd would be those officially representing member bodies. DMQ Ltd would not produce training material or manuals, but member bodies would be free to produce their own or to use material already produced by member organisations. Certificates of competence would be awarded on a two part basis. Part 1 would be theoretical and would be available automatically to existing WSCC and NSCC holders. Part 2 would be practical and would require candidates to shoot and gralloch three deer under the supervision of an approved assessor. The two parts would be known respectively as DSC I and DSC 2.

The likely demise of stag hunting loomed ever closer in 1997 with a change of Government to Labour with a large Parliamentary majority and the presentation by Michael Foster, M.P., of his Wild Mammals (Hunting with Dogs) Bill, about which he sought the reaction of the British Deer Society.

Our response was to stress that we were solely concerned with the welfare of deer and were closely involved with red deer on Exmoor, having given advice and practical help to Professor Bateson with his study, that we are members of the Quantock and Exmoor Deer Forums and are coordinators of a three year study of the impact of Exmoor red deer on their environment. Deer had to be controlled and at present the hunts contributed to this in ways understood by the local community. Our paramount concern was with possible cruelty, and until sound evidence was forthcoming that hunting was unacceptably cruel we would reserve judgement on the matter. If hunting is abolished by law, we are anxious that an alternative, regulated means of control should be put in place before a free for all can develop and the herd is decimated.

It was announced in the October, 1997 issue of Deer that in view of the volume and complexity of business requiring the attention of BDS Council at its meetings, a sub committee was proposed to lighten the load of Council business by holding regular meetings between meetings of Council

proper. Sub committee members would be the Society Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Treasurer, the Chairmen of English and Welsh and of Scottish Council and the Society's General Manager. The sub committee would be responsible to Council, thus ensuring compliance with the democratic process. This was the third occasion during the life of the BDS that Council had had recourse to such a measure after reshaping itself, definitively as it had seemed to cope with changing situations.

A letter from the President recommending Incorporation of the British Deer Society as a company limited by guarantee while remaining a Registered Charity was circulated to members along with a voting form on the issue with the October 1997 Deer. More than 1,000 members voted, a large majority being in favour of the proposed change.

The January 1998 issue of Deer was the first in which some of the articles were illustrated in colour. This was made possible by a change of printer to one quoting prices more competitive than its predecessor, equating to those charged in the early 1990s and representing a worthwhile saving in cost. Initially this colour facility would be restricted to eight pages.

In the same issue the Chairman said good progress was being made in meeting objectives identified by the President in his recent paper, and one of the tasks ahead was agreeing a five year plan listing goals to be met by the Society during the period 1998-2003. He also devoted further space to explaining and validating changes involved in setting up Deer Management Qualifications Limited as the national body responsible for testing and certificating deer managers and stalkers trained to meet acceptable standards of competence. Training would continue to be carried out by the BDS, BASC and by Sparsholt and Thurso Colleges. In the case of the BDS, as well as courses to prepare candidates for the DMQ I and DMQ 2 tests, Advanced Stalker Training Courses were also available. These points were spelt out to allay misgivings and doubts expressed by some members who questioned the need for change of any kind to the existing training and testing regime developed by the BDS which had been thought to serve its purpose supremely well.

The Chairman was also looking at ways in which funds from the National Lottery might be sought to help fund BDS work in specific areas. The Editor of Deer said he had received a request for more "down to earth" articles in the Society's journal, and he questioned what was meant by this.

Details were given in Deer Vol. 10, No. 7 of the setting up of the New Forest Deer Monitoring Group on the initiative of the BDS Wessex Branch, whose Chairman is one of its members, other members being experts on one or more of the four established deer species in the area. This development was in response to increasing concern about excessive culling of some species, especially fallow, by the Forestry Commission in pursuit of commercial objectives or for other reasons which may fail to take the historic importance and contemporary aesthetic value of the New Forest's deer sufficiently into account.

The Scottish Secretary used his space in the January, 1998 issue of Deer to reiterate for the benefit of any remaining doubters among BDS members the crucial importance of culling as the core element in deer management, in other words keeping deer numbers within acceptable limits in relation to other demands upon their environment. The British public were reluctant to accept this,

having been brain washed into regarding any form of shooting as repugnant, and it was difficult to change this emotional attitude by so many.

Hugh Rose went on to highlight the serious consequences for deer of long term failure to cull sufficient, thereby encouraging shooting at night and out of season by those directly affected by excessive numbers of deer on their land or on that of their neighbours. Rob Donaldson-Webster, Scottish Editor of Deer, took up this theme in his notes. He quoted a Press report that the Deer Commission for Scotland was giving landowners a final opportunity to increase deer culls to a more satisfactory level or face intervention by the DCS with the imposition of mandatory culls now allowed for by legislation though as yet unimposed.

In April 1998 Deer, the Chairman said he had been approached by Oxford University for advice and help with deer management in the University's research area at Wytham Woods, just outside Oxford. Following discussion, the BDS agreed to undertake an initial cull and to formulate a management plan for the future. Gloucestershire and Avon Branch nominated a team of experienced stalkers. These were headed by Hugh Rose, who reported on later developments in subsequent issues of Deer. The numerous muntjac were heavily shot. A substantial cull of fallow deer was also undertaken. The much less numerous roe were very lightly culled. As part of the management plan it was recommended that muntjac should be culled as heavily as possible but that roe should be encouraged to establish themselves in moderate numbers as a more desirable species.

It was reported that the British Field Sports Society (BFSS) (now the Countryside Alliance) were sponsoring further research on Exmoor red deer and hunting, presumably with a view to challenging the findings of the Bateson study. Professor Bateson welcomed this new development but said he would not change his own conclusions.

It was also reported that following the ban already imposed by the National Trust on deer being hunted on its properties, a small group of farmers on the Quantock Hills had been heavily shooting red deer. They had done so ostensibly on the grounds that since the Quantock red deer could no longer be hunted, there was no longer any point in tolerating the damage and resultant expense caused by their presence. It was suspected that in reality this slaughter was intended to shock the National Trust into reversing its ban on hunting, but this did not happen.

At its meeting in March 1998, BDS Council discussed these developments and decided to defer adopting a policy on the hunting issue until the BFSS sponsored study arrived at some concrete conclusions.

It was also learned that the Timber Growers Association in Wales, in partnership with the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Council for Wales, was submitting a bid for European funding for the establishment of a Deer Management Initiative for Wales. The intention was to coordinate deer management in Wales at a level which would prevent the deer population reaching the same high numbers and density as it had done in Scotland and England. This development was strikingly in contrast with the apparent lack of interest in forming sustainable BDS Branches in the Principality, uniquely among deer populated areas in the British Isles.

The Northern Ireland Deer Society, formed to cater for Northern Ireland stalkers and others who perceived the need for an independent Deer Society to serve their Province, reported frustration being experienced about the attitude of their Government towards the use of full bore rifles for deer control. When asked to give reasons for this attitude, the answer given was "public safety", still a matter of particular concern in Northern Ireland. There was no report in April 1998 Deer from the Irish Deer Society.



## **29. A Company limited by Guarantee**

A DATE OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE in the history of the British Deer Society was 10 May, 1998 when, following a poll of the membership which was heavily in favour of the recommended change of status, the Society became a company limited by guarantee and managed by a Board of Directors. The Directors were Lord Ramsay, Mike Squire, Rosemary Bethell, John Thomas, Paul Leadbeater, Dorothy Ireland, John Johnson, Michael Baxter-Brown, Nigel Pickering, Christopher Roberts, Andrew Yool and David Kyle, who were voted into office at the first AGM of the reconstituted Society.

These Directors were elected at the first AGM of the limited company, at which it was further agreed that Lord Ramsay should remain in office as President, Mike Squire as Chairman, Rosemary Bethell as Vice Chairman and John Thomas as Hon. Treasurer. Whilst it was normal for one third of the directors of a company to retire from office each year, in the case of the BDS Directors they would be elected, or re-elected, annually.

Existing Fellows were re-elected, and on the proposal of the President, seconded by the Chairman (and carried unanimously). Victor Manton, Curator of Whipsnade Zoological Park and former Veterinary Adviser to the BDS, was elected as an additional Fellow. Honorary Membership was awarded to Gary Stanton in recognition of his hard work for the Society at show exhibits and otherwise.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman announced their intention of retiring from office in one year's time on completing three years of service in these roles, although the Chairman agreed to remain in office for a further year should this be necessary for a successor to be found. Rosemary Bethell said she had only agreed to serve as Vice Chairman to give support to Mike Squire as Chairman. She asked that a special vote of thanks should be given to Nancy Squire for the work she had done quite unofficially for the Society in support of her husband Mike. Mike Squire said he would be happy to retain his role as Secretary of English and Welsh Area Council after handing over as Chairman.

The Chairman said that the Five Year Plan envisaged in the President's paper was essentially embodied in the BDS Management Plan, an 80 page document in the process of being considered by Branch Committees, from whom members could obtain details.

A sealed envelope was handed by the President to John Childs on completion of his dedicated and uniquely valuable work on stalker training now embarked upon a new era of its own under the auspices of Deer Management Qualifications Limited, on which the BDS was very actively represented.

The foregoing AGM followed hot on the heels of the final AGM of the Society in its former guise as an unincorporated body whose Trustees were Lord Ramsay, Pat Blackett, David Bowser and Richard Prior who carried unlimited financial responsibility.

Both meetings were held at the Pinewood Thistle Hotel at Handforth in Cheshire, which was also the venue for the Society Dinner the previous evening. The weekend programme was arranged by Midlands Branch. The other main social event was a visit to Lyme Park to see the deer there.

At the first of the two Annual General Meetings the Chairman presented a detailed report on the events of the preceding year. Much of this has already been noted in the quarterly reports in Deer to which reference has already been made here, and other items of particular note are summarised below.

The subject of firearms, especially hand guns, had occupied much time. The Society's official line had been misquoted by the police and others involved in the administration of justice due to a letter written some years ago representing the views of an individual having been thought to be a statement of BDS policy. Clarification of BDS policy had been submitted to the Association of Chief Police officers (ACPO) and others concerned.

The Society was concerned that undue reliance on referees to take responsibility for assessing the suitability of applicants for firearm certificated to acquire and use lethal weapons for shooting deer might discourage individuals from undertaking such a responsibility. As regards stalker competence assessment and certification, as well as DSC 1 and DSC 2, it was anticipated that within about a year the estate management aspect would be provided for with a DSC 3 qualification. In the meantime Advanced Stalker Courses would continue to be run by the BDS.

The Society had monitored and commented on a variety of legislation on countryside related issues, a common factor in which had been a lack of recognition of the needs of deer management.

The Chairman was a Board member of DMQ Ltd. He maintained regular contact with the BASC Deer Committee, the Deer Initiative, the Standing Conference, and the Deer Commission for Scotland and with the police on poaching and firearms matters. There had also been substantial contact with the Press, radio and T.V., mainly on poaching and environmental matters.

The Treasurer reported a surplus of £1, 800 after charging up fees for recovering V.A.T., so that in reality there was a surplus of about £10,000. The set up of DMQ had cost the BDS about £6,000, largely on travel and attendance at meetings.

Support costs had increased by £20,000 in the past year, largely necessitated by the recruitment of new staff for the Society's Education Centre at Trentham and by secretarial expenses. Telephone costs had been necessarily high. Printing and stationery costs had been significant. Advertising in various media had yielded varying results but had produced 500 new members. Membership had increased from 4,200 a year ago to 4,887 at the most recent count.

Council had spent some time considering the future of the BDS Education Centre at Trentham, where the stable block was felt to be less than satisfactory from the health and safety point of view in particular. The Management Plan would address this issue. The Chairman was of the opinion that Education and Training should be administratively merged to the benefit of both.

Council agreed to sponsor research by John Clifton Bligh, who was producing a consolidated document on ongoing research within the U.K. This might serve as the basis for future research of a similar nature embracing a wider range of countries and even the world, subject to finance being available.

Following the retirement of John Childs as Training Officer, an Education and Training Manager was advertised for in July 1998 Deer.

The success of last year's British Deer Fair at Cornbury Park in Oxfordshire encouraged its organiser, BDS member and dog trainer Guy Wallace, to arrange another for 1998 with even more attractions. This was held at Offchurch Park, Offchurch, near Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, on Saturday and Sunday 24 and 25 May. Items featured included 4 WD vehicles, deer handling equipment, stalking attire and demonstrations of deer dog training.

The 1998 CLA Game Fair, a three day event as had now become usual, was held, not for the first time, at Stratfield Saye, the Duke of Wellington's north Hampshire estate. The BDS Wessex Branch made a major contribution to the Society's exhibit, following hot on the heels of which was the annual New Forest Show, at which the Branch regularly exhibited.

The October 1998 issue of deer recorded the deaths of three notables in the deer world. The second Lord Riverdale, who died in June 1998 at the age of 96, was notable also in the world of Sheffield steel and had many other interests, including stalking. His was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of the BDS Sheffield and Hallamshire Branch, a comparatively late arrival on our Branch scene. His cheery visage often appeared in our journal in group pictures of Branch members at stalkers' shoots and other events. Lord Riverdale's self published book on stalking, Squeeze the Trigger Gently appeared in 1991.

Dr. W. H.D. (Walter) Wince was a founder member of the British Deer Society and he, and his wife Muriel, a microbiologist who had graduated in botany, were members of The Deer Group before that. Walter was born in India, where his father was chief medical officer in Patiala, one of the princely states. He later returned to England to be educated and later to train as a doctor before taking up general practice at Harrow. His quiet and cheerful demeanour won him many friends in the BDS, which he served as Branch Chairman for East Anglia, International Liaison Officer and, from 1972 until 1985, as Chairman of its International Liaison Committee. He organised several deer watching trips abroad for BDS members as well as reciprocal visits to Britain for overseas visitors. Walter was 82 at the time of his death.

Matt Hyland held office in the Irish Deer Society and served for a number of years as Irish Editor of Deer. A keen stalker who remained physically active at an age when many would have preferred an armchair to the discomforts of the hill, Matt Hyland will be fondly remembered by kindred spirits from Great Britain who enjoyed his hospitality while visiting Ireland, including the writer.

The English and Welsh and the Scottish Secretaries' reports in October 1998 Deer were largely devoted to current firearms issues, highlighting the supreme and overriding importance of securing for stalkers and deer managers the means to fulfil their responsibilities in balance with their

environment. The Scottish Editor of the journal, Rob Donaldson-Webster, announced a scheme whereby the BDS could access for its own purposes the large collection of high quality photographs and slides made by the late Lea MacNally, the use of which had been offered to the Society by his family. This involved producing computer images with the aid of modern technology to illustrate lectures, publicity material, the journal itself and so on, the wherewithal for so doing having been devised by the Scottish Editor. To extend the scope of this service from what had been named the Lea MacNally Image Library, members were asked to lend their own slides and photographs on all aspects of deer of all species in Britain in all situations, copyright being reserved to the copyright holder in every instance. A catalogue of images available would be made available in due course.

Rosemary Bethell travelled by train from Devon to London to interview Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington, about whom she wrote a revealing profile for *Deer* as the man of many parts who had agreed for his name to be put forward at the next AGM as a possible successor to Mike Squire as BDS Chairman. It was evident that the Society could anticipate robust leadership with this jovial Scotsman at the helm should he be elected to the Chair.

Two important new appointments were announced in the January 1999 issue of *Deer*. Alan McCormick, a former Services Branch member living in Wiltshire, became BDS Training Manager in succession to John Childs. He brought to his new post a wide experience of training in general and of deer management, being a holder of the Advanced Stalker Certificate and the N.R.A. Range Officer's Certificate. He was a member of the BDS Training Committee, then chaired by P.J.D. (Peter) Donnelly.

The other new appointment was of Andrew Hoon, a recently retired Brigadier, as Chairman of the Deer Initiative, a Government sponsored forum representing public and private interests concerned with sustainable wild deer management in England. While in the Army Andrew Hoon had been responsible for co ordinating deer management on MOD land in the south of England.

In his report the Chairman contrasted the coolness that existed between some deer management groups and other organisations and interests on the one hand and the consummate success achieved, in the face of many difficulties, by the BDS sponsored Exmoor and Quantock studies of the impact of red deer in those areas on their environment. This had been made possible by the sustained cooperation and support of many diverse and often conflicting interests.

The obvious lesson to be drawn from this was the value of mutual trust and of give and take and compromise in achieving goals worthwhile to all.

The Chairman also took some trouble to explain the law on dealing with injured and diseased deer, in particular road casualties. In essence the position was that in order to prevent further suffering, such casualties could be legally despatched during close times and close seasons, but only by weapons and ammunition certified under the Deer Act as approved for shooting deer. This had been very strongly criticised by individuals who considered, for example, a centrefire .22 rifle to be just as effective at close quarters, much less noisy and in other ways more suitable than full bore weapons for putting down road casualties in particular.

The popularity of competitive rifle range shooting among stalker members could be viewed as testimony to the keenness of stalkers in general to demonstrate their ability to shoot accurately and therefore to be encouraged in every way possible. However, some Branches had been finding it difficult to book M.o.D. ranges because of increasing demands by the military, sometimes at short notice, which of course had to be given priority. To help ease the situation efforts were being made to locate private ranges which might be prepared to accept BDS bookings.

Despite the prevailing low prices being paid by game dealers for deer carcasses, Mike Squire observed that deer poaching seemed not to have diminished. Not all police forces gave the detection of deer poachers high priority, and members were urged to miss no opportunity of highlighting the scale of the problem and the enormous cruelty often involved.

The Scottish Secretary commented on the continuing growth of deer management groups in Scotland, not only in the Highlands proper but in lower ground farmland and woodland areas. Encouraged by the Deer Commission for Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage an umbrella body, the Association of Deer Management Groups had been set up to coordinate the work of these Groups. The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute had developed a computer model which deer management groups could find invaluable in calculating the deer carrying capacities of different habitats, and thus of determining correct culls to be achieved in a variety of situations. This should help take much of the guesswork out of deer management in the future.

This largely replicated the sequence of events initiated many years previously by the British Deer Society with the establishment of a network of deer control societies operating in accordance with a BDS approved format. The chief difference was that the BDS had no direct influence over these deer management groups, having allowed the opportunity to provide the requisite leadership to slip out of its hands.

Very much to be reckoned with in any serious discussion on deer related economic and environmental issues are the views of Professor Brian Staines, O.B.E., a professional biologist who has served the BDS as Chairman of its Deer Management Committee. In a forceful article in *Deer* in which he cited the findings of other leading researchers as well as his own, Professor Staines outlined the changing fortunes of Highland red deer over the centuries, culminating in the population explosion of the late twentieth century and the serious impact this was having on other land users than deer forest owners and on the environment as a whole. He pressed the need for a substantial and sustained reduction in numbers as being desirable in general and in the best interests of the deer themselves. He also highlighted the damage caused to forestry in Scotland by ever expanding populations of sika and the problems arising from their proneness to hybridise with red deer, one answer to which, he suggested, might be the creation of island "refugia" from which sika could be excluded and native red deer able to flourish and retain their genetic purity. This proposal, however, failed to take into account the indigenous strain of red deer, *Cervus elaphus scoticus*, had had its purity much diluted over a fairly lengthy period of time by introductions of North American wapiti and of red deer of other races, ostensibly to "improve" the quality of the deer in specific areas.

Under the Chairmanship of Ron Perkins, the BDS Photographic Committee has done much to

encourage ethically responsible deer photography by members with competitions and articles giving technical advice. The 1999 Photographic Competition offered certificates for enprints judged first, second and third and "highly commended". There was a separate category for videos with a showing time of not more than ten minutes and another for the article on deer photography published in *Deer* during the year judged to be the best, for which the Dulverton Trophy, an engraved Caithness glass bowl would be awarded to the author to be held by the winner for one year.

Competitors were required to state whether their entries were photographed in the wild state or in enclosed conditions. Entries were judged by members of the Photographic Committee and Prize winning photographs would be published in *Deer*.

The April 1999 issue of *Deer* recorded the death of Donald Glen Tubby, a Services Branch stalwart and one of those dedicated people who seemed never to be happier than when devoting his time and energies to the British Deer Society. Don Tubby passed away after a short illness on 24 November 1998 at the age of 65. His special enthusiasm was for deer management, with which he first became involved around the time when the Services Branch was formed. He lectured at many stalker training courses, his speciality being safety, and he served on the Training Committee for many years. Often accompanied by his wife, Margaret, Don was one of the regulars on Wessex Branch stands at country shows, where his cheery demeanour will be warmly remembered by many.

In what was to be his swan song message to members from the Chair, Mike Squire urged the importance of written and signed agreements between stalkers and deer managers on the one hand and stalking landlords on the other to avoid misunderstandings between the parties involved.

In his role as Secretary to the English and Welsh Council (EWAC) Mike went to some pains to further clarify the law on how deer road casualties should be dealt with. Having sought advice from Peter Green, Hon. Veterinary Adviser to the BDS he recommended the use either of a knife or a 12 bore shotgun to put an injured deer out of its misery.

The Scottish Area Secretary took up the question of how best to safeguard the genetic integrity of red deer in Scotland against dilution by hybridising with sika. He recognised that it was almost too late to "stop the rot" from spreading further, and many possibly all island populations of red deer were no longer of pure bred indigenous stock, Perhaps the best that could be hoped for was the segregation on island refuges of red deer certified as 'being free from sikine influence'.

The international character of deer 'biological research was brought home afresh to BDS members by a report in April 1999 of a meeting in France of deer biologists from many parts of Europe. Roger Lambert, from Aberdeen University, and Alastair Ward, from the University of York, summarised the papers presented on subjects as diverse as nutrition and digestive physiology, reproduction, damage, predation and population dynamics, management and community and ecosystem. A total of 24 subjects for future research emerged from the discussions. A catch up of roe in the forest of Chize involved the employment of more than 200 people, 3km of fencing and the capture and tagging of 22 roe deer. Three wild boar were also caught. The meeting itself took place at the Centre d'Etudes Biologiques de Chize, Villers en Bois, near La Rochelle in western France.

Brian Staines concluded the in depth assessment of red deer related problems in Upland Scotland, Part One of which was published, two issues previously. He carefully analysed various aspects of problems caused by excessive numbers of deer and proposed solutions combining substantial reductions of deer with minimal or no loss of sporting value to deer forest proprietors.

The Gypsy Hill Hotel, on the outskirts of Exeter, Devon, was the base for the Society's 1999 AGM Weekend, the first the writer had attended since his resignation six years previously as editor of Deer. The programme was organised by South West England Branch and began on the Saturday morning 8 May, with a visit to John and Joan Willett's home at Hockworthy, on the Devon Somerset border, where we were able to see John's enclosed herds of Formosan sika and hog deer. We also saw some wild roe near the deer enclosure, we then had buffet lunch and viewed the numerous heads of antelope, deer and other herbivores in the large barn used by John Willett as a trophy museum before heading north to Exmoor, on the way to which we saw red deer through roadside trees. Despite showery weather some of us braved the elements and walked to the top of Dunkery Beacon. Most of the men wore a black tie for the Annual Dinner that evening, after which the Society's Hon. Veterinary Adviser, Peter Green, addressed members and their guests with some thoughts of his own on the BDS as it is now and in what direction it ought to be heading.

At the AGM next morning (Sunday, 9 April) the retiring Chairman presented his report on the multitude of matters which had claimed the Society's attention over the year now ended. He said satisfactory progress had been made in many directions, with the attainment of most objectives either imminent or likely soon to be achieved, The Hon. Treasurer reported a satisfactory financial situation, with Society assets totalling £375,000 as at 30 April 1999. In March 1999 the Chairman and Treasurer had attended a meeting of the Lonsdale Trust, whose assets at the end of March exceeded £183,000, and the Trustees gave assurance of their continued support for the BDS Society. Membership was currently in the region of 5,200 and the Treasurer urged members to try to recruit one new member each during 1999. It was agreed that a legacy from the late Jim Taylor Page should be used as an investment to help fund a bursary. Jim's executor Norman Dewhurst, had warmly endorsed this course of action. The Treasurer suggested that other members should bear the value of such bequests in mind when making their wills, but did not wish to hurry anyone on their way to the next world.

The following Directors were elected or re-elected to office by an overwhelming majority vote by the 67 members present and by a unanimous proxy vote in favour by 135 members: Michael Baxter Brown, Rob Donaldson Webster, John Johnson, Jeanette Lawton, Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington, Dorothy Ireland, David Kyle, Paul Leadbeater, Nigel Pickering, Lord Ramsay, John Thomas and Andrew Yool.

Mike Squire and Rosemary Bethell, retiring Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively, were warmly thanked for their very hard work for the Society over the past three years, and the President handed them tokens of members' gratitude. Mike Squire personally thanked Sarah Stride, General Manager, and her assistant Sue Varvill, for the hard work they had done and the Hon. Treasurer, John Thomas, for his support. He reminded the members present that two days a year had been originally thought to be all that the Hon. Treasurer would need to set aside for Society work, his BDS

duties had kept him busy for more than 70 days during the past year.

The President welcomed the new Chairman, Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington, a man who brought to his new role wide ranging executive experience, and Patrick spelled out his leadership philosophy as a countryman poet who hated excessive paperwork and liked people.

In his first message to members from the Chair (Deer, July 1999). Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington put a new figure 5,340 on the Society's total membership and appealed to all to remember what inspired the Society in its early days and to be guided accordingly for the future. He urged members to actively welcome newcomers to the BDS and to avoid the cliques and mutual jealousies which bedevilled so many societies. He said we should work to a Business Plan with clearly defined objectives and Mike Squire had made good progress with preparing such a plan for an initial five year period, with a rolling programme to take full account of changing needs and circumstances.

In his notes as EWAC Secretary, Mike Squire further clarified the law on the use of rifles and shotguns for putting down diseased and injured deer. Briefly, shotguns of any calibre could be used for this purpose, but only those rifles of calibres specified as legal for shooting deer under the terms of the Deer Acts. Use of a deer rifle for shooting wild boar, wild goats or any quarry other than deer required the inclusion on the firearm certificate of the intended quarry species to be legal. Mike Squire also stated that he would be responsible for coordinating records for the National Deer Survey of England and Wales which was still incomplete after much delay.

The Scottish Secretary announced that the survey of deer distribution in Scotland published in 1993 was being updated and should be published by next spring. He also confirmed that hybrid sika had now been added to Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it illegal to release them into the countryside. It was also now illegal to release any deer of the genus *Cervus* into the islands of Arran, Rhum, Jura, Islay or the Outer Hebrides, which might thus be secured as refugia for red deer unadulterated by possible hybridisation with sika. He also appealed for any evidence of possible harmful affects on deer of the presence of wind farms in any area, the R.S.P.B. having already complained of possible ill effects on wild birds in some localities where the siting of wind farms had been proposed.

Hugh Rose reported in *Deer* on the progress of deer management at Wytham Woods, near Oxford, entrusted to a team of experienced BDS stalker members by Oxford University, for which these woodlands serve as a research area of major importance.

A reminder that BDS training was not solely targeted on stalking was an announcement by the Gloucestershire, Avon and North Wiltshire Branch that it was planning a three day modular course for non stalkers. The intention was to deal with all six British wild deer species and to borrow illustrative material from the BDS Study and Resource Centre at Trentham for use on the course, which would be held at the Deer Cabin, The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. Module 1 would provide an all round introduction to British deer. Module 2 on the second day, would deal with the identification, habits and lifestyle of the six species and Module 3 on the third and final day, with deer conservation, biology, why deer management is necessary and how it should be carried out.



The idea of running such a course chimed in well with the views of our Hon. Veterinary Adviser, Peter Green. Although himself a keen stalker, he thought the Society should refocus its main concerns away from stalking and deer management and more on science and education and concentrate its efforts upon areas and aspects of deer welfare where its views could be made known at the highest level. He deplored television driven sentimentality about wild animals and hoped the BDS would play its part in redirecting public opinion towards a more realistic approach to animal welfare.

In July 1999 our President Lord Ramsay, became the 17th Earl of Dalhousie on the death of his father the 16th Earl at the age of 84. The late Lord Dalhousie served in the Black Watch in North Africa during the Second World War. Wounded and taken prisoner, he escaped from captivity in Italy and was awarded the Military Cross in 1944. He later became a Conservative M.P. and Whip, and in 1957 was appointed as the last British Governor General of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. From 1965-92 he was Lord Chamberlain to the Queen Mother and from 1967-69 was Lord Lieutenant of Angus, to which he had returned in 1965 to oversee the family estates. From 1977-92 he was Chancellor of Dundee University.

The BDS had a stand as usual at the 1999 Game Fair. This was held at Harewood House in Yorkshire and the Society's exhibit was visited by Viscount Lascelles who was photographed there in conversation with Nigel Pickering and Christopher Borthen the Editor of Stalking Magazine.

Following the 1999 AGM, Council ceased to be so described in Deer and in other literature. Those who had been members of Council and their successors now became Trustees/Directors with individual areas of responsibility and hence members of a Board of Directors. At the same time the Hon. Treasurer, John Thomas TD, MBA, FCA, MIMgt was also elected Vice Chairman in succession to Rosemary Bethell. The President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Hon, Treasurer, Committee Chairmen and Journal Editor became Board members ex officio.

In the October 1999 issue of Deer the new Chairman reiterated points he had made in the July issue, when he appealed for cohesion and berated factions, cliques and the pursuit of personal advantage at the expense of BDS aims and objectives. He called for increased participation by members in the work of the Society, at present shouldered by a very small paid staff and a few overstretched volunteers.

The EWAC Secretary added his voice to those of the Chairman and others urging early completion of the long overdue Society survey of wild deer distribution in England. Scottish Secretary Hugh Rose presented a disturbing report of developments north of the Border emanating from a reformist Scottish Parliament. Environmental and access issues were tending to take precedence over the necessities of sound sustainable deer management in Scottish Government thinking and ensuing policy priorities.

The chequered history of Deer Society allegiances in Ireland took a new twist with the inauguration on 19 November 1999 of a Northern Ireland Branch of the British Deer Society at a meeting at the Cornmill Heritage Centre in Coalisland. Among those present was BDS Chairman Patrick Gordon-

Duff-Pennington, who outlined his hopes for the future of the BDS and entertained the gathering with anecdotes and recitations of his poems. In no way put out by this, the Northern Ireland Deer Society, a wholly independent body set up some years previously to cater for deer minded people in Ulster who felt they were ill served by the all Ireland Irish Deer Society founded in the 1960s, maintained a programme of its own including a barbecue and sika watching foray in Davagh Forest on 5 October and an AGM on 5 November 1999 at the self same venue in Coalisland where the BDS local Branch was to be launched 16 days later.

The IDS itself had two autonomous subsidiaries the Kerry Deer Society and the Donegal Deer Society, which were variously identified as independent organisation and Branches of the national body. There was also a breakaway entity known as the Wicklow Deer Group, independently affiliated to the British Deer Society.

### **30. 2000 not out!**

WHEN DID THE NEW MILLENIUM START? Common sense surely suggests 1 January 2001 as being the actual starting date, that being when the year 2000 had finally run its course. As we all know, however, impatience and general emotion decided the issue, with the result that the event was celebrated worldwide a year too soon.

We all had to go with the flow of course, although the January 2000 issue of Deer was a rather subdued celebratory number. Its entire contents were assembled during the closing weeks of 1999, with news items and comment on the ever changing deer scene, relating exclusively to happenings before the 1990s had passed into history.

The Chairman thanked members for responding more positively to his appeal in the previous issue for better understanding of pressures and problems at BDS Headquarters, where staff were now much happier after being moved by the Game Conservancy to much larger accommodation than their previous "shoe box" size office.

The Chairman had spent much time during the past few months "building bridges" with animal welfare organisations including the RSPCA and the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS) and had been courteously received. At EWAC's meeting in September, the Masters of Deerhounds Association and LACS had presented their diametrically opposed views but at least agreed that deer had to be culled.

The House of Commons Committee dealing with firearms legislation had accepted a paper setting out the views of the BDS. One essential is a unified interpretation of the law by the various police forces, which tends to be lacking in the absence of firm guidelines by the Home Office.

The Chairman's millennium message was: "Many of you don't like each other, start trying even if all stalkers are what Willie Poole describes as 'dysfunctional'!"

EWAC Secretary Mike Squire reported on a meeting convened by the Home Office to discuss and resolve various issues concerning firearms for use against deer. Lancashire Police had prepared a draft paper for circulation to ACPO proposing a ban on certain calibres of rifle because the muzzle energy or muzzle velocity exceeded military criteria governing use on M.o.D. ranges. Mike Squire's suggestion that responsibility for allowing the use of these rifles on range shoots should rest with the shooter or club officials and the M.o.D. This argument was accepted and Alan McCormick, BDS Training Manager, circulated guidelines on how to keep within the law.

A senior Army officer present at the Home Office meeting raised a further potential obstacle when he said expanding ammunition could not be used on M.O.D. ranges. Efforts by the EWAC Secretary to obtain chapter and verse supporting this claim had not yet been successful.

Firearms legislation was due to be reviewed by the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee in

November 1999. After originally being omitted from organisations whose views were sought, the BDS was later invited to participate and had submitted its own views.

Apathy by some English Branches was partly to blame for delayed completion of the National Wild Deer Distribution Survey, which the Chairman had asked the EWAC Secretary to expedite as a top priority.

The Chairman and Secretary of EWAC had spent much time seeking a satisfactory resolution of problems within the East Anglia Branch. The Board had finally intervened and a reconvened Branch AGM was held with a new Branch Chairman, David Farman, and Branch Committee elected.

Following publication of the Joint Universities Study on hunting with hounds which was set up largely to challenge the findings of the Bateson Report, the BDS had been pressurised to support continued hunting. At a Board meeting in September 1999 representatives of the LACS and the Masters of Deerhounds Association had been invited, to state their case. The BDS opted for neutrality and for acting as "honest broker", a position endorsed by the two other parties.

A draft BDS booklet on the humane despatch of wounded deer recommended the use of a knife only in circumstances where no other method was available or appropriate, but the RSPCA requested that all reference to the use of a knife should be deleted. The BDS would now work towards gaining acceptance of the use of a knife where no other means were available to avoid prolonging the suffering of an injured animal. In the meantime stalkers were advised that use of a knife incurred the risk of prosecution by the RSPCA. An updated Deerstalking Code of Practice was being published jointly by BASC and the BDS and would be available in January 2000.

Mike Squire reported receiving a number of requests from police forces for BDS support for the fight against rural crime including poaching, and Branches were urged to enquire how they might best help in their own force areas.

The Scottish Secretary highlighted the loopholes in Scottish Deer law which make it possible to shoot deer out of season legally or with the minimum of bureaucratic interference. The mere expectation of serious crop damage in the absence of armed intervention out of season was sufficient to warrant a cull on stock fenced land, and what constituted "serious damage" in the eyes of the law was notoriously hard to define.

At an EWAC Council meeting in early March 2000 the late Jim Taylor Page's executor, former BDS Vice Chairman Norman Dewhurst handed over to Society Chairman Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington a cheque for more than £18,000, this being Jim's legacy to our Society, which he was instrumental in launching in 1963 and which he served as founder Secretary. Also bequeathed to the BDS by Jim was a carved trophy, a section of ancient antler used by EWAC Chairmen as a gavel to call his Council to order at meetings, and Jim's M.B.E. The financial legacy was to be used to fund education and research. Present at the handover ceremony were Jim's niece Elizabeth Brennan and her husband, Patrick Gordon Duff Pennington, Norman Dewhurst and E.W.A.C. Chairman Paul Leadbeater as well as the members of EWAC.

In the April, 2000 issue of *Deer* the BDS Chairman urged Board members and others to rally behind him if at the forthcoming AGM they wished him to serve for a second year. Divisiveness over such issues as the future of the Society's Education Centre at Trentham in North Staffordshire, which some thought a Health and Safety risk and a likely future financial liability in view of improvements planned by the owner which could make the rent no longer affordable, could only frustrate the long term success of the Society. The BDS Chairman also asked to be spared having to make written reports about all the large number of visits he paid to other organisations on behalf of the BDS.

EWAC's Secretary reported that a fresh study of the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 clearly exculpated those who might use a knife to despatch injured or diseased deer when no other method as available or appropriate. Paragraph 2 of the Act stated "A person shall not be guilty of an offence under the Act by reason of the attempted killing of such wild mammal as an act of mercy if he shows that the mammal had been so seriously disabled otherwise than by his unlawful act that there was no reasonable chance of its recovery."

The RSPCA remained obdurate in its view that the use of a knife to despatch disabled deer under any circumstances was cruel and that prosecution might follow if such an act were proven or recommended. Nevertheless, BASC and the BDS Board of Directors were in agreement the booklet on humane despatch of injured or diseased deer should retain recommendation of the use of a knife to despatch such deer when no alternative was appropriate or available.

The death of Major F.B. (Freddie) Hingston early in the year 2000 deprived the BDS of a widely respected "elder statesman". A Society member almost from its beginning, he ran a stalker training session for our Wessex Branch at a stage in the Society's development when such events were still experimental. His dry wit will long be remembered as a stimulating accompaniment to the sage advice he imparted, based as this was on a long experience of his subject. A professional soldier, he was commissioned in 1931 and he served in India, Burma, East Africa and Malta at various times during his military career. In 1988 he published his book *Deer Parks and Deer of Great Britain*. Under the pen name "Uncle Offa" he contributed regularly to the *Weekend Telegraph* on traditional weather lore.

In early March, 2000 Scottish Council and Central Scotland Branch hosted a BDS Board meeting at Blairinroar Community Centre, a converted farmhouse near Comrie in Perthshire where Hugh Rose held training courses. Board members were invited to attend a meeting of Scottish Council on the Saturday afternoon 4 March, and those who availed themselves of this found it an ideal opportunity to get to know some of their Scottish colleagues. In the evening Board and Scottish Council members were guests of Central Scotland Branch at a supper and lecture session at the nearby Crieff Hotel. Speakers were Graeme Swanson, a research colleague of Josephine Pemberton at Edinburgh University, whose subject was sika/red deer hybridisation, which he thought much more of a threat to the genetic integrity of sika than to that of red deer, and John Mackay of Scottish Natural Heritage, who spoke on the progress in Scotland of planned legislation on "the right to roam". Board members at their meeting on Sunday 5 March were sustained by food and liquid refreshment dispensed by Margie Rose, wife of Hugh and the wives of other members present.

The BDS was represented by its Chairman,      journal Editor and South East England

Branch members at a short seminar instigated by the Surrey Woodland Working Group and held in Guildford on 15 March 2000. Other organisations represented included the National Trust, Surrey Wildlife Trust and the St. Hubert Club of Great Britain, and papers were presented by Surrey County Council, the Deer Initiative, the Forestry Commission, Forest Research, Surrey Police and BASC. The theme of the seminar was "Managing Surrey's Deer".

Shap Wells Hotel at Shap, on the Cumbrian Fells was the venue for the AGM in the year 2000, held during the weekend of 12-14 May together with a full programme of events arranged by North West England Branch. Fine weather blessed the Stalkers' Shoot on Friday 12 May, and the whole of the weekend that followed. After dinner that evening the two southernmost Branches in Scotland and the two most northerly ones in England gave presentations on their individual circumstances and on how each dealt with its own particular challenges and problems.

Presentations by Dr. Josephine Pemberton, Dr. Peter Delap and Andrew Hoon followed each other on Saturday morning. Dr. Pemberton said research on sika/red deer hybridisation indicated that the odds against successful matings varied from 1:500 to 1:1,000 and that heavy culling of sika hinds was likely to accentuate dispersal by sika stags in search of a mate and resultant greater risk of matings with red deer hinds. Dr. Delap presented the head of an exceptional red deer stag from the local area the "Winster Head" to North West England Branch of which he was founder Chairman, for exhibition at the Ray Bridge Deer Museum, at Bouth-by-Ulverston. His talk was about this head and the stock from which it came. Andrew Hoon explained the purpose of the Government backed Deer Initiative, of which he was Chairman, and urged influential members to give it all the support they could, albeit that this was going over old ground first ploughed by the BDS nearly 40 years ago with the establishment of a network of local deer control societies operating according to rules laid down by the British Deer Society.

In the afternoon Peter Delap amazed everyone with his agility at the age of 87 when he led members on foot to see the mediaeval deer trap at Wet Sleddale, a notable item of deer archaeology.

The Society Dinner that evening was graced by the presence of Baroness Mallalieu, who gave a very lively after dinner speech.

At the AGM on Sunday 14 May, the Chairman said too much time and too many resources had been diverted during the year from the Society's prime objectives of promoting the welfare, management and conservation of deer. This had happened because of the need to re establish the East Anglia Branch on a sound footing and because of differences of opinion concerning the management of deer in Oxford University's Wytham Woods research area, which the Chairman felt should not have arisen. Better communication within the Society was needed. The Chairman had visited a number of Branches and during the ensuing year hoped to visit several more to hear members' views and to respond to them. The Society's charitable status was worth some £20,000 a year and it was vital to retain this.

Paid staff worked above and beyond the call of duty and deserved our thanks for their dedication.

The Society's charitable status was widely respected and debarred it from taking sides in the ongoing debate about the future of hunting with hounds, but not from taking note of developments and reacting appropriately if consulted. Training now required a full time Training Manager, and the Chairman foresaw that the time may come when stalking without a certificate of competence would no longer be legal.

Uncertainty over the future of the premises at Trentham used for educational purposes by Jeanette Lawton and her team for many years had prompted the Board reluctantly to discontinue this arrangement. Jeanette, however, had decided to retain use of the premises as a Deer and Resource Centre, independently of the BDS.

To avoid time wasting duplication of effort, the Chairman favoured working in combination with other organisations wherever possible, but this did not mean handing over responsibility for firearms matters to BASC or to anyone else.

The Treasurer reported a net deficit over the year of about £3,000. Over the past five years income from membership subscriptions had increased by 44% and training income by a net amount of 214% over the same period, journal costs had risen by 41% and support costs (including staff costs and training costs) by 85%. General costs had risen by 100%, which included increases in travelling costs of nearly 200% incurred by members of Committees travelling to and from Committee meetings.

The BDS supported and was involved with Deer Management Qualifications Ltd and the Deer Initiative Ltd. Both companies were limited 'by guarantee' and did not distribute profits or pay Directors' fees although they were expected to make a profit. Mike Squire had been replaced as a Director of DMQ Ltd by the Treasurer. References in the accounts to Macroguard, related to a company run by John Johnson, a BDS Director responsible for I.T. and Administration. I.T. equipment was purchased from Macroguard only when it had been ascertained that its prices were lower than these of competing firms.

Continued delay in completing the English Deer Distribution Survey was due to exceptional pressures on the time of the EWAC Secretary and others involved, caused by such matters as the East Anglia Branch problem and the Wytham Woods controversy.

Following a series of questions about the conduct and financing of the deer cull in Wytham Woods, it was resolved that the Society should hold a full enquiry into the whole affair from October 1997 to the spring of 2000. The Annual Accounts, Directors' Report and the Auditors' Report for the year ended 31 December 1999 were adopted and the Directors, other officials and Auditors were re elected. Fellows were also re elected.

At the date of the AGM, Society membership was listed as totalling 5,550. Seventy six members attended the AGM and 243 exercised their right to vote through an attorney on some or all of the resolutions.

The Burns Enquiry into the welfare and social effects of deer hunting with "dogs" and of the likely

damage resulting from the abolition of hunting was published on 13 June 2000 and was outlined in July 2000 Deer by the Secretary of EWAC. The Scottish Secretary wrote about the avalanche of paper received from the Scottish Executive, often requesting informed opinion on abstruse matters requiring research, at almost impossibly short notice. An open winter had caused hinds to gather in large herds at high altitudes, making culling in sufficient numbers that much more difficult. In many areas the BDS was concerned about too few stalkers being used, with the result that much hind shooting was done out of season to catch up on arrears of work.

Many wildlife parks and nature reserves had no deer management at all, either because those in charge and their visitors were averse to the use of firearms in such surroundings, or did not know how to operate a deer management plan. Where deer damage on a significant scale was noted, fencing was apt to be the solution of choice, regardless of the fact that a total absence of grazing or browsing could be as bad for the environment and habitat as too much.

The Chairman's message in October 2000 Deer was a typically fiery blend of castigation and wit such as members had come to anticipate since Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington took office in 1999. He reserved his special censure for those Branches which still had not completed the Deer distribution survey for their individual areas, either through slothfulness or because of some other reason. He also included in his report not for the first time a few lines of verse, in this case on hunting by Rudyard Kipling.

The EWAC Secretary reported that all English Branches had now submitted returns for the Deer distribution survey. These were being processed by the Game Conservancy and definitive maps would shortly be completed. It would now be important to keep records up to date.

Also announced was the availability from BDS H.Q. of an Advice Note on how to deal with road traffic accidents involving Deer and what the law lays down on the subject. Police and local authorities had already requested copies, and, all BDS members were strongly urged to obtain one in view of the virtual inevitability of sooner or later arriving on the scene of such an accident, of which there could be as many as 50,000 in Britain annually.

An item of good news was the fact that during the summer of 2000 the Exmoor Deer Forum had held its first meeting for two years. It was hoped this was a sign that a fresh attempt would be made to reconcile seemingly intractable differences of opinion on future management of the red deer. During her Vice Chairmanship of the BDS, Rosemary Bethell had worked hard behind the scene to help reactivate the Forum.

The Scottish Secretary devoted the first part of his report in October 2000 Deer to urging upon stalkers and deer managers the importance of fairly detailed record keeping. Apparently one of the earliest deer management groups in Scotland initially proposed not to involve its members in keeping records because at busy periods, they would lack the necessary time, and this was weakly agreed upon at the outset.

The Scottish Secretary also inveighed against the translocation and release into the wild of exotic animals, fish and plants of all descriptions. He cited a number of examples of releases that had



proved harmful to competing native species, sometimes irreversibly so, and reminded readers that the release of sika and muntjac was now illegal except in particular circumstances, despite which some misguided people were still intent on breaking the law.

Another bete noir to deer forest proprietors and others concerned with deer welfare had been the move towards the establishment of national parks in areas where deer would be particularly exposed to disturbance by the public. However, a National Parks (Scotland) Act became law in August 2000 with Loch Lomondside and the Trossachs and the Cairngorms to be the first areas affected.

Training Committee Chairman Nigel Pickering belatedly reported in October 2000 Deer the award at the Society's AGM in May of a well deserved BDS Fellowship to John Childs. John had served variously since the early 1980s as Training Committee Secretary, Training Officer and Training Committee Chairman until his recent retirement from office.

Other news on training matters included the fact that thanks to the efforts of Training Manager Alan McCormick, the BDS was now a recognised DMQ Assessment Centre. The revised 300 Questions, the answers to which DMQ candidates need to learn before taking the written test as potential qualified stalkers, were announced as being ready for introduction in 2001. Level 3 Assessment was still "a long way away in time", but intending candidates could meanwhile take the Advanced Course in the case of stalkers or the Lowland Deer Management Course in the case of land agents and other non stalkers concerned with setting up and administering deer management as an element in overall estate management. An all time record number of training courses had been held in the current year.

On 25 November 2000 the death occurred, at the age of 89, of William Arthur Cadman O.B.E., B.A. A noted sportsman and naturalist who served on the BDS Council in its early years, Arthur Cadman as most people knew him, was educated at Malvern College and Keble College, Oxford. He trained in forestry at the Commonwealth Forestry Institute and after graduating in 1933 he obtained employment with the Forestry Commission. His first post was at Thetford. After serving as a senior forest officer in Wales, in 1959 he was appointed Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, where he was able to put his particular love of deer to good effect by having the forest keepers retrained in modern deer management methods. He also took active measures to save the red deer in the New Forest from extinction.

In 1968 Arthur left the Forestry Commission and became involved in deer management in Scotland and elsewhere. He wrote a number of books on field sports and wildlife, one of which, Dawn, Dusk and Deer, first published in 1966 and later reprinted was largely based on his experiences with deer in the New Forest. In January 2001 Deer, the Chairman told us that in the preceding three months he had visited several more Branches, an aspect of his activities on behalf of the Society which had given him particular enjoyment. Nevertheless, he noted that most members appeared to regard Branch meetings as occasions for entertainment rather than for learning more about the Society, its work and objectives. Moreover, members were prone to aggregating into small cliques at Branch meetings rather than circulating among other members in general and thereby broadening their acquaintance by making themselves and their personal interests known to newcomers and vice

versa.

While bemoaning the fact that a new and even more stringent Game Meat Regulation had been drafted in Brussels for all Member States of the European Union, and would inevitably make heavy demands on the time of those charged with scrutinising its implications and negotiating practical solutions to problems the Regulation, as drafted, might present to individual countries, the Scottish Secretary stressed the vital importance to the health of the venison trade, and hence to the economics of Estates with significant deer populations, of complying with the eventual revised Regulation. The Scottish Secretary also stressed the importance to stalkers of being aware of the address of their local Divisional Veterinary Office or Manager in case they should need to submit for veterinary inspection deer carcasses suspected of being diseased.

Having lapsed for a number of issues, the publication of reports on meetings of the Society's governing body now the Board of Directors was resumed in January 2001. Deer in the interests of improved communication. The meeting reported upon in this instance was a two day one held on 18 and 19 November 2000. The first day was devoted to two subjects: Wytham Woods about which no details were given, and the Society Memorandum and Articles. It was agreed that in the latter case only minor amendments were needed before a draft and working guide were circulated to Branches. The second day was occupied with miscellaneous agenda items ranging from Shows, which in 2000 had been highly successful overall, to Membership, which had risen from 4,200 in 1996 to a recent peak of 5,500 before dipping to 5,300. The total number of members was subject to constant fluctuation but the overall trend remained upward.

## 31. All change!

THE FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE epidemic of 2001 caught many on the back foot, no pun intended. Not least of those caught off balance were those at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) whom one might have hoped to have responded with a clear cut, decisive policy. Instead, one sensed that behind the scenes, and sometimes much more openly, a tug of war was being played out between proponents of different policies.

While this went on the epidemic spread remorselessly, and many aspects of country life closed down for the duration, to borrow a phrase from the Second World War. There was great anxiety about deer. While sheep and cattle were being slaughtered in unprecedented numbers at enormous cost to all concerned, wild deer were able to wander unrestrained, over affected ground and otherwise.

While officialdom played down the potential of deer as infective agents, others proposed a wholesale cull. The BDS Chairman himself favoured what he called "a forensic cull" with a view to determining whether and where deer might be harbouring foot and mouth.

He mentioned this in his parting message to BDS members in the May 2001 issue of *Deer*, an emergency number produced to plug the gap between the January and October issues in place of the more usual April and July issues during that time. For the rest, his epistle was the mixture of good humour and plain speaking to which members had grown accustomed during Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington's two year tenure of the Chair. He regretted the democratic brakes placed on his preference for direct decisive action, and said the Society suffered from being too large to be run on a shoestring and too small to be a major player on the political scene. On the plus side, he valued the many friendships he had made with Society members and was grateful for the friendly hospitality he had received from so many.

As well as the many Branch meetings cancelled or substantially rescheduled because of the foot and mouth epidemic, the Society AGM weekend, arranged to be based at the Hilton Hotel, Edinburgh Airport on 11-13 May 2001 with a full programme of supporting events, had to be abandoned.

Despite the wholesale cancellation of non essential gatherings or their postponement until happier times, the need for a national organisation to deal with deer and related matters was never more clearly demonstrated than during 2001. From the very first day of the foot and mouth disease (FMD) crisis, leading BDS officials and the Society's Headquarters staff were bombarded with an avalanche of queries from members and others: Was stalking now banned nationally? Could crop marauders still be dealt with? Could bookings from recreational stalkers still be taken for next year? Could deer shot before the FMD outbreak still be sold for human consumption? What should be done about deer road casualties?

These were just a few of the questions raised as a matter of urgency by deer managers and stalkers nationwide. By putting everything else "on hold", the Society went into top gear to offer up to the

minute advice to all enquirers. Advice Notes on how best to deal with problems arising were published in Deer as well as articles on a range of FMD related subjects.

A source of major anxiety to landowners and game dealers reliant on venison sales for a substantial part of their income was the future of the vital export trade in this commodity. Prior to the FMD epidemic, almost all the annual output of roe venison in Britain and around 80% of the venison from larger deer species was exported to the European continent. This trade was immediately suspended when FMD was confirmed and could not be resumed until at least three months after the very last case of FMD was notified. Efforts to increase domestic sales of British venison above about 20% of total output had met with little consistent success.

A few weeks into the FMD crisis farmers and others began to look critically at deer as potential vectors of infection which might cause the disease to break out afresh among new farm stock when eventually turned out to pasture on ground cleared earlier of stock. Calls began to be heard for the extermination of deer in infected areas. This galvanised the game industry into action. Keith Taylor, Director of the National Game Dealers' Association put his concerns and those of his members to the BDS, and following discussions with Mike Squire it was agreed to call a meeting of interested parties to assess the overall situation and consider the way forward.

Opened by the Earl of Dalhousie and Chaired by Mike Squire with assistance from Keith Taylor, the resultant meeting was held on 25 April at the Royal Agricultural Society Centre in Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire. Representatives of an impressive range of rural organisations and interests informed the meeting how their activities and concerns had been affected by FMD, and BDS Hon. Veterinary Adviser Peter Green and deer farmer and vet, John Fletcher described the veterinary implications of the disease. There was general agreement that stalking should be allowed to recommence and that Government research should be directed to finding out more about deer and FMD. It was regretted that neither the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, nor the National Farmers' Union had sent delegates to the meeting to contribute to the discussion and answer questions from those present.

Notwithstanding the fact that Scotland was only marginally affected by the FMD epidemic, Scottish Secretary Hugh Rose launched himself unsparingly into the fray from the beginning. He acknowledged the enormous help given by e-mail and other aspects of modern technology in making it possible for the flood of communications generated by the FMD crisis to be dealt with speedily and efficiently.

Meanwhile, another prominent founder member had passed from the scene. On 25 January 2001 Sir Dudley Forwood, Bt., died at the age of 88, two months to the day after the death of Arthur Cadman, former Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, of which Sir Dudley had been a notable resident. The two had combined resources and influence in the early 1960s to secure the survival of red deer in the New Forest at a time when their numbers were reduced to single figures. A past Master like his father, another Sir Dudley, of the now non-existent New Forest Buckhounds, Sir Dudley Richard Forwood played an active part in BDS affairs from the beginning and in 1967 became a Vice President. In 1964-5 he was Joint Vice Chairman with John Willett and sole Vice Chairman from 1965-6. From 1985-6, at a critical time in the Society's affairs, he was BDS Chairman, with

Hugh Oliver-Bellasis as Vice Chairman.

At various periods, Sir Dudley Forwood was Official Verderer of the New Forest, Chairman of the New Forest Consultative Panel, of the New Forest Show and of Crufts' dog show. In 1934, while serving as an honorary attache at the British Legation in Vienna, he was deputed to accompany the Prince of Wales and Wallis Simpson on a skiing holiday in Austria. A friendship developed which had a sequel three years later when, as equerry to the ex King who by then was Duke of Windsor, he was responsible for arranging the Duke's wedding to Wallis Simpson. He later recalled the Duke's bitter disappointment when he had to tell him his new Duchess had not been granted royal rank. He also accompanied the Duke and Duchess to Berchtesgaden to meet Hitler, an occasion he described many years afterwards in a television documentary.

The postponed 2001 AGM was held as a "business only" event at the Jarvis International Hotel, Solihull, on Saturday 16 June. As well as the usual agenda, an important item of business designed to safeguard the future of the Society and its membership, was a Resolution on the proposed changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the British Deer Society. Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington duly resigned as Chairman, and was presented by our President the Earl of Dalhousie, with a specially bound copy of Rodger McPhajl's book: Artist, Naturalist, Sportsman with reproductions of the artist's work and text by Ian Alcock, as a token of gratitude for his work for the Society.

As already indicated, the retiring Chairman had continued his practice of visiting Branches almost to the end of his time in office. One of these visits on 7 February 2001 was to Wessex Branch to attend its AGM at which he took the opportunity to present scrolls of Society Fellowship to Trustee/Director and Wessex Branch Chairman Dorothy Ireland and John Childs, now retired from his post as Training Committee Chairman.

While on the subject of presentations, it should be mentioned that at the North West England Branch AGM delayed from 2 March 2001 until 24 April because of the FMD epidemic which had affected north west England and its northern part especially with particular severity, branch President Bill Grant took special pleasure in presenting Grizedale Head Ranger John Cubby with the Balfour-Browne Trophy for 2001. The Chief Executive of Forest Enterprise had already made a formal presentation, but Bill Grant retired Chief Forester for the area who had originally employed John Cubby, was anxious to pay a personal tribute to the man who had been directly responsible for deer management in a vital area of south Lakeland for many years and who had become a personal friend.

Yet another presentation, by our President Lord Dalhousie at the Society AGM, was of the Jim Taylor Page Trophy to Cliff and Di Moore, two members who had worked very hard behind the scenes and otherwise, organising exhibits at Shows and generally helping the BDS in other ways. Carry on the good work Cliff and Di.

At the AGM itself, Mark Nicolson was welcomed as our new Chairman. In his message to members in October 2001 Deer he reiterated the warnings given by his predecessor, Patrick Gordon-Duff-

Pennington, about the corrosive effects of schism by a small rebel element amongst the membership. Staff time had been needlessly diverted into dealing with representations by these people. Members were requested to direct any such queries or observations in future to the new Chairman, who undertook to deal with them personally. Mark Nicolson realised he was unknown to many members, but hoped to remedy this, by meeting as many members as possible at an early stage in his Chairmanship.

The appointment of Alastair Ward as full time BDS Conservation and Information Officer was announced in October 2001 Deer. In accordance with a suggestion made at the AGM that members might like to have more specific information about how the BDS was organised and the Lonsdale Trust and other bodies with which the BDS is connected the following facts were published in Deer:

BDS (Sales and Services) Ltd., a company limited by guarantee, is the trading arm of the British Deer Society. It was set up in 1994 in accordance with the recommendations of the Charity Commission. It is used for monies received from such things as the sale of BDS memorabilia, show goods, books, stalking insurance and advisory works. Formation of a trading subsidiary is best practice and a system used by numerous charitable institutions, among them the RSPB, The National Trust, Game Conservancy Trust and the British Heart Foundation as well as numerous schools and colleges.

The Lonsdale Trust was set up in 1973 by the 7th Earl of Lonsdale, the 4th Viscount Ridley and the 2nd Baron Dulverton. The Trust has regularly gifted its yearly interest to further the work of the BDS. The BDS President, Chairman and Treasurer are on the Board of Trustees.

Qualifications in Deer Management Ltd, currently trading as DMQ is a company limited by guarantee originally incorporated in 1997. Its qualifications as an award making body have been generally accepted as the industry standard for deerstalking. It is made up of the DCS, BASC, BDS, Game Conservancy Ltd, Countryside Alliance, Forest Enterprise, the Association of Deer Management Groups Scotland, Sparsholt College, North Highland College, the Deer Initiative and a few independents. The BDS is represented on the Board by one of its Directors.

Relocated to Shuttleworth in Bedfordshire because of the FMD outbreak, the 2001 CLA Game Fair was blessed by fine, hot weather. It was attended by our Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, who spent much time at the BDS exhibit, talking to members and visitors. He was particularly interested in Deer Quest; a computer based training aid for DSC Level 1 aspirants being demonstrated by Terry Cooper of Deer UK.

FMD received further in depth coverage from contributors to October 2001 Deer. Deer farmer John Fletcher took some comfort from the fact that Government employed veterinarians had failed to find any signs of FMD infection among deer they had examined. Hugh Rose, on the other hand, cited a litany of errors, omissions, incompetence and downright folly and obstructiveness by officialdom which was all the more disturbing because of the very real possibility that the outbreak would re erupt in 2002. In fact there was no further outbreak, and suspicions by farmers and others that deer might be harbouring the FMD virus and would reinfect domestic livestock in areas cleared of the

disease were not borne out by later events.

Also reported in Deer was the Tenth Symposium and Tour of the International Sika Society, which drew members from all over Europe to Sopron, in Hungary, for three very full days in June 2001. At a time when it had become the fashion to revile sika in Britain as being thoroughly undesirable and worthy of little but universal condemnation, it is noteworthy that in continental Europe there were scientists and others who still took them sufficiently seriously to hold symposia about them in which their allegedly undesirable features did not take precedence over all else.

A new name to appear at this time among those holding official positions for the Society was that of Professor R.J, (Rory) Putman as Honorary Scientific Advisor.

In January 2002, the Editor profiled Mark Nicolson the new BDS Chairman, as a 47 year old former City of London banker who was educated at Eton and Durham University and who now runs a property firm in London's West End. He also manages and co owns the 6,000 hectare Mar estate in south west Aberdeenshire, where the number of hinds has been more than halved since 1987. His object there is to integrate deer management and public access harmoniously. He says he is not a deer expert but hopes his business experience will benefit the Society.

In his New Year message to members, Mark Nicolson thanked all those including staff members, who had worked far beyond the call of duty dealing with queries from the public during the FMD outbreak, which was now over. His particular thanks went to Mike Squire and Hugh Rose, who had borne the brunt of the work throughout. When people asked him what the BDS did, as frequently happened, he could confidently reply that what the Society did during the FMD crisis was an excellent example of what it does "in achieving its charitable remit of advancing the welfare of the six species of deer found wild within the UK and Northern Ireland".

A contemporary news item was that a 500 year old Scots pine on the Mar Lodge estate in Scotland, now protected by deer fencing, had produced saplings for the first time in 200 years. At almost the same time it was announced that 50 miles of deer fencing was to be lowered, with more to follow, to safeguard capercaillie which were prone to killing themselves by flying into this fencing. A further 80 miles of fencing was to be marked to make it more visible to these large birds. A study had shown that as many as one third of all capercaillie deaths were caused by colliding with deer fencing.

The EWAC Secretary dwelt upon the tightened up food hygiene regulations already in place or to be anticipated as a consequence of the FMD outbreak, and the extra responsibilities these would place on stalkers and deer managers when preparing and forwarding deer carcasses for human consumption at home or abroad. The Society had been consulted by the Home Office about the proposed wording of advice to the police on interpreting firearms legislation, and most of what the BDS had recommended had been embodied in the resultant draft document.

Reporting from north of the Border, Hugh Rose said fears that the venison market might be swamped by the early unloading of a mountain of stored venison had proved unfounded. The tightening of food hygiene regulations had been followed by the closing down of many small game dealers handling indifferent quality venison from dubious sources, which was no bad thing for the

trade in general although other problems persisted. One of these was cash bribes by dealers to professional stalkers to secure contracts when these were at the stalkers' disposal and disinterested employers were deceived into accepting prices for their venison less than the normal going rate. The Scottish Secretary also had critical words for the Scottish Executive and the Deer Commission for Scotland about the volume of paper both produced.

The FMD outbreak was officially declared to have ended early in February 2002. At around the same time however, and coinciding with the lifting of restrictions on livestock movement, stalking, export of venison and other affected activities, a worrying increase in the number of cases of bovine tuberculosis was reported from the north of England. Apparently northern farmers had been restocking their depleted pastures with cattle from south west England, where we were informed by our EWAC Secretary that many beasts had fallen victim to TB.

The English and Welsh Area Secretary reported that at the EWAC Annual General Meeting in February 2002 Dorothy Ireland had been elected Area Chairman, a post she had held in an acting capacity for several months previously following the resignation of Paul Leadbeater because of work commitments. Adrian Baker had been elected Area Vice Chairman, a position from which he resigned a few months later. As well as England and Wales, EWAC now included the recently created Northern Ireland Branch of the BDS.

Another recent development among EWAC member Branches was a change of name by the erstwhile Gloucestershire, Avon and North Wiltshire Branch to the much less unwieldy West England Branch - a change which nevertheless was not universally welcomed.

The Scottish Secretary devoted his space in April 2002 Deer to various topics of the moment including the future of the venison trade post FMD. He hoped game dealers now realised the precariousness of a business which relied so heavily on exporting to the European continent. The Forestry Commission and one leading Scottish dealer had obtained a contract from the supermarket chain Sainsbury's to supply wild Scottish venison to many of its branches, while in the export market, following the ending of FMD restrictions, there was a big demand for roe venison which could not at present be fully met by British suppliers.

To encourage an increased red deer cull on selected Highland estates of key importance on conservation grounds or for some other special reason, the Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS) was offering a bonus payment of £30 a carcase for every deer culled in excess of the target figure agreed by the Commission with the estates concerned and the local deer management group - a cause for jealousy by some other property owners who were not invited to benefit in this way.

Hugh Rose expressed his concern about the too readily availability of licences from the Deer Commission for Scotland for shooting deer at night or out of season. He thought the open season for hinds could be extended to the end of March without detriment to deer welfare, the prime purpose of the BDS, and also brought forward to October 1st under special circumstances provided it was also lengthened to late March.

As a new member of staff, Alastair Ward, Conservation and Information Officer, set out his stall for



the benefit of members who might not be fully aware of the important role he now filled as the Society's principal link and channel of communication with the scientific world in particular. He had already attended several conferences on behalf of the BDS.

Also recorded in April 2002 Deer was the gift by G. Kenneth Whitehead, our most senior Vice President, of his entire collection of books, pictures and deer related items and specimens to Durham University, to be housed in what was named "The Whitehead Room" at a special ceremony at which Kenneth, 89 years old this year, was photographed in conversation with the University's Vice Chancellor, Sir Kenneth Calman. Included in the donated collection were a number of books on Deer by Kenneth himself, some of them now rare collectors' items.

South East Scotland Branch hosted the British Deer Society's AGM Weekend Meet, based at Edinburgh Airport's Hilton Hotel from 10-12 May, 2002. This would have been the venue for the same event the previous year but for the FMD outbreak, which necessitated a complete change of plan. Members assembled in the Hilton Hotel's Lancaster Suite on the Friday evening of 10 May, to be addressed in turn by Andrew Raven, Chairman of the Deer Commission for Scotland, Dr, Bob Mackintosh, Chief Executive of Forest Enterprise, and Dr. Ranald Munro, Senior Veterinary Pathologist with the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The theme of the three presentations and ensuing discussion was "Focusing on Scotland's Deer issues", which were comprehensively dealt with by the distinguished panel of speakers.

The Saturday was set aside for an all day field trip by coach to various plantations, mainly coniferous, managed by Forest Enterprise near Peebles, where members and guests were shown examples of serious forestry damage by a sizeable feral population of sika. The Lancaster Suite was the venue that evening for the Society's Annual Dinner and the after dinner speaker was Professor Rodger Wheeler, O.B.E, Chairman of the National Trust for Scotland.

Members assembled again on the Sunday morning for the formal AGM. This preceded an informal exchange of questions and answers on a very wide range of topics - a sequence of events the Chairman hopes to repeat in future years. One new appointment at the AGM was of John Brown as a Trustee Director. John was a BDS founder member and a long serving Chairman of Yorkshire Branch.

In his notes in the July, 2002 issue of Deer the Chairman congratulated South East Scotland Branch on the excellence of their arrangements for the Society's 2002 AGM Weekend and on the high calibre of the speakers. He reinforced what had been said about the woeful effect on the Society's finances of the FMD emergency but said projections for the current financial year looked reasonably healthy. He stressed the importance of transparency in the running of the Society and said that starting this September one Board meeting annually would be held with Scottish Council and one with EWAC Council. He intended devoting his space in Deer in future to recording BDS activities and highlighting their importance.

Peter Curtis of Chilterns Branch was awarded the Jim Taylor Page Trophy for the current year in appreciation of the Ashridge Deer Walks and Deer counts he conducted and their importance to good

public relations and education. The Jim Taylor Page Bursary would go to Deer U.K. for their continuing work on separate educational compact disks on the six different wild Deer species.

The Chairman bade a sad farewell to Alan McCormick, who had done excellent work as the Society's Training Manager since 1998 and had been recruited as Deer Manager by BASC. He was being replaced by Dave Goffin from the Deer Commission for Scotland, who was already well known to many Society members.

The Conservation and Information Officer updated readers of Deer on a few of the seeming myriad organisations and specialist groups involved in various ways with deer and with other ungulates, with several of which he has established regular channels of communication. He reported on the development of new methods to survey wild deer distribution, including recording presence or absence of individual species in woodlands, and said there appeared to be an upsurge of interest in deer by countryside magazines and others, some of which had approached him for contributions to their columns.

Hugh Rose produced a review of methods currently employed to secure the cull of adequate numbers of deer on individual properties and their cost effectiveness with rising costs in all directions. Many landowners were now reluctant to employ professional Stalkers full time and were turning to contract cullers. These were often well equipped and highly experienced, and so long as they did not cut corners on deer welfare and observed the law, Hugh felt they had a useful part to play in deer management.

High standards of performance were all the more important in view of recent allegations by full time gamekeepers, possibly fearful that their jobs may be in jeopardy, that contract deer cullers are "careless, unskilled, unqualified and unselective", accusations which are hard to substantiate or disprove.

EWAC's Secretary devoted his space in July 2002 Deer to firearms matters, in particular the Home Office publication "Firearms Law - Guidance to the Police", which he recommended all stalkers to buy.

Having agreed to continue in office as Vice Chairman of the Society until a replacement could be found, our Hon. Treasurer John Thomas handed over the Vice Chairmanship to Roger Wadsworth at the September 2002 Board meeting. Roger, Chairman of an electronic manufacturing and distribution group, was a former owner of the Camusrory Estate. He was also Vice Chairman of South East England Branch. Another appointment not previously noted was of Hugh Guillebaud, a BDS Trustee Director, as Vice Chairman of EWAC. Hugh lives at Cheltenham and is a member of West England Branch.

The October 2002 issue of Deer recorded the death of Bill Grant, O.B.E., at the age of 83. Short in physical stature but a metaphorical giant in his achievements in his chosen areas of interest, as Chief Forester of Grizedale Forest in Cumbria, Bill played a crucial role in securing the welfare of the local red and roe deer. Having served two terms as Chairman of North West England Branch, this

BDS founder member became Branch President, a position he held for the remainder of his life.

Born at Coatbridge in Lanarkshire and educated at Coatbridge Academy, in 1937 Bill started work as a forestry student in Thornthwaite Forest, near Keswick. He also worked at Grizedale when the forest there was in its infancy and later applied his skills as an environmentalist to transforming it into a multi purpose forest geared to enjoyment by the public. He also developed a museum dedicated to local forest wildlife and the Theatre in the Forest, constructed of locally grown timber and attracting international stage personalities, was his personal inspiration. Bill Grant was made an M.B.E. and later awarded the O.B.E. for services to forestry, to the protection of the environment and to the arts.

In the same issue of our Journal the BDS Chairman expressed anxiety about an increasing trend to regard deer as vermin and to find reasons for shooting them at night and out of season. He felt the Society needed to be more vigorous and to assert anew the persuasiveness exerted in its early years to ensure humane treatment of deer and to secure solid public support for this. He also urged members to read a review by Andrew Yool, Scottish Chairman, of a new book "A Highland Deer Herd and its Habitat" by Paul van Vliissingen, describing the fruits of three years' research carried out on his deer forest, Letterewe - the findings of which flew in the face of much that had been said and written about deer management in the Scottish Highlands. As to the running of the Society, the Chairman said he planned to increase the number of Corporate Members, of which at present there were 28, and that the present total membership of 6,200 ought also to be amenable to being substantially increased. We were financially "on target" and by next year every function of the Society at Board level would be realistically targeted.

The extent to which modern technology has revolutionised all our lives was reflected in an article in Deer Vol. 12, No. 5 headed "The use of digital images and the BDS Image Library", in which Rob Donaldson-Webster, Trustee Director with special responsibility for photographic matters, explained the nature and significance of photographic digital images. He further explained how these images are catalogued in the BDS Image Library and appealed for greater use to be made of the Library.

## 32. Anniversary countdown

OUR DETERMINATION TO STAGE a major celebration to mark the fortieth anniversary year of the British Deer Society became apparent well in advance of our actual fortieth birthday. By contrast with the day of the Society's inauguration, during the bitterly cold February of 1963, the Society's sights were set on a May reunion focussed upon the same venue Woburn Park, the Russell family's seat in Bedfordshire.

The Anniversary Year began, like many another with the January issue of Deer, on which the first thing to catch the eye was one of Steve Smith's photographic close ups of a New Forest sika stag, its left antler adorned with a tangle of vegetation unintentionally acquired while working off a rush of adrenalin - an irresistible subject for a front cover illustration.

On the inside of that front cover was something quite different to catch the eye and give food for thought, a whole page advertisement headed "The Future for Deer". This announced a Conference planned for 28-29 March 2003 and organised by the Government sponsored Deer Initiative. The future envisaged was one in which the uncontrolled increase and spread of all species of wild deer which had characterised the last half century and more would no longer be tolerated, and would be replaced by co-ordinated control, made acceptable to the public at large by being labelled "management". The purpose of the Conference, at which the keynote speaker would be The Rt. Hon. Elliot Morley, M.P., Forestry Minister for England, was to explain the need for this and how it would be implemented.

Two of the chief sponsors of the Deer Initiative are the Forestry Commission and English Nature, both of which are inclined to look upon Deer, in their present numbers and widespread occurrence, as imposing an unacceptable burden upon the natural environment. Were their future left to English Nature to decide, there can be very little doubt deer populations would be drastically reduced and non native species eliminated.

In his New Year review of Society affairs, the Chairman said that although our financial results for 2002 promised to be "better than budget", we needed to do better in 2003 and needed a wide range of items to auction to help raise additional finance. Nearly 1,000 members had signed up for the monthly e-mail organised by Sarah Stride, BDS General Manager, and the service was proving a great success.

Although our membership had risen to some 6,200, there were many more people out there who would surely join our ranks if we made ourselves known to them and what we stood for, the Chairman added, and we must make a point of doing this as a number one priority.

The Government planned to introduce an Animal Welfare Bill to update the provisions of the 1911 Act. This would benefit domesticated and captive animals only, but the Chairman hoped it might be extended to cover wild animals which are fed, such as deer in many Scottish Highland Deer forests

where supplementary winter feeding is carried out regularly.

The Chairman appealed for members who felt they had something to contribute, particularly in regard to fund raising, to put their names forward as potential Trustee Directors of the BDS. He also reported the resignation of Alastair Ward as Conservation and Information Officer, and thanked him for his hard work and professionalism during the short time he had held this post.

The death on 1 November 2002 at the age of 89 of one of our most distinguished founder members, Dr. Peter Delap, LC., M.D., was duly recorded in January 2003 Deer. Author of BDS booklets on Red Deer and Roe Deer and of numerous articles in Deer and in other publications, Peter was also a contributor to the Field Guide to British Deer published by the Mammal Society in 1957. A local medical practitioner and past Chairman of our North West England Branch, Peter devoted much of his leisure time to studying and photographing the wild deer of the region, a hobby he had first enjoyed in the Wicklow Mountains of Ireland while a medical student in Dublin during the early 1930s. Peter's depth of knowledge of deer and empathy with them was of a rare quality and he was a BDS Vice President for many years. The genial hospitality of Peter and his wife Myfanwy, who died in the summer of 2002, at their home in Appleby in Westmoreland was legendary.

In the Sunday Telegraph of 24 November 2002 Gordon Pearce was quoted as saying he had been employed for more than 30 years as a stalker by the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS) to put down diseased and injured Deer. He claimed that in the year up to April 2002 he had dealt with 107 dead or dying Deer at the LACS Baronsdown Deer Sanctuary on Exmoor. He commented critically about the physical condition and excessive numbers of deer in the Sanctuary.

It was the BDS Board's unanimous view that the allegation could not be ignored and a Press release was drafted expressing the Society's "extreme concern" at what was alleged. This was duly reported in the Sunday Telegraph. An independent investigation into the situation at Baronsdown was proposed but the initial response of the LACS was to reject this because of doubts about the expertise of the proposed team of investigators. However, the BDS Chairman hoped to meet LACS Director Douglas Bachelor to discuss the best way forward.

The foregoing matter was recorded by the BDS Chairman and the EWAC Secretary in their respective notes in January 2003 Deer.

Mike Squire also reported developments with the anti hunting Bill and reactions to it in the West Country. Alun Michael, Rural Affairs Minister, had briefed the House of Commons on its contents. Under his proposals deer hunting and hare coursing would be abolished. Foxhunting could be licensed and its practitioners would have to prove that it would be carried out "in the least cruel way". Opponents of abolition had pointed out that the three staghound packs (Devon and Somerset, Quantock and Tiverton) controlled deer in their respective areas in a traditional manner accepted by the local rural community which ensured the maintenance of a healthy deer population. If hunting ceased there would be no incentive for people with deer on their land to tolerate their presence at current levels of population, or indeed at all.

The Scottish Secretary addressed a range of topical issues including close seasons, official thinking, the political environment, BDS intervention on controversial matters and the varied stress levels in deer arising from different situations. He aired afresh some of his favourite bete noirs such as "inappropriate access" and "over population of protected predators" on grouse moors. He listed a number of rural issues, such as the virtual extermination of wild salmon by commercial fish farming on Scotland's west coast and the effect of this on rod fishing, which can never be seriously discussed in contemporary political circles.

Official thinking on deer close seasons, Hugh Rose warned, was that these should perhaps be abandoned for male deer as there was no very obvious humanitarian reason for their retention. However, in Scotland the most recent deer legislation (enacted in 1996) made provision for the Secretary of State to fix close seasons for deer of all species and both sexes, albeit on a discretionary basis for male deer. Although there might be no humanitarian need for a close season for roebucks, it remained important, thought our Scottish Secretary, to protect 'vulnerable red stags, especially in the Scottish Highlands, from being subjected to harassment when they were recovering condition after the rut to face the winter. He was pleased that his proposals on modifications to legal close seasons, as set out in October 2002 Deer, had attracted no serious criticism.

Prepared before his departure from office as BDS Conservation and Information Officer, Alastair Ward's notes in January 2003 Deer report his attendance on the Society's behalf at deer related meetings and symposia arranged by other bodies. One of these was a meeting of the Deer Initiative (DI) Scientific Advisory Group, formed recently by Dr. Robin Gill of Forest Research to identify research planned or in progress which has a bearing on deer management.

He also attended a two day Symposium, "Managing Woodlands and their Mammals", organised jointly 'by the Mammal Society and the Forestry Commission at which the 20 papers presented included several on deer and their management. This was followed by a "Deer Awareness" seminar - one of a series planned by the Deer Initiative to increase public awareness of deer and the function of the DI in coordinating their management in England.

This latter event was held at the Peterborough headquarters of English Nature, a body not noted for being overly sympathetic to wild deer conservation. In a tailpiece to his report, Alastair noted a worrying trend for those in charge of nature reserves to regard deer as a nuisance to be got rid of. Especially was this the case where deer were no longer a rarity to be shown off as such to visitors. Despite the remit of the BDS to work for the welfare of all six species of wild deer in Britain there were some among its members who seemed equally concerned with finding reasons to vilify them, especially the non native species.

Anticipation by members of what the Society's 40th Anniversary AGM Weekend on 10-11 May 2003 might hold in store, was heightened by two articles in January Deer. On the same page as the visit to Woburn Park and other attractions were outlined, were four photographs by BDS General Manager Sarah Stride taken on the mid October day of the 2002 Annual Ashridge Deer Walk, led as

usual by Peter Curtis to which Sarah, and Sue Varvill her admin colleague at HQ, had been invited. On a separate page Sarah evocatively described what had been seen, and what members could hope to see if they opted to visit Ashridge during the AGM Weekend, when the Marquess of Tavistock, heir to the 13th Duke of Bedford, would be a guest at the Society Dinner.

### 33. Epilogue

ALTHOUGH THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY of the British Deer Society's inauguration fell on 14 February 2003, this significant winter date passed virtually unnoticed. The main celebration took place on the weekend of 9-11 May. It was centred upon the Thistle Hotel at Luton, a venue chosen for its close proximity to Woburn Park and its Deer, which had seen the Society's birth on a snowy weekend four decades previously.

Hosted by the Chilterns Branch, the programme started on the Friday evening with presentations of Branch activities. By kind permission of the Marquess of Tavistock (who became the 15th Duke of Bedford on the death of his father, the 14th Duke, a few weeks later) the party toured the Deer park and Deer farm at Woburn under the guidance of head Deer keeper Callum Thompson. Lunchtime soup and sandwiches at the Greyhound Inn, Aldbury preceded a choice between joining Peter Curtis for a Deer walk at Ashridge, or visiting Rothschild's Museum at Tring.

Lord Tavistock (as he then was) was principal guest at the Anniversary Dinner on the Saturday evening at the Thistle Hotel, and the after dinner speaker was Ian Coghill.

The AGM on Sunday morning, was followed by informal discussion of issues raised by members and a midday meeting of the Board of Trustee Directors coincided with a working lunch.

The new Duke of Bedford expressed a wish to work more closely with the British Deer Society, and the Chairman was glad to accept this reinforcement of the relationship between the Woburn estate and ourselves.

The Society's Fortieth Anniversary was further celebrated by a visit in late June to Highgrove, the Gloucestershire home of our Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, who personally welcomed BDS staff and members representing various Branches after they had toured the gardens.

The award of a BDS Fellowship to L.A. (Tony) Waterson, of the Balfour-Browne Trophy to Dick Youngson and of the Jim Taylor Page Trophy to Pat Leonard for their work for deer in Scotland were appreciatively noted by the Chairman in Deer Vol. 12, No. 8, the last to be edited by Michael Baxter Brown. Tribute was paid by the Chairman to Michael's unremitting hard work despite deteriorating health since becoming Editor of our journal in 1993.

Michael intended to start his retirement by editing this BDS History, but his health continued to worsen. He died at his home in rural Surrey on 17 February 2004 at the age of 70, and the BDS was represented at a memorial service to him in Dunsfold church six days later. His work on this History was taken over initially by Ian Alcock, a writer on deer of long experience whose help is gratefully acknowledged. Subsequent assistance was given by John Thomas.

Production of the Deer Journal was taken over as from the Autumn 2003 issue by Perdix Publishing Limited, with Graham Downing, a professional journalist, as Editor responsible to an Editorial Panel appointed by the Society's Board. Advertising was vigorously promoted, advertising sales and



administration being handled by Julia Woolley. Perdix Publishing carried out a comprehensive survey of members' interests prior to taking over production of the journal. A detailed questionnaire was prepared and circulated. Instead of an anticipated 7% response, 13% of the questionnaires were completed and returned, with deer welfare, deer study and all other aspects of the subject revealed as subsidiary to stalking as motivating factors for an interest in deer. This was intended to offer guidance as to how advertising and editorial space might best be apportioned in the future.

As well as help in the early stages from members such as John Thomas and Rob Donaldson-Webster in preparing this history for publication, credit is also due to John Johnson and Sarah Stride for their hard work in seeing it through to final completion.

## Appendix

### Illustrations from the early years

The following fascinating selection of colour illustrations is from the early days of BDS when the expense of colour printing precluded their publishing in Deer. Photography is by BDS members John Willett, Norman Dewhurst and others.

[In addition to the snapshots shown below, a photograph contact sheet is available within this CD entitled "contacts". To find this click start, then my computer, scroll down to the CD icon then right click to explore and view the files available. This will access a full set of the same images available for you to select and look at in larger format.]

- 1A Deer feeder at Glen Feshie, Inverness-shire.
- 2A Motorised "garron" used at Glen Feshie for hauling out deer carcasses.
- 3A BDS party visiting Glen Feshie, autumn 1975.
- 4A The late Lord Dulverton, former BDS President, welcomes Society members to his deer forest at Glen Feshie, Inverness-shire.
- 5A BDS party on a visit to Grizedale Forest in the Lake District.
- 6A A briefing for BDS visitors to Grizedale in the Lake District.
- 7A Norman Dewhurst examines a red deer wallow at Glen Feshie, on a BDS visit 1<sup>st</sup> November 1975.
- 8A Display of typical local deer heads is one of the prime exhibits at deer museums like that at Grizedale.
- 9A Exhibits like this highlight the aims of modern deer management.
- 10A BDS Game Fair exhibit explaining the Society's purpose to the public.
- 11A Deer exhibitions like this are unfailingly popular.
- 12A At Game Fair exhibits like this the public learn much about deer and their management.
- 13A A handshake from the Queen for BDS Chairman Peter Baillie at a CLA Game Fair.
- 14A Her Majesty The Queen, accompanied by HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, on one of her visits to the BDS Game Fair stand.
- 15A Rides on tractor-hauled trailers with straw bales as upholstery, help enable BDS members to enjoy a closer view of shy park deer.
- 16A Peter Baillie's monster Hampshire roe head was rejected as a freak by trophy judges at the 1981 International Hunting Exhibition at Plovdic in Bulgaria.
- 17A Symbol of an exhibit on endangered species, including deer.
- 18A 'Endangered deer' was the theme of this BDS Game Fair exhibit.
- 19A An outstanding example of Branch initiative was the purchase by Midlands Branch of this caravan to accommodate members manning show exhibits.

- 20A BDS Chairman Peter Baillie and Mrs Baillie meet the Queen on one of Her Majesty's visits to the annual CLA Game Fair.
- 21A BDS members setting off to view the deer at Wootton Park, on the estate of JCB Chairman J.C.Bamford.
- 22A Wootton deer park in Staffordshire and some of its deer.
- 23A Tractor-hauled trailer ride for BDS visitors to JCB owned Wootton Park.
- 24A Ceremonial tree planting marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary BDS visit to Wootton Park in Staffordshire.
- 25A German hornblowers perform traditional hunting fanfares for BDS visitors to Wootton Park.
- 26A German hornblowers at Wootton Park.
- 27A German hornblowers at Wootton Park.
- 28A All aboard for a wagon ride to see the deer at Wootton Park.
- 1ND John Ruskin's old Lake District home Brantwood, was the venue for the first field meet of the newly-formed BDS.
- 2 ND 'Ready for the off' at Brantwood. BDS members at their first field meet.
- 3 ND Forestry Commission headquarters at Grizedale visited by members during the Society's first field meet.
- 4 ND Conservation forester Jack Corfield (right) answer questions from BDS visitors to Grizedale.
- 6 ND A BDS party on a visit to Melbury Park, Dorset, in 1964.
- 9 ND Willing BDS participants in a roe catch-up for study purposes at Chedington, West Dorset 1964.
- 10ND Willing BDS participants in a roe catch-up for study purposes at Chedington.
- 11ND Willing BDS participants in catching up roe for study purposes at Chedington.
- 14ND Watching for deer in Sika country at Wareham Forest in Dorset in 1964.
- 17ND Holding this weighty red deer head is David Percy, a strong man in more ways than one, who helped launch the Wessex Branch and was Assistant Editor of DEER before a grave illness cut his life short.
- 40ND Conservation forester Peter Lewis and BDS helpers with a roe kid tagging exercise at Chedington in Dorset.
- 41ND A roe kid in bracken at Chedington Dorset.
- 42ND Forest workers with a reel of netting used for catching up roe kids for marking.
- 48ND Jim Taylor Page, BDS founder Secretary, and Diana Brown are on the right of this picture taken outside the BDS stand at a Game Fair at Shotover Park, near Oxford.
- 50ND BDS party at a meet in Mortimer Forest, Shropshire, in 1965.
- 79ND Peter Baillie with his monster Hampshire roe head, which was rejected as a freak at the 1981 International Hunting Exposition at Plovdiv,Bulgaria.
- 56ND Belvedere multiseater wildlife observation tower in Cannock Chase, Staffordshire. This forest saw the birth of the BDS Midlands Branch, the first of its kind in 1966.

- 70B 1971 Game Fair, with founder Secretary Jim Taylor Page (wearing spectacles) and International Liaison Officer Walter Wince in attendance.
- 74ND Hosts Het Reewild (the Dutch Roe Deer Society) entertain British Deer Society to tea during a BDS visit to see black roe in The Netherlands in 1974.
- 79B Muntjac on show at a BDS Game Fair exhibit.
- 8ND A Scottish Area autumn meet at Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire.
- 85ND Studley Royal deer park head keeper Ernest Kemp was a frequent host to Yorkshire Branch members.
- 86ND A Studley Royal red stag of good quality.
- 9ND Richard Prior receiving the Balfour-Browne Trophy for the first time in 1976.
- 95ND (Left to right) BDS Chairman Peter Baillie, BDS Patron HRH The Prince of Wales and BDS President Lord Dulverton at the 1976 Game Fair, Crickhowell, Glanusk, South Wales.
- 101/2 Forester Bill McCavish from Kielder demonstrates how to locate deer by dowsing, to a BDS audience at a symposium in London.
- 104ND Game Fair exhibit at Woburn in Bedfordshire, where the BDS was inaugurated in 1963.
- 105ND The first English Area Council meeting brought members to Bradgate Park in Leicester.
- 107ND John Hotchkis receives the Balfour-Browne Trophy at Englefield in 1981.
- 121ND BDS Game Fair Exhibit at Lowther in Cumbria.
- 131ND The 1981 BDS AGM was held at Englefield in Berkshire.
- 132ND Dr Archie McDiarmid receiving the Balfour-Browne Trophy at Englefield in 1981.
- 133ND This Caithness Engraved Glass trophy was presented by Lord Dulverton to be awarded annually for the photograph judged best in the BDS Photographic Competition.
- 134ND The late Lea MacNally, Scottish Editor of Deer, was the first to be awarded the Dulverton Trophy.
- 137ND Clatteringshaw Deer Museum, Dumfries and Galloway was visited by BDS Patron HRH The Prince of Wales on a whistle stop tour of Scotland in 1981.
- 150A North West England Branch members at a meet at Bolton-by-Bowland to study sika.
- 152ND BDS Officials at the 1982 AGM at Chatsworth.
- 163ND Irish Deer Society Members at Muckross House, Killarney.
- 168ND The late Cyril Wright (left) being presented with the Balfour-Browne Trophy by the late Morley Penistan of the Forestry Commission. Cyril was primarily responsible for introducing stalker training.
- 172 ND Jeanette Lawton and fellow exhibition BDS stalwart Garry Stanton.
- 174ND Members of General Council at Windsor in July 1983.
- 170ND BDS Game Fair Exhibit at Strathallan 1983.
- 182ND International Sika Society Chairman Ernst Eick and fellow members visited Hockworthy in Devon to view John Willett's Formosan sika in June 1983.

183ND BDS Former Chairman John Willett and International Sika Society members at John's Trophy museum in 1983.

184ND World deer expert and BDS Vice President G. Kenneth Whitehead.

187ND British sika heads on view to International Sika Society members during their 1983 visit.

194ND Roe trophies on show at Petworth during the 1984 BDS AGM.

196ND High quality fallow heads on view on the BDS visit to Petworth in April 1984.

201ND Game Fair Hosts Lord and Lady Romsey at the BDS stand, Broadlands, Romsey 1984.



BDS History - 1A



BDS History - 2A



BDS History - 3A



BDS History - 4A



BDS History - 6A



BDS History - 7A



BDS History - 8A



BDS History - 9A



BDS History - 10A



BDS History - 11A



BDS History - 12A



BDS History - 13A



BDS History - 14A



BDS History - 15A



BDS History - 16A



BDS History - 17A



BDS History - 18A



BDS History - 19A



BDS History - 20A



BDS History - 21A



BDS History - 22A



BDS History - 24A



BDS History - 25A



BDS History - 26A



BDS History - 27A



BDS History - 28A



BDS History [ND] - 11



BDS History [ND] - 14



BDS History [ND] - 17



BDS History [ND] - 1



BDS History [ND] - 2



BDS History [ND] - 3



BDS History [ND] - 4



BDS History [ND] - 6



BDS History [ND] - 8





BDS History [ND] - 9



BDS History [ND] - 9)



BDS History [ND] - 10



BDS History [ND] - 40



BDS History [ND] - 41



BDS History [ND] - 42



BDS History [ND] - 48



BDS History [ND] - 50



BDS History [ND] - 56



BDS History [ND] - 70B



BDS History [ND] - 74



BDS History [ND] - 79



BDS History [ND] - 79B



BDS History [ND] - 85



BDS History [ND] - 86



BDS History [ND] - 95



BDS History [ND] - 101-2



BDS History [ND] - 104



BDS History [ND] - 105



BDS History [ND] - 107



BDS History [ND] - 121



BDS History [ND] - 131



BDS History [ND] - 132



BDS History [ND] - 133



BDS History [ND] - 134



BDS History [ND] - 137



BDS History [ND] - 150A



BDS History [ND] - 152



BDS History [ND] - 163



BDS History [ND] - 166



BDS History [ND] - 170



BDS History [ND] - 172



BDS History [ND] - 174



BDS History [ND] - 183



BDS History [ND] - 184



BDS History [ND] - 182



BDS History [ND] - 183



BDS History [ND] - 184



BDS History [ND] - 187



BDS History [ND] - 194



BDS History [ND] - 196



BDS History [ND] - 201