

The
BEDFORDSHIRE
NATURALIST

THE
JOURNAL
OF THE
BEDFORDSHIRE
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

FOR THE YEARS

1965, 1966 & 1967

Nos. 20, 21 and 22

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BEDFORDSHIRE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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BEDFORD
1968



FELMERSHAM NATURE RESERVE

(*Photograph by H. A. S. Key*)

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EDITED BY J. M. DYMOND

Nos. 20, 21 and 22. 1965, 1966 and 1967

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METEOROLOGY :

A. W. Guppy, B.Sc., 22 Poplar Avenue, Bedford.

ZOOLOGY :

Insects :*Hymenoptera* :

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Lepidoptera : B. B. West, 39 Station Road, Willington.*Odonata* : K. E. West, 37 Cardington Road, Bedford.*Vertebrates* :*Amphibians, Fishes and Reptiles* :

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Birds : A. J. Livett, 12 Braughton Avenue, Luton.*Mammals* : H. A. S. Key, Friary House, Greyfriars, Bedford.

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BEDFORDSHIRE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1966

RECEIPTS				PAYMENTS			
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.			£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1965				1965			
141	Cash at Bank and in Hand at 1st January, 1966		237 17 10	46	Printing, Postages and Stationery		60 14 7
	SUBSCRIPTIONS :			5	Hire of Halls		8 7 6
181	Subscriptions 1966 and arrears	129 3 6		—	Lecture Expenses		9 0 11
26	Subscriptions 1967	15 2 2		88	Bedfordshire Naturalist Journal		136 10 0
10	Life Subscription	—		4	Subscriptions and Donations to other Societies		6 1 6
217			144 5 8	4	Sundry Expenses		1 0 0
10	Surplus on Coach Trips		4 18 4	4	Cash at Bank, 31st December, 1966	172 11 11	
15	Surplus on Lectures and Film Shows		9 17 9	219	Cash in Hand, 31st December, 1966	5 0 8	177 12 7
1	Donations		12 6	18			
—	Hire of Bird Records		1 15 0				
				237			
				—			
				£384			£399 7 1
£384			£399 7 1	£384			£399 7 1

We have examined the above Account with the books and vouchers of the Society and certify it to be correct in accordance therewith.

BEDFORD.
14th March, 1967.

THORNTON BAKER & CO.,
Chartered Accountants, Hon. Auditors.

EDITORIAL

We were very sorry to lose the services of our Editor, Michael Wortley, in December when he moved to Surrey to take up a new career in forestry. We are extremely grateful to Michael for all the time and effort he put into his work for the Society and members will, I am sure, join with me in wishing him every success in his new venture.

It was agreed by the Council that I should take over as the temporary Editor for the purpose of publishing this issue of the *Bedfordshire Naturalist*. As previously indicated it has been decided to revert to the former practice of publishing this annually. It is hoped, however, to supplement it with news sheets during the course of the year to keep members up to date with matters of interest. If the support is forthcoming the news sheets could also provide a forum for members' views and comments.

The Journal will constitute the official record of the Society's activities during the year and it is clearly desirable therefore that it should be published as early as possible in the following year. To be able to do this it is imperative that records and articles for publication should be in the hands of the Editor by the end of January at the latest. Material for the news sheets may be sent to the Editor at any time during the year.

The Council have decided that in order to maintain continuity this issue of the Journal shall contain the Society's records for the years 1965 and 1966 as well as 1967, it is therefore numbered 20, 21 and 22.

J. M. DYMOND.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL 1967

The Council met on seven occasions during the year alternately at the Carnegie Room, Luton, and at 36 St. Andrews Road, Bedford, by the kind invitation of the chairman, Mr. L. A. Speed. Nine members attended at least six of the meetings.

The year marked the end of the trial period of publishing quarterly journals and as this policy had met with criticism within the Society and indeed at national level it was decided at a special Council Meeting to revert to an annual journal supplemented by occasional news sheets.

The Council have considered the lack of a co-ordinated policy of field work and feel that if it is to play its proper role the Society should make a greater effort to record the flora and fauna of the County, especially in those areas which are threatened by residential or industrial development or to which the public have unlimited access. Accordingly, a scientific sub-committee has been formed to look into this matter in greater detail and to make recommendations as to what the Society should try to do in this respect. Work of this nature would provide valuable information for the conservation activities of the Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire Naturalists Trust and lead to closer links between the Trust and our Society.

The Society's activities during the year followed the usual pattern. The indoor meetings in general were well attended but the field meetings were not so well supported, rarely more than ten attending. The coach trips too, met with only moderate success. It is not always easy to think of suitable venues for our outdoor activities and if members have any suggestions to offer, the Council would be pleased to consider them.

During the year 35 new members joined the Society and the total membership is now just under 300.

Miss G. H. Day, an Honorary Life Member of the Society, died during the year and an appreciation appears elsewhere in this issue. She made a bequest to the Society in her will and it is proposed to invest this money to provide an annual book prize for a Junior members' competition.

Michael Wortley took up an appointment in Surrey towards the end of the year and as a consequence had to relinquish his post as editor. He was an enthusiastic ornithologist and served the Society in many capacities over a number of years. He was for a time the recorder for birds and played a prominent part in producing the bird bulletins and more recently the experimental quarterly journals.

Following the publication of the Countryside Bill, now before Parliament, the Bedfordshire Rural Community Council were invited by the County Council to set up a "Countryside Committee" of representatives of interested bodies to assist the County Council in implementing the legislation. Mr. I. J. Ferguson-Lees has been appointed a member of this committee to represent jointly the Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire Naturalists Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and our own Society. The main purpose of the Bill is to provide for the improvement of facilities for the enjoyment of the countryside by the public and its scope appears to be very wide indeed.

T. A. HASDELL, *Hon. Secretary.*

PROCEEDINGS

INDOOR MEETINGS, 1965

200TH ORDINARY MEETING, Thursday, 7th January, Bedford. "The Flora of Hertfordshire" by Dr. J. G. Dony.

201ST ORDINARY MEETING, Thursday, 28th January, Luton. "The Work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds" by F. Hamilton. *Chairman*: M. D. Wortley.

202ND ORDINARY MEETING, Thursday, 11th February, Bedford. "A Valley in Andorra" by R. G. O. Stephenson. *Chairman*: F. G. R. Soper.

203RD ORDINARY MEETING, Thursday, 25th February, Luton. Scottish Film Evening. *Chairman*: F. D. Hamilton.

18TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Thursday, 18th March, Bedford. *Chairman*: F. G. R. Soper.

204TH ORDINARY MEETING, Thursday, 25th March, Luton. "Some Plants and Insects of the Chilterns" by F/Lt. Halliday. *Chairman*: R. G. O. Stephenson.

205TH ORDINARY MEETING, Wednesday, 31st March, Luton. Film Show.

206TH ORDINARY MEETING, Thursday, 7th October, Bedford. "Life under the Microscope" by W. G. Goldstraw, M.Sc. *Chairman*: Dr. D. M. Jeffreys.

207TH ORDINARY MEETING, Wednesday, 20th October, Luton. "Bats" by J. A. Burton of the British Museum. *Chairman*: A. J. Livett.

PUBLIC FILM SHOW, Thursday, 11th November, Civic Theatre, Bedford. "Birds of Strathspey" and "A Place for Birds".

208TH ORDINARY MEETING, Wednesday, 17th November, Luton. "Recording Nature's Sounds" by E. H. Cunningham. *Chairman*: R. G. O. Stephenson.

209TH ORDINARY MEETING, Thursday, 2nd December, Bedford. "Clouds" by A. W. Guppy, B.Sc. *Chairman*: L. A. Speed.

210TH ORDINARY MEETING, Wednesday, 8th December, Luton. "Badgers" by J. H. P. Sankey, Warden of Juniper Hall Field Centre. *Chairman*: M. D. Wortley.

211TH ORDINARY MEETING, Thursday, 30th December, Bedford. Question and Answer Evening with film "The Marsh Fritillary Butterfly". *Chairman*: F. D. Hamilton

FIELD MEETINGS, 1965

SUNDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY. EYEBROOK RESERVOIR. *Leader*: T. A. Hasdell.

FRIDAY, 16TH APRIL TO MONDAY, 19TH APRIL. SOUTH WALNEY NATURE RESERVE. *Leader*: A. J. Livett.

SUNDAY, 25TH APRIL. HAYLEY WOOD. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy.

THURSDAY, 13TH MAY. STOCKGROVE WOODLANDS. *Leader*: A. J. Livett.

THURSDAY, 20TH MAY. FELMERSHAM GRAVEL PITS N.R. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy.

SUNDAY, 23RD MAY. SCOLT HEAD ISLAND N.R. *Leader*: M. J. Wortley.

SUNDAY, 30TH MAY. FLITWICK MOOR. *Leader*: M. J. Wortley.

SUNDAY, 13TH JUNE. SANDY HEATH. *Leader*: Dr. J. G. Dony.

THURSDAY, 24TH JUNE. BOTANY IN BEDFORD. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy.

SATURDAY, 3RD JULY. TOTTERNHOE. *Leader*: E. G. Meadows.

SUNDAY, 11TH JULY. WEST WOOD, KNOTTING. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy. (abandoned).

SUNDAY, 25TH JULY. DEVIL'S DYKE AND ADVENTURERS FEN. *Leader*: Dr. D. M. Jeffreys.

SUNDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER. THE NEW FOREST. *Leader*: Dr. D. M. Jeffreys.

FRIDAY, 1ST OCTOBER TO SUNDAY, 3RD OCTOBER. PORTLAND BILL BIRD OBSERVATORY. *Leader*: M. J. Wortley.

SUNDAY, 17TH OCTOBER. FUNGUS FORAY AT ROWNY WARREN. *Leader*: Dr. D. Reid.

INDOOR MEETINGS, 1966

212TH ORDINARY MEETING, 19th January, Luton. "Flowers in 3D" by Dr. J. H. Fremlin, Birmingham University. *Chairman*: R. G. O. Stephenson.

213TH ORDINARY MEETING, 27th January, Bedford. "Nature through the Colour Camera" by H. A. S. Key. *Chairman*: A. W. Guppy.

214TH ORDINARY MEETING, 23rd February, Luton. Film evening on the soil and landscape. "The Making of Soil", "The Story of Rocks" and "The Wind on the Heath". *Chairman*: Miss E. M. Fairey.

215TH ORDINARY MEETING, 24th February, Bedford. "The Work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds" by F. D. Hamilton. *Chairman*: F. G. R. Soper.

PUBLIC FILM SHOW, 23rd March, Luton Public Library. "Birds of Strathspey" and "A Place for Birds".

19TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 24th March, Bedford. *Chairman*: A. W. Guppy.

216TH ORDINARY MEETING, 6th October, Bedford. "Bats" by J. A. Burton of the British Museum. *Chairman*: A. W. Guppy.

217TH ORDINARY MEETING, 12th October, Luton. "The Work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds" by P. W. Ellicott, Regional Officer.

218TH ORDINARY MEETING, 2nd November, Luton. Informal discussion with slides. *Chairman*: M. D. Wortley.

PUBLIC FILM SHOW, 3rd November, Civic Theatre, Bedford. "Island of Birds" and "Birds of a Hampshire Garden".

219TH ORDINARY MEETING, 17th November, Bedford. "The Natural History of Blakeney and Chesil Shingle Beaches" by W. G. Goldstraw. *Chairman*: A. W. Guppy.

220TH ORDINARY MEETING, 1st December, Bedford. "The Natural History of the Badger" by J. H. P. Sankey, Warden of Juniper Hall Field Centre. *Chairman*: H. A. S. Key.

221ST ORDINARY MEETING, 7th December, Luton. "Animal Tracks and Signs" by A. Leutscher. *Chairman*: D Green.

222ND ORDINARY MEETING, 29th December, Bedford. Social evening with films, competition and refreshments. M.C., J. M. Dymond.

FIELD MEETINGS, 1966

WEDNESDAY, 27TH APRIL. FELMERSHAM NATURE RESERVE. Nature Trail in connection with National Nature Week.

SUNDAY, 8TH MAY. DAWN CHORUS AT SOUTHILL PARK. *Leader*: P. Smith.

THURSDAY, 19TH MAY. EVENING CHORUS AT CHARLE WOOD, WOBURN. *Leader*: M. D. Wortley.

SUNDAY, 22ND MAY. GRAFHAM WATER: SPRING MIGRATION. *Leader*: P. Smith.

SUNDAY, 5TH JUNE. WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM AND THE COTSWOLDS. *Leader*: F. G. R. Soper.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH JUNE. MAULDEN WOOD. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy.

SUNDAY, 26TH JUNE. WEST WOOD, KNOTTING. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy.

SUNDAY, 3RD JULY. NEW FOREST. *Leader*: Dr. D. M. Jeffreys.

SUNDAY, 17TH JULY. SUNDON AND MARKHAM HILLS. *Leader*: Miss G. Elwell.

THURSDAY, 27TH JULY. HOLME MILLS, RIVER IVEL. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy.

SUNDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER. WISBECH SEWAGE FARM AND NORFOLK COAST. *Leader*: T. A. Hasdell.

FRIDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER TO SUNDAY, 2ND OCTOBER. PORTLAND BIRD OBSERVATORY, DORSET. *Leader*: T. A. Hasdell.

FRIDAY, 14TH OCTOBER TO SUNDAY, 16TH OCTOBER. SPURN HEAD BIRD OBSERVATORY. *Leader*: A. J. Livett.

SUNDAY, 23RD OCTOBER. FUNGUS FORAY, HANGER WOOD. *Leader*: D. Reid. (A detailed report appears elsewhere in this issue.)

FRIDAY, 9TH DECEMBER TO SUNDAY, 11TH DECEMBER. GIBRALTAR POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY. *Leader*: P Smith.

INDOOR MEETINGS, 1967

223RD ORDINARY MEETING, 4th January, Luton. Film evening: "Wild Highlands" and "The Living Pattern". *Chairman*: A. J. Livett.

224TH ORDINARY MEETING, 19th January, Bedford. "The World of Amphibians and Reptiles" by G. Twisleton, *Chairman*: F. G. R. Soper.

225TH ORDINARY MEETING, 1st February, Luton. "Birds of Foula" by D. Wilson. *Chairman*: M. D. Wortley.

226TH ORDINARY MEETING, 16th February, Bedford. "Insect Life" by M. P. J. Gent. *Chairman*: Dr. D. M. Jeffreys.

PUBLIC FILM SHOW, 2nd March, Public Library, Luton. "Swallows at the Mill" and "Birds of Teesmouth".

20TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 16th March, Bedford. *Chairman*: F. G. R. Soper.

227TH ORDINARY MEETING, 19th October, Bedford. "Animal Tracks and Signs" by A. Leutscher. *Chairman*: J. M. Dymond.

228TH ORDINARY MEETING, 25th October, Luton. Film evening: "The Lonely Places" and "Sea Sanctuary". *Chairman*: M. D. Wortley.

PUBLIC FILM SHOW, 9th November, Civic Theatre, Bedford. "Birds of Teesmouth" and "Broadland Winter".

229TH ORDINARY MEETING, 16th November, Bedford. "Reflections on Iberia" by P. J. Wilkinson. *Chairman*: J. N. Dymond.

230TH ORDINARY MEETING, 22nd November, Luton. "The Work of the Conservation Corps" by D. B. Burton. *Chairman*: D. Green.

231ST ORDINARY MEETING, 6th December, Luton. "Wild Flowers of the Chalk" by J. Mead. *Chairman*: M. D. Wortley.

232ND ORDINARY MEETING, 14th December, Bedford. Members' slides with an informal discussion on them. *Chairman*: W. G. Goldstraw.

FIELD MEETINGS, 1967

SUNDAY, 30TH APRIL. FLITWICK MOOR. *Leader*: S. W. Rodell.

The weather was dry and warm with some cloud and the following birds were noted: Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Sedge Warbler, Blackcap, Yellow Wagtail, Reed Bunting, Marsh Tit, Swallow and Sand Martin. Attendance: 20.

THURSDAY, 18TH MAY. EVENING CHORUS AT THE LODGE, SANDY. *Leader*: P. Smith.

Mr. Julian Knowles of the R.S.P.B. showed the party round the grounds on a pleasant evening. Roding Woodcock were observed as well as Redstart, Blackcap, Tree Pipit and Goldcrest. Attendance: 36.

SUNDAY, 21ST MAY. MAULDEN WOOD. COMMON BIRD CENSUS. *Leader*: M. D. Wortley.

On a warm and sunny morning the boundaries of the census area and beyond were explored. Most of the usual woodland birds were seen and of particular note was a flock of between 60-70 Turtle Doves feeding in the nursery area. Attendance: 2.

SUNDAY, 28TH MAY. YELNOW LANE, SHARNBROOK. *Leader*: L. A. Speed.

A botanical meeting held on a fine afternoon. Thirty-three varieties of plants in flower were found including four species of orchid. Attendance: 10.

SUNDAY, 4TH JUNE PITSFORD RESERVOIR, NORTHANTS. *Leader*: T. A. Hasdell.

On a warm afternoon with intermittent cloud the party walked from the eastern end of the causeway round the Holcote, Walgrave and Scaldwell bays and back to the causeway. Kestrels, Yellow Wagtails, Whinchat and a flock of 70 1st summer Mute Swans were the main items of ornithological interest. The swarms of insects hovering like clouds of smoke provoked considerable interest.

SUNDAY, 11TH JUNE. BLAKENEY POINT. Coach Outing. *Leader*: W. G. Goldstraw.

The warden of the Nature Reserve conducted the party over the reserve to see the following nesting species: Ringed Plover, Arctic, Common, Sandwich and Little Terns, Oystercatcher, and one Common Gull. After lunch the leader showed the party the succession of plants which were concerned with the growth of sand dunes. Among the interesting species of plants found were the rare Sea Hair Grass, Sea Bindweed and the Little Sand Catstail. Attendance: 31.

SUNDAY, 18TH JUNE. MAULDEN WOOD. COMMON BIRD CENSUS. *Leader*: M. D. Wortley.

Owing to the poor attendance the visit was confined to a brief walk around the census area where the usual breeding species were observed. Attendance: 3.

THURSDAY, 22ND JUNE. CLOPHILL CUTTING. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy.

Starting from the lay-by at the top of Deadman's Hill the party walked down the eastern side of the cutting and returned on the western side. Spotted Orchids, Sulphur Clover and Grass Pea were found in profusion. One Bee Orchid and a patch of Alkanet provided plants of more unusual occurrence. Attendance: 14.

SUNDAY, 25TH JUNE. SURLINGHAM FEN. Coach Outing. *Leader*: P. W. Strachan.

The party was welcomed by our host and guide, Mr. E. A. Ellis, who owns this fen which comprises 200 acres of private fen and woodland. A wide selection of fen plants were recorded. It was too cloudy for butterflies and only a few birds were seen. Heavy rain curtailed the visit. Attendance: 18.

SUNDAY, 2ND JULY. SHARNBROOK SUMMIT. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy.

After walking along Forty Foot Lane, the party explored the east side of the railway cutting both to the north and south of the railway bridge. The usual chalk-hill flora was found and a great increase in the spread of the Wild Liquorice (*Astragalus glycyphyllus*) was noted. Attendance: 11.

SATURDAY, 15TH JULY. PEGSDON HILLS. *Leader*: Miss G. Elwell. Attendance: 9.

THURSDAY, 27TH JULY. HOLME MILLS, BIGGLESWADE. *Leader*: A. W. Guppy.

Members met on a rather dull and threatening evening and walked about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles along the tow-path on the west bank of the Ivel to below Biggleswade Church. The only plant found which was new to several members was the Water Chickweed (*Myosoton aquaticum*). The rain luckily held off until the party had returned to its starting point. Attendance: 9.

SUNDAY, 29TH OCTOBER. FUNGUS FORAY, WREST PARK, SILSOE. *Leader*: D. A. Reid.

A joint meeting with the British Mycological Society. For a detailed report of this meeting see page 16.

SUNDAY, 5TH NOVEMBER. NORTHANTS RESERVOIRS. *Leader*: T. A. Hasdell.

The party first visited five lakes at Ditchford near Rushden, obtaining good views of Shoveler and Water Rail. It then went on to Pitsford Reservoir where the usual species of wintering duck were seen including Goldeneye and two Egyptian Geese (presumed escapes). The weather was wet and cold and the visibility poor. Attendance: 5.

THE FUNGUS FORAY, 1966

About a dozen members of the Society attended the fungus foray, held this year on October 23rd at Hanger Wood, Kempston, near Bedford, with Dr. D. A. Reid acting as leader. Unfortunately the weather was cold, dull and inclined to be showery, but this was partly offset by the number of interesting species which were discovered.

Perhaps the most spectacular sights of the day were the numerous large fairy-rings up to 20 feet in diameter encircling individual trees. Many of these rings were almost perfect; some produced by *Clitocybe nebularis* and others by *C. geotropa*.

Edible species were also much in evidence and enormous numbers of both *Lepiota rhacodes* and *Agaricus silvaticus* were found. The former is very similar to the well known Parasol Fungus (*Lepiota procera*) but lacks the scaly markings on the stem and has the flesh turning pinkish orange in the cavity left when the stipe is pulled away from the cap. *Agaricus silvaticus* is a brown, scaly-capped species with reddening flesh. It is not a particularly common fungus under normal circumstances. Growing with the typical brown, scaly form were a few groups of the var. *pallidus* with almost whitish caps. The latter taxon is a decided rarity. However, despite the succulent array of fruitbodies few if any of the participants, with the exception of the leader, felt tempted to collect for the table.

In addition to the large *Lepiota* mentioned above a number of smaller and rather insignificant species were collected. These were found amongst *Mercurialis* beneath Hazel, and included both the tiny white *L. sistrata* (—*L. seminuda*) and *L. aubgracilis*. The latter is a rare species which has the cap surface broken up into minute, brown, granular scales on a whitish background, except at the dark blackish-brown disc which remains entire. The stipe is whitish but has an annular zone on the lower portion beneath which are bands of minute brown scales.

A very exciting find was that of a large *Agaricus* species with cap about 20 cm. across, pure white in colour and reminiscent of *A. arvensis*. Subsequent examination showed it to be *A. macrocarpus* — a species new to the British list. Still more exciting was the discovery of a minute, slightly branched, whitish *Clavaria* about 2 cm. in height. This collection was found to belong to *C. biformis* — a species hitherto unrecorded from Europe. However, another collection of this species was received at Kew a few weeks earlier from a locality in Lincolnshire.

Late in the day another rarity was discovered — *Polyporus wynnei*. This species, collected on twigs, etc., lying on the ground, is striking on account of its thin, flexible pileus which is bright brownish-orange above in contrast to the white pore layer. To my knowledge this fungus has not been collected in the British Isles since 1929.

Other interesting collections included *Clitopilus pleuroteloides*, *Tricholoma atrocinereum*, *Nolanea tenuipes*, *Hebeloma helodes*, *Conocybe pygmaeo-affinis* and *Russula pseudointegra*. However, apart from the last named species which has a bright red cap and cream coloured gills these fungi are rather small and insignificant.

It is interesting to refer back to the list of species (see this Journal No. 13, p. 7) collected in Hanger Wood in 1958 when the foray was last held in this locality; for the species added to the county list on that occasion only one—*Pluteolus aleuriatus*—was found again on this foray.

Furthermore if the agarics in the two lists are compared it will be seen that there is remarkably little concordance. This goes to show how transient the fungi are in any locality or possibly how dependent they are on special climatic conditions for fructification.

A total of 103 species were collected of which 12 are new records for the county, and of these two are also new British records.

Amanitopsis fulva (Grev.) Rea; *Armillaria mellea* (Vahl.) Fr.; *Bolbitis vitellinus* (Pers.) Fr.; *Clitocybe cerrusata* Fr.; *C. clavipes* (Pers.) Fr.; *C. flaccida* (Sow.) Fr.; *C. geotropa* (Bull.) Fr. *C. infundibuliformis* (Schaeff.) Fr.; *C. nebularis* (Batsch) Fr.; **Clitopilus pleuroteloides* (Kuhn.) Hoss.; *Collybia ambusta* Fr.; *C. radicata* (Relh.) Berk.; *Coprinus lagopus* Fr.; *C. micaceus* (Pers.) Fr.; *C. plicatilis* (Curt.) Fr.; *C. picaceus* (Bull.) Fr.; *Corlinarius cinnamomeus* Fr.; *Entoloma sericeum* (Bull.) Fr.; (*) *Geletra pygmaeoaffinis* Fr.; *Hebeloma crustuliniforme* (Bull.) Fr.; **H. helodes* Favre; *Hygrophorus niveus* (Scop.) Fr.; *H. psittacinus* (Schaeff.) Fr.; *Hypholoma fasciculare* (Huds.) Fr. *H. hydrophilum* (Bull.) Fr.; *Inocybe cincinnata* Fr.; *I. geophylla* (Sow.) Fr.; *I. geophylla* var. *lilacina* Fr.; *Laccaria laccata* (Scop.) Cooke; *Lactarius pyrogallus* (Bull.) Fr.; *L. quietus* Fr.; *Lepiota cristata* (Alb. & Schw.) Fr.; *L. rhacodes* (Vitt.) Fr.; **L. subgracilis* Kuhn.; *Marasmius confluens* (Pers.) Karst.; *M. dryophilus* (Bull.) Karst.; *M. epiphyllus* (Pers.) Fr.; *M. foetidus* (Sow.) Fr.; *M. peronatus* (Bolt.) Fr.; *M. ramealis* (Bull.) Fr.; *M. rotula* (Scop.) Fr.; *Mycena alcalina* Fr.; *M. alcalina* Fr.; *M. epipterygia* (Scop.) Fr. *M. filipes* (Bull.) Fr.; *M. galericulata* (Scop.) Fr.; *M. galopus* (Pers.) Fr.; *M. galopus* var. *alba* Hornem.; **M. olida* Bres.; *M. polygramma* (Bull.) Fr.; *M. sanguinolenta* (Alb. & Schw.) Fr.; *M. speirea* Fr.; *M. tenerrima* Berk.; **Nolanea tenuipes* Orton; *Pholiota filaris* (Fr.) Lange; *P. spectabilis* Fr.; *Pluteolus aleuratus* Fr.; *Pluteus cervinus* (Schaeff.) Fr.; *P. phlebophorus* (Ditmar) Fr.; *Psalliota arvensis* (Schaeff.) Fr.; *P. macrocarpa* Mull.; *P. silvatica* (Schaeff.) Fr.; **P. silvatica* var. *pallidus* Mull.; *P. silvicola* (Vitt.) Sacc.; *Psathyrella squamosa* (Karst.) Moser; *Ripartites tricholoma* (Alb. & Schw.) Karst.; **Russula pseudointegra* Arn. & Goris; *Stropharia aeruginosa* (Curt.) Fr. **Tricholoma atrocinereum* (Pers.) Fr. *T. nadum* Fr.; *T. personatum* Fr.; *Tubaria furfuracea* (Pers.) Gillet.

Boletus chrysenteron (Bull.) Fr.

Polyporus fragilis Fr.; *P. semipileatus* Peck.; *P. wynnei* Berk & Br.; *Polytictus versicolor* (L. ex Fr.) Fr.; *Trametes confragosa* (Bolt.) Jorst.

Clavaria acuta (Sow.) Fr.; *Clavaria bififormis* Atk.; *C. conerea* (Bull.) Fr.; *C. cristata* (Holmskj.) Fr.; *C. inaequalis* (Muller) Quel.; *C. pulchra* Peck; *C. rugosa* (Bull.) Fr.; *Typhula erythropus* (Bolt.) Fr.

Coniophora puteana (Schum.) Karst.; *Gloeocystidium lactescens* (Berk.) Hohn. & Litsch.; *Stereum gausapatum* (Fr.) Fr.; *S. hirsutum* (Willd.) Fr.; *S. purpureum* (Pers.) Fr.; *S. rugosum* (Pers.) Fr.

Lycoperdon pyriforme (Schaeff.) Pers.

Calocera viscosa (Pers.) Fr. *Dacrymyces deliquescens* (Bull. ex Merat) Duby.

Exidia nucleata (Schw.) Burt.

Coryne sarcoides (Jacq. ex Fr.) Tul.

Daldinia concentrica (Bolt. ex Fr.) Ces. & De Not.; **Hypoxyylon serpens* (Pers. ex Fr.) Fr.; *H. coccineum* (Bull.) Fr.; *Nectria cinnabarina* (Tode ex Fr.) Fr.; *Xylaria hypoxyylon* (L. ex Fr.) Grev.

Lycogala epidendrum Fr.; *Reticularia lycoperdon* Bull.

* New County Record 'New British Record (*) Confirmation of old record.

DEREK A. RIED.

THE FUNGUS FORAY, 1967

The annual fungus foray was held jointly with the British Mycological Society at Wrest Park, Silsoe on 29th October; about 40 people attended.

The area was last visited in October 1964 during a period of drought and few agarics were collected so comparisons of the two lists are misleading. For example grassland fungi figure much more prominently in this year's list. Among these was *Clitocybe rivulosa* — a common fungus not previously recorded for the county. It has a small white cap with pinkish or yellowish tints showing through in places. Another grassland species found in quantity was *Galera pygmaeo-affinis* — an uncommon, relatively robust member of this genus of brown-spored fungi with pale ochraceous cap and white stalk. Large numbers of *Tricholoma cuneifolium* were also seen on the lawns. They have small smoky-grey or grey-brown pilei with a dull matt texture but the cuticle cracks into areolae in older specimens due to its cellular structure. Two interesting species of *Hygrophorus* were collected i.e. *H. quietus* — an orange or chrome-yellow species with the same oily smell of *Lactarius quietus* when crushed, and *H. aurantio-splendens* — a species new to Bedfordshire with a scarlet cap. Also new to the county were the rare *Volvaria murinella*, a tiny species with grey cap and *Drosella fracidia* which has a pale creamy-ochre cap, white gills and a stem dotted with brown granules below the ring. Two species of *Psalliota* were added to the county records — *P. xanthoderma* — a white fungus with yellow-staining flesh and *P. augusta* — a very robust fungus with pale ochraceous cap densely covered with yellowish-brown scales. *Lactarius subsericeus*, another rare species, is also new to the county. It has a rich red-brown cap with bright orange-brown margin and milk which turns slowly yellow. *Entoloma prunuloides* with its white cap and *Psathyrella multipedata* forming very large tufts of fruitbodies were two other uncommon fungi present. Fine specimens of *Ganoderma lucidum* growing from the base of *Quercus ilex* also attracted attention. This polypore has a red-brown laccate pileus and dark shining stalk.

A total of 110 species was collected, 10 of which are new to the county and a further two substantiate old existing records.

With current popular works on mycology using up to date latin names it is proposed in future to adopt a more modern system of nomenclature in these foray reports.

Armillaria mellea (Vahl) Fr.; *Clitocybe flaccida* (Sow.) Fr.; **C. rivulosa* (Pers.) Fr.; *Collybia carbonaria* [= *C. ambusta* s. auct.]; *C. radicata* (Rehl) Berk; *Coprinus atramentarius* (Bull.) Fr.; *C. comatus* (Mull. ex Fr.) S. F. Gray; *C. hiascens* (Fr.) Quél.; **C. impatiens* (Fr.) Quél.; *C. lagopus* Fr.; *C. micaceus* (Bull.) Fr.; *C. plicatilis* (Curt.) Fr.; *Crepidotus mollis* (Schaeff.) Fr.; **Drosella fracidia* (Fr.) Sing. [= *Lepiota irrorata* Quél.]; *Entoloma prunuloides* Fr.; *Flammula carbonaria* Fr. var. *gigantea* Lange; *F. gummosa* (Lasch) Quél.; *Galera hypnorum* (Batsch) Fr.; *G. pygmaeo-affinis* Fr.; *G. tenera* (Schaeff.) Fr.; *Hebeloma mesophaeus* (Pers.) Fr.; **Hygrophorus aurantiosplendens* (Haller) Orton; *H. eburneus* (Bull.) Fr.; *H. niveus* (Scop.) Fr.; *H. psittacinus* (Schaeff.) Fr.; *H. quietus* Kühn.; *Hypholoma fasciculare* (Huds.) Fr.; *H. velutina* (Pers.) Fr.; *Inocybe geophylla* (Sow.) Fr.; *I. geophylla* var. *ilacina* Fr.; *Laccaria amethystina* (Vaill.) Cooke; *L. laccata* (Scop.) Cooke; **Lactarius subsericeus* Hora; (*) *Lepiota acutesquamosa* (Weimm.) Fr.; *L. amianthina* (Scop.) Fr.; *L. cristata* (Alb. & Schw.) Fr.; *Marasmius*

oreades (Bolt.) Fr.; *Mycena aetiles* Fr.; *M. avenacea* Fr.; *M. galericulata* (Scop.) Fr.; *M. galopus* (Pers.) Fr.; *M. speirea* Fr.; *M. tenerima* Berk.; *Nolanea stauropora* Bres.; *Omphalia griseopallida* Desm.; *Pholiota filaris* (Fr.) Lange; *P. spectabilis* Fr.; *Pluteus cervinus* (Schaeff.) Fr.; **P. olivaceus* Orton; **Psalliota augusta* Fr.; *P. campestris* (L.) Fr.; **P. xanthoderma* Genev.; *Psathyrella disseminata* (Pers.) Fr.; *P. gracilis* Fr.; *P. multipedata* (Peck) A. H. Smith; *P. tephrophylla* Romag.; *Psilocybe foenicisii* (Pers.) Fr.; *P. physaloides* (Bull.) Lasch; *P. semilanceata* Fr.; *P. spadicea* Fr.; *Russula fragilis* Fr.; *Stropharia aeruginosa* (Curt.) Fr.; *S. inuncta* Fr.; *Tricholoma aggregatum* (Schaeff.) Secr.; *T. carneum* (Bull.) Fr.; *T. cuneifolium* Fr.; *T. melaleucum* (Pers.) Fr.; *T. nudum* Fr.; *T. personatum* Fr.; *Tubaria furfuracea* (Pers.) Gillet; **Volvaria murinella* Quéf.

Boletus chrysenteron (Bull.) Fr.

Fistulina hepatica (Huds.) Fr.; *Fomes annosus* (Fr.) Cooke; *F. ulmarius* (Sow.) Sacc.; *Ganoderma applanatum* (Pers.) Pat., (**G. lucidum* (Leys.) Karst., *Polyporus adustus* (Willd.) Fr.; *P. dryadeus* (Pers.) Fr.; *P. squamosus* (Huds.) Fr.; *P. sulphureus* (Bull.) Fr.; *P. varius* Fr.; *Polystictus versicolor* (L.) Sacc.; *Trametes gibbosa* (Pers.) Fr.

Clavaria cristata (Holmskj.) Fr.

**Caldesiella ferruginosa* (Fr.) Sacc.; *Coniophora arida* var. *flavobrunnescens* Bres.; *Stereum purpureum* (Pers.) Fr.

Lycoperdon pyriforme (Schaeff.) Pers.

Calocera cornea (Batsch) Fr.

Exidia glandulosa (Bull.) Fr.; *E. nucleata* (Schw.) Burt.

Auricularia auricula-judae Schroet.

Coleosporium tussilaginis Tul.; *Puccinia menthae* Pers.

Coryne sarcoides (Jacq. ex Fr.) Tul.; *Helotium fructigena* (Bull. ex Fr.; Fuckel; *Helvella crispa* Scop. ex Fr.; *Melastiza chateri* (W. G. Smith) Boud.; *Peziza aurantia* Pers. ex Fr.

Daldinia concentrica (Bolt ex Fr.) Ces. & de Not.; *Diatrype disciformis* (Hoffm. ex Fr.; *D. stigma* (Hoffm. ex Fr.) Fr.; *Hypoxyylon fragiforme* (Pers. ex Fr.) Kickx.; *Nectria cinnabarina* (Tode ex Fr.) Fr.; *Rhytisma acerinum* *Xylaria hypoxyylon* (L. ex Fr.) Grev.; *X. polymorpha* (Pers. ex Fr.) Grev.

Didymium melanospermum Macbr.; *Trichia varia* Pers.

New County Record () Confirmation of old existing record.

DEREK A. REID.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1966

The 19th Annual General Meeting was held in the Guild House, Harpur Street, Bedford, on Thursday, 24th March, 1966. Mr. A. W. Guppy was in the chair and about 35 members were present.

Reports were presented by the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer and the Ornithological Secretary. The Society membership showed a considerable reduction on previous figures, but this was partly accounted for by the removal of a number of names from the register on account of long-standing arrears of subscription.

The Treasurer reported a balance at 31st December, 1965, of £237 17s. 10d. but pointed out that the 1964 Journal had not yet been published.

The President, Mr. F. G. R. Soper, has another year to serve in office, but the other officers of the Society were then elected as follows :

Chairman : A. W. Guppy
 Hon. General Secretary : P. Smith
 Hon. Treasurer : J. M. Dymond
 Hon. Editor : M. D. Wortley
 Hon. Programme Secretary : Miss E. G. Cole.

Following a ballot, the Council was elected as follows :

Miss E. M. Day	T. A. Hasdell
Mrs. B. J. Green	Dr. D. M. Jeffreys
W. G. Goldstraw	A. J. Livett
D. Green	S. W. Rodell
F. D. Hamilton	L. A. Speed

At the conclusion of the business meeting the President gave a short address entitled "Then and Now", in which he contrasted the accounts of exceptional weather in earlier times with similar happenings at the present day; he reached the conclusion that there was no significant difference between the seasons in Gilbert White's time and those we have to put up with nearly two hundred years later.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1967

Report of the 20th Annual General Meeting held at the Guildhouse, Bedford on Thursday, 16th March, 1967.

Mr. F. G. R. Soper took the chair, the Society's Chairman, Mr. A. W. Guppy being indisposed. 48 members attended.

The minutes of the 19th A.G.M. were read and signed. The Hon. Sec. Mr. Peter Smith, reported that 44 members had joined the Society during the past year and the membership was now a little over 300. He then summarised the activities of the Society in the past year, with good attendances at most meetings.

He announced his retirement from the Secretaryship because he would be taking examinations in the next few years and concluded by thanking Miss Gwen Cole for her help in the past year.

Mr. Soper thanked Peter Smith for his work and the report was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Michael Wortley then gave the report of the Ornithological Section. Several unusual birds in the County had been recorded, including Black-throated Diver, Slavonian Grebe, Purple Heron, Merlin, Corn-crake, Wryneck, Gannet, Great Grey Shrike and Hen Harrier, also Bearded Tits which had been ringed at Bedford Sewage Farm.

Weekend visits had been made to Spurn and Portland Bird Observatories and the Solway, with good attendances.

He concluded by outlining the Common Bird Census to be carried out at Maulden Wood.

The Treasurer, Mr. J. M. Dymond, presented the accounts of the Society which appear in detail elsewhere in this issue. He agreed to investigate further the amount of the Society's funds to be invested. The Treasurer thanked Mr. E. Lucas of Messrs. Thornton Baker & Co. for services as Hon. Auditors.

Mr. Dymond was thanked from the chair for his invaluable work; the report was adopted unanimously.

The proposals of the council for officers for the next year were :

President : A. W. Guppy
 Chairman : L. A. Speed
 Hon. Secretary : T. A. Hasdell
 Hon. Programme Secretary : Miss E. G. Cole
 Hon. Treasurer : J. M. Dymond
 Hon. Editor : M. D. Wortley

Mr. H. A. S. Key proposed that they should be elected and Mrs. J. M. Dymond seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The following had been nominated to serve on the council :

Miss E. M. Day	D. Green
Mrs. B. J. Green	H. A. S. Key
Dr. D. M. Jeffreys	A. J. Livett
J. N. Dymond	S. W. Rodell
W. G. Goldstraw	P. Smith

These comprised the number required and were elected en bloc, unanimously.

Mr. Soper outlined the provisional programme for the summer. Mr. Dymond made a plea for members to submit material other than Ornithological to the Editor for the Journal.

That concluded the official business and the evening was delightfully rounded off by Mr. H. A. S. Key who showed slides of his usual excellent quality illustrating the varied chalk and limestone scenery and natural history in Britain.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1968

The Society's 21st Annual General Meeting was held at the Guildhouse, Harpur Street, Bedford, on Thursday, 14th March, 1968. Mr. L. A. Speed was in the chair and about 60 members were present.

The minutes of the 20th Annual General Meeting were read and adopted and the Hon. Secretary, Mr. T. A. Hasdell, then submitted the Report of the Council for 1967. The adoption of the Report, which is printed on page 8 was proposed by Mr. Soper and seconded by Miss Cole.

The Statement of Accounts presented by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. J. M. Dymond, called for little comment but the Treasurer pointed out that if the Society's expenditure continued at its present level it might become necessary to consider raising the subscriptions. In response to a suggestion made at the previous A.G.M. the Council had looked into the question of investing some of the Society's funds but had decided that there was little benefit in doing this at the moment. The Treasurer concluded his Report by thanking Mr. E. Lucas and Messrs. Thornton Baker & Co. for auditing the accounts and printing copies of them. The adoption of the Report was proposed by Mrs. Neate and seconded by Mrs. Sharman.

The Recorder for Birds, Mr. A. J. Livett, gave an extemporaneous account of the activities of the Ornithological Section and mentioned that an osprey and three Kentish plovers were among the rarer species recorded in the County during the year.

On a proposition from the Council the following officers were then elected :

President : A. W. Guppy
 Chairman : L. A. Speed
 Hon. Secretary : T. A. Hasdell
 Hon. Treasurer : J. M. Dymond
 Hon. Programme Secretary : Miss E. G. Cole
 Hon. Editor : J. N. Dymond

There were 13 nominations for the Council and as the ballot produced a tie for the 10th vacancy it was agreed that the Council should co-opt an additional member. The new Council therefore will comprise Miss E. Day, Mrs. V. Forshaw, W. G. Goldstraw, D. Green, B. Harding, Dr. D. M. Jeffreys, H. A. S. Key, J. Knowles, A. J. Livett, S. W. Rodell and R. V. A. Wagstaff.

After the Chairman had given a brief outline of the summer programme two matters were raised under any other business. The one concerned the deficit on the coach trips and the reasons for this. It was felt that the probable explanation was that the two trips were within a few weeks of each other and in the same part of the country. The other matter was raised by Dr. Jeffreys and concerned the midwife toad which, he reminded the meeting, had been introduced into the County many years ago but was now in danger of extinction as many of its habitats were being destroyed to make way for building development. Further comments on the subject were made by Mr. Soper and Mr. M. Rogers.

At the conclusion of the business meeting Mr. Key gave a talk on the subject "The Natural History of the Waterside" illustrating it with a series of excellent colour slides of numerous localities including the Lake District, the Pennines, Teeside, the Cotswolds and the River Ouse.

REPORTS OF RECORDERS

BOTANY

I apologise for my failure to make a report for three years, but my time was fully occupied in preparing the *Flora of Hertfordshire* which was published in 1967. Many fellow botanists have sent me records and my own excursions into the county were more numerous in 1967 than in any previous year since 1953. I am now in the course of preparing an account of the many changes in the flora of the county in the last 14 years which I hope will be published in the next Journal.

J. G. DONY.

METEOROLOGY

1965

Taken as a whole, 1965 was a cool and rather wet year, most months having temperatures below average, especially July, which was one of the coldest of the present century. The sunniest and warmest periods were in mid-May and in mid-August when there was a fortnight without measurable rain. October was drier still, with only one wet day out of the first 27 and a month's rainfall scarcely exceeding half an inch. Nevertheless, the year's rainfall was nearly 15 per cent in excess of normal in many places, largely due to the heavy totals in July and December.

A. W. GUPPY.

1966

Like 1965, 1966 was, on average, another cool, dull year with rainfall even more above the average by up to 20 per cent in most places. Apart from a very cold period during the third week of January, and some cold easterly weather in mid-February, the winter was not severe, and there was slight snow only on 10th January. February and April, normally two of our driest months, were unusually wet, April having nearly three inches in 23 days. A feature, too, of the latter month were the very cold easterly winds in the second and third weeks.

May brought some fine and, indeed, brilliant weather, and this continued for the first half of June, culminating in the warmest day of the year on the 15th, with 84 deg. F. The second half of the month, the whole of July and the first half of August were all unsettled and wet.

The second half of September produced some dry and settled weather with light easterly winds and morning fogs, but unsettled conditions were resumed on the 29th and continued throughout a very wet October and a mild November which was free from frost and fog. An unusually wet and unsettled December was ushered in, as it so very often is, by a heavy storm on the 1st.

A. W. GUPPY.

1967

For those whose holidays had been spoilt by the chilly and rather wet summers of 1965 and 1966, 1967 was a welcome return to what is thought of as more "normal" conditions, with June, July and August all enjoying long periods of dry warm weather.

Although the winter was, once again, not severe, the weather in the first three months was dominated by cold winds from the north and east, and the rainfall was below average, more particularly in January, which had less than one-half of its usual amount. By comparison, May was remarkably wet; in fact, for the British Isles as a whole it was the wettest May for nearly 200 years, although this was not so in the Bedford area. Even so, 25 days had rain in this district.

June and July together produced long, warm and very dry periods. Of the 44 days between 2nd June and 16th July only five were wet, but thereafter there was considerable thundery activity during the last fortnight of July. August was dry from the 19th onwards, but September was unsettled, and October and the first week of November were very wet indeed.

There was a brief spell of very cold weather, with some snow, during the second week of December, but the year closed without any further extremes. The net result was a warmer drier year than its two predecessors, with rainfall about ten per cent below average.

A. W. GUPPY.

BIRDS

The following pages include the ornithological records for Bedfordshire for the three years 1965-1967. The summaries for 1965 and 1966 are very brief, and the classified lists for these two years are less detailed than for 1967. Readers will notice that some observers' initials occur a great many times in the lists and I should like to convey the Society's thanks to these people, and to all other members (and non-members) who have contributed records over the past three years enabling the reports to be compiled.

It is apparent that during the breeding season many of our woodland and heathland areas are paid scant attention by observers, and the records for many species (warblers, chats, starts and others) suffer as a result. Can I request members to visit these areas (respecting private and restricted property), and to record and submit their findings to the Bird Recorder. Until we have wide and systematic coverage we cannot possibly assess whether such species as the Nightingale is really vanishing from our County.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS, 1965-1967

C. D. Addington, D. W. Beard, G. J. Buss, Miss B. M. Clutton, the late H. Cole, Mrs. A. Connet, M. J. Coughlan, C. J. Cox, G. J. Dring, K. R. Dugmore, J. N. Dymond, Mrs. M. E. Dymond, P. W. Ellicott, D. W. Elliott, Dr. A. W. Ferguson, I. J. Ferguson-Lees, Dr. J. J. M. Flegg, T. W. Gladwin, D. Green, F. D. Hamilton, B. D. Harding, D. Hasdell, T. A. Hasdell, A. Horder, L. N. Illingworth, B. S. Jackson, A. R. Jenkins, H. Kemsley, R. Kent, H. A. S. Key, P. G. Kitchener, J. P. Knowles, B. Lewicki, A. J. Livett, Mrs. K. Livett, K. C. Marlow, H. Mayer-Gross, C. J. Mead, A. C. Morriss, P. J. Mountford, B. Nightingale, D. Parsons, R. Pennell, S. W. Rodell, M. Rogers, Miss D. A. Rook, B. R. Sacree, M. Seaman, W. G. Sharpe, Dr. J. T. R. Sharrock, P. Smith, R. K. Smith, S. C. Smith, B. Squires, R. G. O. Stephenson, J. H. Swan, D. J. Swift, C. F. Tebbutt, P. Trengrove, R. V. A. Wagstaff, C. D. Warren-Smith, K. R. Weeden, R. White, J. P. Widgey, E. M. Wilkinson, P. J. Wilkinson, M. D. Wortley, Lt.Col. E. P. Young.

The following abbreviations are used in the classified lists : SF—Sewage Farm, GP—Gravel Pit, CIP—Clay Pit, ChP—Chalk Pit, SP—Sand Pit, L—Lake.

1965

1965 was a particularly poor year for both quantity and quality of bird species. The most interesting occurrence in the early months of the year was a Black-necked Grebe at Stewartby Lake on 24th March. A Little Egret at one of the Heath and Reach Sand Pits on 5th June was the rarest species seen during the year, and apart from three or four Pied Flycatchers at Sandy Lodge in August, the only other noteworthy records were a Twite at Luton Airport on 13th November, a total of at least nine Waxwings from 13th November until the end of the year, and a pair of Bearded Tits at Bedford Sewage Farm from 21st November until January 1966. The last two species closely followed the national pattern of an immense invasion of Waxwings and a very big irruption of Bearded Tits.

Wildfowl and winter thrush numbers were very low at both ends of the year, the spring and autumn passages of waders were only moderate, tern passage was very small, and summer migrant arrival and departure dates were, in general, rather ordinary.

Species recorded as present in normal numbers in Bedfordshire, and not included in the text are : Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Heron, Mute Swan, Kestrel, Red-legged Partridge, Partridge, Pheasant, Moorhen, Coot, Snipe, Great Black-backed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Common Gull, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Barn Owl, Little Owl, Tawney Owl, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Skylark, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Marsh Tit, Willow Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Tree-creeper, Wren, Mistle Thrush, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Goldcrest, Dunnock, Meadow Pipit, Pied Wagtail, Starling, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Chaffinch, Yellowhammer, Corn Bunting, Reed Bunting, House Sparrow.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE : One at Stewartby L on 24th March (JTRS).

LITTLE EGRET : One seen near Heath and Reach on 5th June (HMG,RP).

MALLARD : No concentrations of more than 300-400 during the year.

TEAL : Very low numbers in the winter months.

GARGANEY : Single male at Wyboston GP from 4th-18th April. No autumn records.

WIGON : No flocks exceeding 15 were reported during the year.

SHOVELER : A pair reared six young at Southill L. Also three at Stewartby L on 12th March, five at Oakley on 10th August and one at Dunstable SF on 13th October.

TUFTED DUCK : Winter numbers were very low, the maximum counts being 40 at Wyboston GP and 30 at Stewartby L in January.

POCHARD : Very low numbers, and the only report of breeding was at Battlesdon L, where a pair reared at least three young.

GOLDENEYE : One at Wyboston GP on 3rd January, one at Felmersham GP on 9th February and two there on 19th March, and three on 17th January at Stewartby L where birds were present until 18th April with a peak of 10 on 27th March.

GOOSANDER : One female at Wyboston GP from 1st-17th January (JND, PGK, BRS, PS).

SMEW : Three "red-heads" at Bedford SF on 27th January (PGK) and one at Stewartby L on 7th March (JTRS).

SHELDUCK : One at Stewartby L on 11th March, one at Wyboston GP on 22nd April and one at Dunstable SF on 2nd May.

WHOOPEE SWAN : Fifteen flying over Sandy Lodge on 25th February (JPK, JHS).

BEWICK'S SWAN : One immature at East Hyde on 28th December (AJL).

BUZZARD : One over Sandy Lodge on 5th October (JHS) and one over Ampthill Park on 3rd November (BRS).

SPARROWHAWK : One near Riseley on 17th June was the only sighting (CFT).

HOBBY : A male at Sandy Lodge on 13th May (JHS).

QUAIL : One heard on Warden Hills on 7th June (RVAW), one near Tottenhamhoe on 14th, and two near Dunstable on 10th July (SWR).

WATER RAIL : Individuals sighted on many occasions late in the year at Bedford SF/Barkers Lane GP. No reports from Flitwick Moor, an established breeding site.

OYSTER-CATCHER : One heard calling over Bedford on 5th September (PGK).

LAPWING : Many observers commented on the abundance of this species from early autumn to the end of the year.

RINGED PLOVER : Only three spring records, all of single birds, at Wyboston GP on 4th April, Dunstable SF on 10th May, and Stewartby L on 12th May. Few records in the autumn either; one at Barkers Lane GP on 11th July, one at Stewartby L on 24th July, and one there on 1st August, and three at Houghton Regis ChP on 5th September.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER : First spring birds at Stewartby L and City Fields GP on 29th March, followed by two at Wyboston GP on 2nd April and 10 there by 11th.

Breeding : 4-5 pairs at Wyboston GP, two pairs at Harrod GP, one pair at City Fields GP, one pair at Blunham GP and one pair at Heath and Reach. No measure of success reported for the first four sites and the pair at Heath and Reach were unsuccessful, being disturbed by machinery.

None were recorded after 8th August when one was still at Wyboston GP.

GOLDEN PLOVER : The larger flocks early in the year were c300 near Old Warden on 9th January and 165 at Houghton Conquest on 10th March. Last two birds near Henlow on 29th March. The first reported autumn arrivals were c100 near Arlesey on 3rd October, and no larger flock was seen until 26th December when c200 were at East Hyde.

TURNSTONE : One at Bedford SF on 29th April (PT).

JACK SNIBE : Very few recorded in the year. Last spring birds were two at Bedford SF on 3rd April.

WOODCOCK : The only record away from breeding haunts was one at Wyboston GP on 1st January.

CURLEW : A small party heard over Luton on 15th March and one near Heath and Reach on 27th March.

GREEN SANDPIPER : One at Bedford SF on 9th January (DH). Only one bird on spring passage, at Bedford SF from 21st-28th March.

Autumn passage : At Bedford SF from 22nd July to 28th September, maximum four on 11th September; at Cople GP from 17th July to 18th September, maximum four on 28th July; at Wyboston GP from 21st July to 19th September, maximum three; also singles at Harrold GP on 20th July, at Luton Hoo L on 14th August, at City Fields GP on 7th July, and at Stewartby L on the late date of 22nd December.

WOOD SANDPIPER : Two at Bedford SF on 10th-11th September was the only record (PT).

COMMON SANDPIPER : Two at Wyboston GP on 17th April were the first spring arrivals. Odd birds in May at Dunstable SF, Wyboston GP, Stewartby L, Luton Hoo L, and East Hyde.

Autumn passage : From 13th July to 31st October with maxima of five at Bedford SF in early September, eight at Wyboston GP on 21st August, four at Stewartby L and two at Dunstable SF, and also odd birds at Harrold GP and Luton Hoo L.

REDSHANK : First arrivals were three at Bedford SF on 13th March and one at Wyboston GP on the same day. Up to eight at Bedford SF in April and 3-4 pairs attempted to breed. Passage birds at a number of localities and breeding pairs at Chimney Corner CIP, Brogborough CIP and Stanford GP. Only one record later than June, a single bird at Barkers Lane GP on 23rd August.

GREENSHANK : One at Wyboston GP on 2nd May was the only spring record (PS). In autumn there were one or two on most dates from 21st July to 22nd September at Wyboston GP (with four on 19th September), one or two at Bedford SF from 22nd August to 2nd October, and one at Oakley on 22nd August.

DUNLIN : One at City Fields GP on 29th March and one at Bedford SF on 29th April were the only spring birds.

Autumn passage : Two at Stewartby L on 16th July and one there on 6th September; 1-2 at Bedford SF from 10th-21st September and two there from 21st-28th November.

RUFF : All records from Bedford SF in the autumn : at least three on 5th September increasing to 15 by 11th, and the last four seen on 18th. Another bird present from 20th-27th November (PT).

BLACK-HEADED GULL : c200 pairs in the breeding colony at Millbrook CIP and c50 pairs at Chimney Corner CIP (BS, PS, MDW).

BLACK TERN : One at Dunstable SF on 2nd May (AJL) and 12 at Stewartby L on 12th May (ACM).

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN : One over Bedford on 24th March, one at Bedford SF on 19th April, two over Sandy Lodge on 31st May, and three at Longholme L, Bedford on 23rd July.

COMMON TERN : The first birds to return to Wyboston GP were two seen on 17th April, and two pairs probably attempted to breed. Their success is somewhat uncertain, but at least three young were reared, and up to 10 birds were seen together at the end of July, the last remaining until 25th August.

Two were at Harrold GP on 26th July.

TURTLE DOVE : First at Sandy Lodge on 30th April (JHS). A maximum of 40 at Wyboston GP in August is many fewer than usual. The last was seen near Bedford on 18th September (PT).

COLLARED DOVE : Numerous reports in Bedford, and also seen in Luton, Dunstable, Harlington and Sandy.

CUCKOO : First arrival at Sandy Lodge on 23rd April (JHS) followed by one at East Hyde on 25th (RKS). No departure dates.

LONG-EARED OWL : None recorded during the year.

SHORT-EARED OWL : One at Bedford SF on 17th February (DH) and one at Luton Hoo Park on 6th March (AJL).

NIGHTJAR : Several seen and heard in Heath and Reach area and at least four pairs around Sandy Lodge (DWB, AJL, JHS, MDW). No reports from other suitable localities.

SWIFT : First two at Dunstable SF on 1st May, and many reports in the next few days. Last recorded on 14th September at Bedford.

KINGFISHER : Records from Felmersham GP, Bedford SF to Renhold (up to four individuals), Cople GP and near Blunham on the R. Ivel.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER : Only recorded at Sandy Lodge and Northill (JHS, PT).

WOODLARK : One heard singing at Tingrith on 27th May (SWR).

SWALLOW : First arrivals were six at Bedford SF on 25th March and one at Radwell on 30th (MR). Not widespread until late April. Several were seen during October and the last two at Bedford on 1st November (MR).

HOUSE MARTIN : One seen in Luton on the very early date of 14th March (KRW). Then none until 19th April when two were at Great Barford (PGK). No more until May. Last emigrants were 15-20 near Bedford on 9th October (MR).

SAND MARTIN : One at Felmersham GP on 28th March (PS) and 15 there on 30th (JTRS). Last record was one at Stewartby L on 22nd September (JTRS).

BEARDED TIT : A pair at Bedford SF from 21st November until the end of the year (MDW et al).

FIELDFARE : Last spring record was one at City Fields GP on 23rd April (ARJ, ACM). First autumn arrivals were three at Sandy Lodge on 12th October (JHS). No really large flocks reported during the year.

REDWING : Last spring record was 30 at Bedford SF on 18th March (PS) and first autumn record was two at Sandy Lodge on 12th October (JHS). No large flocks seen in the year.

RING OUZEL : A male near Renhold on 6th April (PT).

WHEATEAR : One at Stratford on 22nd March (JPK) and 12 on Warden Hills on 28th. Singles in April and May at Bedford SF, Wyboston GP and East Hyde. A scattering of birds from 22nd August to 18th September.

STONECHAT : None recorded in the year.

WHINCHAT : First seen on 9th May at Barkers Lane GP (PT) followed by a pair at Stewartby L on 16th May (MDW). The only other breeding season record was a male on Galley Hill on 5th June (RVAW). Autumn records from 23rd August to 20th September at Galley Hill, Bedford SF, Barkers Lane GP and Renhold (MR, PT, RVAW).

REDSTART : First spring male at Sandy Lodge on 19th April (JHS). Breeding throughout the Greensand ridge. Last autumn bird in Bedford on 5th October (PS).

NIGHTINGALE : The first was heard on 9th May at Kings Wood, Heath and Reach, and others were seen or heard at Maulden Wood, Pegsdon, Luton Hoo Park and Flitwick Moor.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER : Not reported until 9th May (AJL, MDW) at Heath and Reach, which is exceptionally late for an arrival date. Widely reported during the summer months.

REED WARBLER : No arrival or departure dates were reported.

SEDGE WARBLER : First spring record on 1st May at Dunstable SF (AJL) and last autumn bird at Barkers Lane GP on 23rd September (PT).

BLACKCAP : First arrival on 23rd April at Sandy Lodge, and the last autumn bird there on 9th October (JHS).

GARDEN WARBLER : First records from Kings Wood and Rushmere on 2nd May (AJL, BS). Two at Sandy on 21st September were the latest autumn birds (FDH).

WHITETHROAT : First at Carlton on 21st April (PGK) and last at Bedford SF on 19th September (PT).

LESSER WHITETHROAT : First two at Kings Wood on 9th May (AJL, MDW) and last recorded at Sandy Lodge on 19th September (JHS).

WILLOW WARBLER : First arrival at City Fields GP on 4th April (ACM) and last migrant at Sandy Lodge on 19th September (JHS).

CHIFFCHAFF : Earliest at Sandy Lodge on 24th March (JHS), and the last two autumn records were on 6th October at Sandy Lodge and 23rd October at Flitwick Moor (AJL, JHS).

WOOD WARBLER : Few of the suitable breeding localities were visited, but a new site was discovered at Keysoe Wood (HASK).

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER : One very early migrant at Hanger Wood on 11th April (PS), then none until May. Last record from Bedford SF on 23rd September (PT).

PIED FLYCATCHER : Two passage migrants at Sandy Lodge on 16th August, one on 22nd and one on 25th (JHS).

TREE PIPIT : Not recorded until May. Breeding in all suitable localities that were visited. One at Sandy Lodge on 20th September was the last emigrant (JHS).

GREY WAGTAIL : Reported from Bedford SF, Wyboston GP, R. Ouzel near Heath and Reach, and near Henlow, but only at the last place during the breeding season.

YELLOW WAGTAIL : First male at Stewartby L on 4th April (PS) with numerous records in the next ten days. Last bird at Stewartby L on 22nd September (JTRS).

WAXWING : Bedfordshire was represented in the immense invasion of this species by one at Sandy Lodge on 13th November, four at Putnoe, Bedford from 1st-7th December, one remaining until 12th, one near Odell on 12th, one at Totternhoe on 20th, and two at Sandy Lodge on 21st (AC, MED, TAH, LNI, JHS).

RED-BACKED SHRIKE : Two pairs found breeding on the eastern Chalk downs were the only ones located this year (ACM).

HAWFINCH : Family parties observed at Bidwell and Sandy Lodge (DG, JHS).

GREENFINCH : The roost at Sandy Lodge had an estimated 1,000 of this species at the end of the year (JHS).

SISKIN : No parties of more than 4 birds were seen early in the year, and in the autumn the only report was up to 25 at Sandy Lodge.

LINNET : c1,000 roosting at Sandy Lodge from December onwards (JHS).

TWITE : One at Luton Airport on 13th November (AJL).

LESSER REDPOLL : Breeding in small numbers in many localities in the southern part of the County. By far the largest winter flock was that at Sandy Lodge, which peaked at c150 on 20th November (JHS).

CROSSBILL : The only record during the whole year was one at Sandy Lodge on 6th June (PGK). This suggests that the breeding population of the County fluctuates very much more than is perhaps thought.

BRAMBLING : Odd birds at Sandy Lodge and Bedford SF were the only records in the year

TREE SPARROW : Largest flocks were c200 at Sharpshoe Clappers on 31st January (BS) and at least 100 near Luton Airport on 13th November (AJL).

NICHOLAS DYMOND.

1966

Some 155 species were recorded in Bedfordshire during 1966. The first few months were rather quiet with below average numbers of wildfowl, and nothing unusual was seen until the end of February, when a Black-throated Diver appeared at Stewartby Lake. On 18th March there was a Merlin at Felmersham Gravel Pits, and in April there was a Slavonian Grebe at Stewartby Lake on 3rd, a Red-throated Diver there on 6th, and three Common Scoter there on 20th. Pride of place in May must go to an immature Marsh Harrier at Sandy Lodge on 16th, and 40 Black Terns at Stewartby Lake on 31st were unusually late. August produced an immature Purple Heron on 10th at Wyboston Gravel Pits (it stayed for a month), a Wryneck at Biddenham on 26th, and very high numbers of Ruff at Bedford Sewage Farm, peaking at 27 at the end of the month. On 9th October an immature Gannet was found dead near Bedford, and on 15th and 22nd a Lapland Bunting was seen at the north end of the town. Lastly, a Hen Harrier was seen on several occasions in December at Sandy Lodge.

The spring arrival dates of summer migrants were, in general, about normal, but several species were recorded rather late in the autumn. Waders were scarce in the spring, but the autumn passage was most interesting, with good quantity and quality. October to December was notable for high numbers of duck and huge numbers of Fieldfares. To mention three of our breeding species; Little Ringed Plovers had a very poor year with probably only four pairs in the County, Common Terns increased to three pairs at Wyboston Gravel Pits, and Crossbills possibly bred in as many as eight different areas along the Greensand ridge of wooded hills.

Species recorded as present in normal numbers in Bedfordshire, and not included in the text are : Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Heron, Mute Swan, Kestrel, Red-legged Partridge, Partridge, Pheasant, Moorhen, Woodcock, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Common Gull, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Barn Owl, Little Owl, Tawny Owl, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Skylark, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Marsh Tit, Willow Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Wren, Mistle Thrush, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Goldcrest, Dunnock, Meadow Pipit, Pied Wag-tail, Starling, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Chaffinch, Yellowhammer, Corn Bunting, Reed Bunting, House Sparrow.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER : One at Wyboston GP from 27th February to 6th March (PT).

RED-THROATED DIVER : One at Stewartby L on 6th April (PT).

SLAVONIAN GREBE : One at Stewartby L on 3rd April (BDH, DH, MDW).

GANNET : One immature bird found dead near Elstow on 9th October (GJD).

CORMORANT : Three at Millbrook CIP on 8th May (BDH, MDW), one at Wyboston GP from 24th July to 13th August and one at Stewartby L on 7th September (PT).

PURPLE HERON : One immature at Wyboston GP from 10th August to 10th September (PT et al).

MALLARD : Numbers at Stewartby L peaked at c1,200 at the end of October.

TEAL : c120 at Wyboston GP in early January, and 70 there in November were the largest flocks.

GARGANEY : Only record was a pair at Stewartby L on 6th April (PT). Present at Wyboston GP from 26th August to 17th September with a maximum of seven on 4th September.

WIGEON : Very few seen during the year.

PINTAIL : Single drake at Chimney Corner CIP on 2nd January, and a pair there on 20th December.

SHOVELER : One at Chimney Corner CIP on 6th April and a pair at Barkers Lane GP on 8th. A pair were present at Southill L in May, but breeding was not proved. Up to six at Wyboston GP from 6th August to 4th September, and one at Stewartby L on 26th December.

TUFFED DUCK : Maximum count of c100 at Stewartby L on 25th August.

POCHARD : Maximum count during the early months of the year was c165 at Stewartby L on 12th January. At Wyboston GP the numbers increased from c100 in mid-September to 210 on 16th October, thereafter decreasing to 130 in December.

No breeding records received.

GOLDENEYE : One at Felmersham GP on 10th January and two there on 1st February. Two at Wyboston GP from 13th February to 6th March and another there on 5th April. Present at Stewartby L from 2nd January until at least 16th April with a maximum of nine on 21st February.

COMMON SCOTER : Two males and a female at Stewartby L on 20th April, one male still present on 25th (PT).

SHELDUCK : One at Stewartby L on 1st-2nd February and one there on 21st February. One at Dunstable SF on 14th August and a flock of 20 (nearly all juveniles) at Stewartby L on 7th September.

GREY GESE sp : Five flying N. over Maulden Wood on 13th March, c35 N. over Thorn on 25th August, c30 SW over Great Barford on 17th December, and 11 NW over Pegsdon on 26th December.

CANADA GOOSE : One at Wyboston GP on 27th April (PT).

BEWICK'S SWAN : Four adults and four immatures at Wyboston GP from 10th-14th December (PT, MDW).

BUZZARD : One over Bidwell on 10th April (DG), one at Tingrith on 17th (KRW), one over Dunstable Downs on 31st May (JPW). Two frequented the Eversholt area in October (via BDH), one was reported in Luton Hoo Park in the same month (via AJL) and one flew over Sandy Lodge on 25th October (JHS).

SPARROWHAWK : A pair at Maulden Wood on 13th March (DH) and two sightings at Sandy Lodge in November and December (via JHS) were the only reports of this species in the year.

MARSH HARRIER : One immature at Sandy Lodge on 16th May (JHS).

HEN HARRIER : One "ring-tail" seen at Sandy Lodge on five days in December (DAR).

HOBBY : One at Barkers Lane GP on 2nd May (PT), one at Sandy Lodge on 16th May, and another on 8th June (JHS), and one at Dunstable SF on 18th July (MDW).

MERLIN : One at Felmersham GP on 18th March (JTRS).

WATER RAIL : One at Barkers Lane GP on 27th January, and one at Wyboston GP on 15th April. Two adults and a juvenile flushed by the river between Clapham and Bedford on 14th August (MR). No reports from Flitwick Moor.

CORNCRAKE : One seen on 9th September at Hardwicke Farm near Felmersham, and again on 16th and 17th (HK).

COOT : Maximum count was c250 at Wyboston GP on 17th September.

OYSTER-CATCHER : One at Wyboston GP on 17th July (PT).

LAPWING : Heavy hard-weather movements to the west noted in the Bedford area on six days in October and also on 26th December.

RINGED PLOVER : Spring passage at Dunstable SF from 15th-27th May with a maximum of five; one at Stewartby L on 30th May.

Autumn passage : Up to three at Bedford SF from 11th-18th August and two there on 5th October, one at Stewartby L on 21st August, two at Dunstable SF on 11th August, three at Wyboston GP on 6th November, and one at Houghton Regis ChP on 20th November.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER : First two spring birds were at Wyboston GP on 5th April. Also one at Bedford SF on 20th April and two at Arlesey on 23rd.

Breeding : One pair at Wyboston GP, 1-2 pairs at Harrold GP and 1-2 pairs at Blunham GP. Success not easy to ascertain, but never more than three were together at Wyboston GP, although eight were seen at Blunham GP on 25th July.

Autumn passage : At Wyboston GP until 8th September; at Bedford SF from 10th July until 16th August with maximum of six on 4th; at Dunstable SF from 18th August to 10th September with maximum of two.

GOLDEN PLOVER : Larger flocks early in the year were c200 near Arlesey on 19th March and c70 at Bedford SF on 28th, and the last spring birds were 24 at Bedford SF on 16th April and one at Stewartby L on the same day.

First autumn record was two at Bedford SF on 6th August, and c200 were near Arlesey on 28th. No other big flocks were seen late in the year.

TURNSTONE : One at Bedford SF on 8th August (PT).

SNIBE : Largest concentration was c65 at Bedford SF in October.

JACK SNIBE : One at Bedford SF on 28th March and one at Wyboston GP on 2nd October were the last spring and first autumn records respectively.

CURLEW : One at Dunstable SF on 24th May. Nine records of ones and twos from July to December.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT : One at Bedford SF on 17th April was in breeding dress (BS).

GREEN SANDPIPER : No spring records.

Autumn passage : At Bedford SF from 26th June to 5th November, maximum eight on 25th August, and another on 30th November; at Dunstable SF from 24th July to 27th November, maximum seven on 17th August; at Wyboston GP from 11th July to 15th September, maximum three; also odd birds at Blunham GP, Stewartby L and Chimney Corner CIP.

WOOD SANDPIPER : One at Dunstable SF from 17th-22nd May (RVAW et al), two there on 11th July (BDH, MDW), one at Bedford SF on 17th August and one at Stewartby L on 12th September (PT).

COMMON SANDPIPER : First spring arrival at Bedford SF on 10th April, and ones and twos here, at Wyboston GP, Stewartby L and Dunstable SF until 31st May.

Autumn passage from 13th July until 23rd October with maxima of 10 at Bedford SF on 9th August, 15 at Wyboston GP on 1st September, 10 at Stewartby L on 5th and six at Dunstable SF on 3rd, and odd birds at Blunham GP and City Fields GP.

REDSHANK : Two near Bedford on 23rd February were the first arrivals. Normal spring passage and build-up of numbers at breeding sites. Birds were present at Bedford SF until 9th September, much later than usual.

SPOTTED REDSHANK : One at Bedford SF on 6th August, 21st August and 8th September (PT). One at Wyboston GP on 22nd August, and again from 4th-8th September (BDH, MR, PT, MDW).

GREENSHANK : No spring records. In autumn, up to four at Bedford SF from 20th July to 8th October, up to five at Wyboston GP from 28th July to 9th October, one at Dunstable SF from 21st August to 22nd September, and one at Stewartby L on 24th August.

KNOT : One at Wyboston GP on 1st September (AJL).

DUNLIN : One at Barkers Lane GP on 5th January.

Spring passage : Eleven at Bedford SF on 20th April, two remaining until 25th May, and up to three at Dunstable SF from 18th-27th May.

Autumn passage : At Bedford SF from 24th July to 5th November, maximum eight on 29th October; also a few records from Dunstable SF, Wyboston GP, Chimney Corner CIP and Stewartby L, three being at the last locality on 27th November.

CURLEW SANDPIPER : One at Bedford SF on 22nd-23rd October. (PT).

SANDERLING : One at Dunstable SF on 21st May (DG, AJL, MDW).

RUFF : No spring records. Exceptional autumn passage as follows : at Bedford SF, four on 18th July, three from 7th-18th August, five on 22nd August increasing steadily to peak of 27 on 29th, decreasing to just one by 12th September, increasing to four in the next week, then 1-2 most days until 16th October; 1-2 at Wyboston GP from 2nd-10th September; three at Stewartby L on 24th August; one at Dunstable SF on 18th August.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL : A pair were displaying at Brogborough CIP on 30th May (BDH, MDW).

LITTLE GULL : One at Stewartby L on 16th April (BDH, AJL).

BLACK-HEADED GULL : 60-80 pairs bred at Millbrook CIP and c120 pairs at Chimney Corner CIP (BDH, PT, MDW).

BLACK TERN : One at Stewartby L on 30th May and c40 the next day. In autumn, two at Stewartby L on 5th September, one there on 7th, and one at Wyboston GP on 15th.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN : One at Dunstable SF on 18th May and three on 22nd, one at Stewartby L on 25th April, 5-6 there on 31st May, and three there on 7th August.

COMMON TERN: First arrivals at Wyboston GP were two on 19th April. Three pairs probably attempted to breed and at least six young were reared. Up to 20 birds were present at the end of July, but a few of these may have been passage migrants. Odd birds were seen until 18th September.

ARCTIC TERN: Two at Stewartby L on 16th April (BDH, AJL).

TURTLE DOVE: First arrivals were three at Cardington and one at Sandy Lodge on 24th April (JPK, MR), but not widespread until the second week in May. Autumn numbers at Wyboston GP reached at least 100 on 29th August. The last two were seen at Sandy Lodge on 24th September (JHS).

COLLARED DOVE: Widely reported from Bedford, Sandy, Luton and Dunstable, with several sizeable parties being involved, the largest of 50 at Dunstable.

CUCKOO: First arrival at Bidwell on 19th April (DG) followed by ones at Sandy Lodge on 23rd and at Warden Warren and Battlesdon L on 24th. Last seen on 3rd August at Bedford SF (PT).

LONG-EARED OWL: None recorded during the year.

SHORT-EARED OWL: Three at Knocking Hoe, Pegsdon on 11th December (via AH).

NIGHTJAR: First heard near Heath and Reach on 7th May and several there subsequently. Also recorded from Rowney Warren and Sandy Lodge, where the last was seen on 8th August.

SWIFT: First on 26th April over Bedford, and last at Colworth on 6th September (MR).

KINGFISHER: Pairs at Willington, Felmersham GP and Oakley (PT).

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER: Reported from Sandy Lodge (JH) and Heath and Reach only. A nest with young was found at the latter locality on 12th May, a very early date (DG, BDH).

WRYNECK: One was stunned flying into a window at Biddenham on 26th August (DWE, HASK).

WOODLARK: One at Sandy Lodge on 27th February (JHS).

SWALLOW: Earliest bird at Barkers Lane GP on 3rd April (BS) and widely reported by mid-April. Parties up to 40 were regularly seen until 12th October, after which the only record was 3-4 late birds at Pavenham on 8th November (EPY).

HOUSE MARTIN: Singles on 16th April at Stewartby L and Barkers Lane GP (AJL, PT). Several October records, and the last on 8th November at Pavenham (EPY).

SAND MARTIN: Not seen until 1st April when two were at Sandy GP (PT), but many reports in the next ten days. Last record was two at Dunstable SF on 9th October (AJL).

BEARDED TIT: The pair which appeared at Bedford SF in November 1965 were present until 11th January (PT, MDW).

FIELDFARE: At least 200 at Bedford SF on 5th March was the largest flock early in the year and 100 were still in the area on 17th April, one remaining until 26th (MR, PT). One was seen at Wyboston GP on 12th June (PT). [June Fieldfares are not particularly rare on the coast, but are most unusual inland.] One early autumn bird was seen at Wyboston GP on 14th August (MDW), but no more were seen until 28th September when one was at Sandy Lodge. Huge numbers poured into the County in October and stayed until the end of the year. Several flocks of 500 were reported, c1,000 were at Bedford SF at the end of October, and c3,000 at Barton Cutting on 6th November (AJL, MR, BS, PT et al).

REDWING: No large numbers early in the year, and last reports were 20 at Maulden Wood on 11th April (BDH) and nocturnal passage over Bedford on 22nd April (DH). First autumn record was one at Bedford SF on 18th September (MR) followed by nocturnal passage over Everton and Houghton Regis on 28th September (PWE, BDH). Numbers from October onwards were far below those of Fieldfare, particularly in the northern part of the County, and the only large flock reported was c200 at Barton Cutting on 6th November (AJL).

RING OUZEL: A male at Bedford SF from 2nd-4th April (PT).

WHEATEAR: Large spring and autumn passage this year, the extreme dates being 28th March to 3rd May and 1st July to 2nd October.

STONECHAT: All records from Barkers Lane GP; a male on 23rd February, a male on 5th October and a female on 12th November (PT).

WHINCHAT: First spring bird was at Barkers Lane GP on 27th April (PT). Breeding season records from Galley Hill, Dunstable Downs, Stewartby L and Bedford SF. Last bird at Bedford SF on 1st October (PT).

REDSTART: A male at Howbury Hall on 7th April (PT), with others at Sandy Lodge on 12th and Home Wood on 13th. Breeding throughout the Greensand ridge. Latest migrant at Sandy Lodge on 20th October (JHS).

[**BLACK REDSTART**]: Two sightings of a bird in central Luton in June probably refer to this species (AJL).

NIGHTINGALE: Two in song at Maulden Wood on 8th May (BDH, MDW). The only other report of this species during the year was one at Telegraph Hill on several occasions in June (AH). It seems impossible that no others were present in the County and must be assumed that observers paid no attention to habitats suitable to this species during the relatively short period of six weeks or so when song is regularly heard.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER: First heard on 19th April at Ireland (JPK), and widely reported during the breeding season.

REED WARBLER: Spring arrival dates not reported. The last autumn record was from Bedford SF on 8th September (PT).

SEDGE WARBLER: First at Stewartby L on 10th April (MDW) with many reports in the next week. Last autumn record was one at Barkers Lane GP on 8th October (PT).

BLACKCAP: Two singing at Felmersham GP on 8th April (PT) and many reports in the next few days. One very late female in Luton on 12th November (BDH).

GARDEN WARBLER: Two at Sandy Lodge on 30th April were the first arrivals (JHS). No records of autumn birds were received.

WHITETHROAT: First at Battlesdon L on 10th April and last at Dunstable SF on 25 September

LESSER WHITETHROAT: First heard at Sandy Lodge on 25th April, and the last autumn birds were one there on 13th September and one at Goldington on 26th (JHS, PT).

WILLOW WARBLER: One at Sandy Lodge on 4th April was the first arrival, and one there on 19th September was the last emigrant (JHS).

CHIFFCHAFF: Early records from Bedford SF on 5th March and Sandy Lodge on 7th. In the autumn three were singing in Bedford on 10th October (MR) and one was singing at Sandy Lodge on 12th (JHS). A wintering bird seen by PT at Barkers Lane GP on 26th December may have been the bird trapped by JND at Bedford SF on 29th January 1967.

WOOD WARBLER: None recorded at Heath and Reach, Kings Wood or Fox Corner during the year, but at least two pairs present in Charle Wood (BDH, AJL, MDW). No reports from other suitable localities.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER : First arrivals at Sandy Lodge on 10th May (JHS) and Stockgrove Woods on 14th (AJL). Many September records up to 29th when one was at Sandy Lodge (JHS), with another late bird on 1st October at Bedford SF (PT).

PIED FLYCATCHER : A male at Sandy Lodge on 3rd May and one there on 13th September (JHS).

TREE PIPIT : First singing at Sandy Lodge on 8th April (JHS), then none until 24th at Warden Warren. Late emigrants at Sandy Lodge on 6th and 11th October (JHS).

WHITE WAGTAIL : Spring passage from 12th April to 30th May at Bedford SF, Dunstable SF, Stewartby I, and Sandy Lodge.

GREY WAGTAIL : All records during the winter months; from Bedford SF, Dunstable SF, East Hyde and Luton Hoo L.

YELLOW WAGTAIL : First recorded on 10th April at several localities, and widespread by 12th. The last bird was at Bedford SF on 21st September (PT).

WAXWING : After the invasion of autumn 1965, returning birds were one at Stewartby in early March and two at Leagrave on 18th, one remaining until 31st (KCM, SWR, PT, KRW).

GREAT GREY SHRIKE : One was killed by a dog in Haynes Park in the last week of December (via DP), and one was seen at Knocking Hoe, Pegsdon, on 27th and 31st (KRD, ACM).

RED-BACKED SHRIKE : At least three pairs bred on the Chalk downs (AJL, ACM, SWR, MDW).

HAWFINCH : Recorded regularly at Sandy Lodge, and also at Warden Warren and Clophill (KRD, AH, BS, JHS).

GREENFINCH : c1,000 in the finch roost at Sandy Lodge until February and again in December (JHS).

SISKIN : 20 at Maulden Wood on 18th March (AJL) was the largest party in the spring, and eight (some in song) at Rowney Warren on 13th April constitute the last spring record (PGK). Maximum of 15 later in the year at Sandy Lodge (JHS).

LINNET : c1,000 roosting at Sandy Lodge until February, and from November (JHS).

LESSER REDPOLL : Breeding widely, but in small numbers, in the southern half of the County. Winter parties in many localities with up to 30 at Rowney Warren and 100 at Sandy Lodge in November (JHS, PT).

CROSSBILL : Many reports throughout the year from eight localities on the Greensand ridge. Maximum parties were c30 in the Maulden/Clophill area on 30th October and 25 at Sandy Lodge on 20th October (MR, JHS et al).

BRAMBLING : The finch roost at Sandy Lodge had c50 of this species in February, increasing to c200 in April. The last spring bird was there on 19th April. First autumn bird returned to Sandy Lodge on 27th September, and numbers roosting reached c60 by the end of the year (JHS). Few recorded elsewhere late in the year.

LAPLAND BUNTING : One seen in flight and heard calling at Brickhill, Bedford, on 15th October, and watched on the ground on 22nd (JRS).

[**SNOW BUNTING**] : A bird seen on Warden Hills on 26th December was thought to be a female of this species, but unfortunately a good view was not obtained (AJL).

TREE SPARROW : No large flocks reported during the year.

NICHOLAS DYMOND.

1967

Ornithologically, 1967 was a most interesting and productive year in Bedfordshire, with well over 160 species being recorded, and although only one of these, the Kentish Plovers, was an addition to the County list, there were many reports of unusual species. The more interesting movements and features of the different seasons closely followed the pattern observed over the whole of Southern England.

The weather during the first two months of the year was, for the most part, very mild, and consequently wildfowl numbers were extremely low, but there was the customary scattering of grey geese, wild swans and less common ducks. In January and early February the roost of finches at Sandy Lodge reached a maximum of about 2,500 birds, but elsewhere few concentrations of finches were reported, the largest being up to 1,500 (800 Tree Sparrows) at Bedford Sewage Farm. More unusual was the occurrence in January and February of at least two Great Grey Shrikes and a Hooded Crow.

British arrivals of summer migrants are not normally associated with February, but 1967 saw a remarkably warm spell of southerly weather at the end of January into February, and this resulted in some ten sightings of Swallows, one of Swift and eight or so of Wheatears spread across the southern counties from Cornwall to Essex. One of these birds, a Wheatear, reached Bedfordshire, being seen at Dunstable Sewage Farm on 5th February.

There were one or two reports of Chiffchaffs and Wheatears in early March, and an isolated Blackcap on 12th, but cold blustery weather prevailed throughout the month and the bulk of the summer migrants were not first seen in Bedfordshire until April. Those that did come in March were Garganey, Little Ringed Plover (neither of these can be much affected by the weather), Sand Martin and a very early Tree Pipit. As a result of these northerly winds in March, our winter visitors, Fieldfares, Redwings and Golden Plovers, remained in large numbers until well into April. Vagrants to Bedfordshire during the month were a Rough-legged Buzzard which haunted Pegsdon Hills for a fortnight from 12th and a Great Snipe identified at Stanford Gravel Pit on 24th. Spectacular was a flock of 175 White-fronted Geese at Wyboston Gravel Pits on 4th March, calling loudly as they flew North-East at great height. Another feature of the early months of the year was the most encouraging number of Crossbills reported, with breeding or suspected breeding at no less than seven localities on the Greensand ridge.

The arrival dates for all the summer migrants are mentioned in the classified list, and it is sufficient to say here that most species were rather late in establishing themselves in quantity, in particular White-throat which was not recorded at all until 27th April and not widespread until mid-May. April saw the last Golden Plover on 9th and the last Redwing on 29th, and 3rd May was the last date for Fieldfare. Rather unusual in April was the high number of Goldeneye at Stewartby Lake, with 14 on 15th, and a pair which stayed until 14th May were watched displaying on several occasions.

Most of the common waders except Green Sandpiper were well represented on spring passage, and Dunstable Sewage Farm produced four less usual species, namely Turnstone, Sanderling, Knot and Grey Plover. Small numbers of Black Terns on 6th-7th May and 13th-14th May coincided with the countrywide movements, and with the first of these waves were a Little Gull and a Little Tern, both at Stewartby Lake.

And so to the breeding species. Judging by the quantity of reports received, observers were more active during the summer months than in recent years, and many species, especially some of the more secretive and nocturnal ones, were reported from more localities than usual. Wood-

lark were reported from three areas, Long-eared Owl from seven and Hawfinch from five, but Nightjars were only heard in three areas and Nightingale in four, which surely cannot be a true representation of their distribution. On the Chalk downs there were at least four pairs of Red-backed Shrikes, at least 10 singing Quails, and a single Stone Curlew was heard calling, while in mid-Bedfordshire a pair of Hobbies reared three young. At least nine pairs of Little Ringed Plovers was the highest number since 1963, and the Common Terns at Wyboston Gravel Pits have now established themselves to the extent of six pairs.

The return passage of waders was not particularly outstanding, although most of the usual species occurred, albeit in rather low numbers. Most interesting were six or seven Little Stints in late September (extremely numerous in autumn 1967 both on the coast and inland), and a Common Sandpiper which remained at Wyboston Gravel Pits until 3rd December. In late August and early September, during a period of prolonged westerly gales, there was a huge countrywide passage of Black Terns and Little Gulls including some ten White-winged Black Terns, and Bedfordshire (to be precise Stewartby Lake) had its fair share of all three species. The movement was first noted on 28th August when there were six Little Gulls, eight Black Terns and an adult White-winged Black Tern, and in the next ten days many Little Gulls and Black Terns passed through with maximum numbers being 15 and 11 respectively, but it is impossible to assess how many of each species were actually involved in the movement. The autumn passage of "commic" terns extended for a long time, but not a great many birds were involved. Two other noteworthy observations in early autumn were a "ring-tail" harrier at Galley Hill on 13th August and an Osprey at Stewartby Lake on 10th September.

Records of departing summer migrants were, as usual, rather incomplete, but late birds were a Redstart and a Yellow Wagtail on 1st October, two reports of House Martins on 4th November, and a Swallow on 5th November.

From late September until the end of the year winter thrushes, Bramblings and Golden Plovers were very scarce, while wildfowl concentrations were spectacularly large, especially those of Mallard, Pochard and Tufted Duck. Few unusual species were seen in these last months, but the more interesting were a Water Pipit at Wyboston Gravel Pits on 1st October, another *spinoletta* pipit at Bedford Sewage Farm on 9th November, a Great Grey Shrike at Barton on 29th October, and Red-breasted Merganser and Goosander at Wyboston Gravel Pits in November and December respectively.

Species recorded as present in normal numbers in Bedfordshire, and not included in the text are: Mute Swan, Red-legged Partridge, Partridge, Pheasant, Moorhen, Stock Dove, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Skylark, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Marsh Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Tree-creeper, Wren, Mistle Thrush, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Goldcrest, Dunnock, Meadow Pipit, Pied Wagtail, Starling, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Chaffinch, Yellowhammer, Corn Bunting, Reed Bunting, House Sparrow.

RED-THROATED DIVER: One on River Ouse at Bedford SF from 11th April to 21st May was slightly oiled. (BL, JTRS, PT et al).

GREAT CRESTED GREBE: Possibly as many as 40 pairs bred in the County. Stewartby L: at least eight pairs bred and maximum autumn count was 97 on 29th August (JTRS). Wyboston GP: about five pairs reared at least 15 young. Bred, but numbers and success not fully recorded, at Chimney Corner CIP, Brogborough CIP, Vicarage Farm CIP, Coronation CIP, Millbrook CIP, Felmersham GP, Harrold GP, City Field GP, Sandy GP, Southill L., Luton Hoo L., and Battlesdon L.

Winter gatherings: Jan.-Mar. Up to 30 at Stewartby L in January. Oct.-Dec. At Stewartby L numbers dropped to c30 in October, but increased to 55 by 20th December. Only small numbers on other waters. SLAVONIAN/BLACK-NECKED GREBE: Two at Stewartby L on 20th December (PT).

LITTLE GREBE: Widespread as a breeding species in the County. Largest winter numbers at Bedford SF/Barkers Lane GP with 28 during hard weather in February.

CORMORANT/SHAG: One in flight at Wyboston GP on 10th December (PT).

CORMORANT: One found dead at Stewartby L on 14th May (PT).

HERON: The heronries were not counted. Autumn parties included 25 at Bedford SF and 14 at Wyboston.

BITTERN: One frequented the reed-bed at Southill L for 2-3 weeks in early spring (Gamekeeper, via PT).

MALLARD: Jan.-Mar. 200 at both Stewartby L and Wyboston GP in January, and 260 at Luton Hoo L on 29th January.

Sept.-Dec. c1,000 at Stewartby L on 15th September and probably at least 2,500 in the "clay basin" in October. 250 at Felmersham GP on 14th September, 400 at Southill L on 25th November and 200 at Wyboston GP on 14th October.

TEAL: Pairs present at several localities during the summer, but breeding not proved at any. Maximum counts of 36 at Luton Hoo on 29th January, 70 at Wyboston GP on 4th February, 55 at Southill L on 20th September and 35 at Bedford SF in November.

GARGANEY: The first spring bird was a female at Bedford SF on 23rd March. Then a pair at Dunstable SF from 24th-29th March, a pair at Wyboston GP on 26th March, single females at Chimney Corner CIP on 25th March and at Wyboston GP on 15th April, and single males near Baldock on 29th March and at Radwell on 15th April. Two or three at Wyboston GP during late August were the only autumn records.

GADWALL: One at Barkers Lane GP on 7th January, one at Chimney Corner CIP on 27th January, a female at Wyboston GP on 4th March and another at Barkers Lane GP from 10th-15th April (JND, BL, MR, PT).

WIGEON: Reported from many waters early and late in the year, but 12 at Felmersham GP on 23rd February and 12 at Stewartby L on 5th March were the largest flocks.

PINTAIL: Five males at Stewartby L on 3rd December and single males at Wyboston GP on 30th September and 3rd December (KRD, BL, ACM, PT).

SHOVELER: Breeding: A pair summered at Wyboston GP but did not breed successfully (JND). Eight at Dunstable SF on 12th August may have been a family party (MS, SCS), as could have been seven at Southill L on 20th September (PT).

Winter records include 12 East over Bedford SF on 7th January (JND, MR), nine at Vicarage Farm CIP on 10th December (BDH), nine at Stewartby L on 20th December (PT), and numerous reports of ones and twos.

MANDARIN: One drake at Battlesdon L on 30th September (BS).

TUFTED DUCK: Present during the breeding season at the following waters, and young seen at most: Wyboston GP, Barkers Lane GP, Stewartby L, Coronation CIP, Chimney Corner CIP, Vicarage Farm CIP, Elstow CIP, Brogborough CIP, City Fields GP, Harrold GP, Felmersham GP, East Hyde, Rushmere Pond, Luton Hoo L, Southill L, and Battlesdon L.

Winter numbers: Jan.-Mar. 80 at Stewartby L on 10th January decreasing to 17 on 17th February. 87 at Wyboston GP on 12th February, 55 at City Fields GP on 5th February, but smaller numbers on other waters.

Sept.-Dec. 20-30 at Stewartby L from September to early December, but huge increase to 450 by 20th December (P.T). There was also a large influx at Wyboston GP in late November, peaking at 150 on 3rd December (JND, MR, PT). The count of 450 at Stewartby L is the highest number ever recorded in the County.

POCHARD: Bred successfully at Barkers Lane GP, City Fields GP (five young), Luton Hoo L (three and five young), and Battlesdon L (six young).

Winter flocks: Jan.-Mar. Largest number was 93 at Wyboston GP on 18th February. Sept.-Dec. Steady build-up at Wyboston GP from c100 in early September to 340 on 29th October, thereafter decreasing. Maximum of 230 at Stewartby L on 20th December when other clay pits were wholly or partly frozen. Up to 50 at Southill L, 26 at Sandy GP and 20 at Battlesdon L.

GOLDENEYE: Present throughout early months at Stewartby L with eight on 10th January, 10 on 29th March, 14 on 15th April, and a pair remaining until 14th May. Others at Felmersham GP, Wyboston GP and Vicarage Farm CIP. First autumn bird at Vicarage Farm CIP on 4th September, with two at Wyboston GP on 17th December and two at Stewartby L on 7th November, increasing to seven by 13th December.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: A female at Wyboston GP on 26th November (JND, BL, MR, PT).

GOOSANDER: A female at Wyboston GP on 3rd December (PT) and a pair there on 17th December (JND, MR).

SHELDUCK: One at Wyboston GP on 7th January and five at Chimney Corner CIP on 8th January. One at Dunstable SF on 11th August, joined by a second on 28th August, the birds remaining until 5th September. Five at Stewartby L on 20th August.

GREY GEESE sp: 50 flying SW over Barkers Lane GP on 8th January (PT).

GREY LAG GOOSE: c60 on river meadows at Bedford SF on 5th January (Mr. Ferriman, via JND).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: c175 flying very high in NE direction over Wyboston GP on 4th March (JND, MR).

CANADA GOOSE: 18 were at Wyboston GP for a few hours on 22nd April (JND, MR).

WHOOPEE/BEWICK'S SWAN: Two NW over Barkers Lane GP on 1st January (BL).

BEWICK'S SWAN: Two ad. and one imm. at Felmersham on 20th-23rd February, five at Chimney Corner CIP on 24th February, and one ad. and one imm. at Bedford SF on 13th March (BL, PT). One ad. at Stewartby L on 13th December (ACM).

BUZZARD: One over Stewartby L on 15th April (BS). One near Silsoe on 25th August (AWF).

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD: One immature at Pegsdon Hills from 12th-24th March (KRD, AJL et al). There was an unprecedented influx of this species in the autumn of 1966 and many individuals stayed throughout the winter. In several places in the Eastern counties up to six were seen together, and the total number involved was approaching three figures. The last was seen in early May.—Ed.

SPARROWHAWK : One at Sandy Lodge in January, one at Sandy on 2nd March, one near Westoning in late April and one at Kensworth in mid-summer were the only reports.

HARRIER sp : One "ring-tail" seen at Galley Hill on 15th August (KRD).

OSPREY : One watched for an hour at Stewartby L on 10th September (JND, DG).

HOBBY : A pair reared three young in mid-Bedfordshire (WGS). One near Bedford on 13th August (AJL).

KESTREL : Widely reported throughout the year.

QUAIL : One heard, and eventually seen, on Biggleswade Common in June (JPK). Ten or more singing males on the Chalk downs in South Bedfordshire during June and July (TWG). One heard at Kensworth in June (CJC, JJMF, CJM).

WATER RAIL : Numerous reports from Flitwick Moor (at least two pairs bred), Bedford SF, Little Barford, Wyboston GP, Felmersham GP, two sightings at Dunstable SF and one on River Ivel near Sandy.

COOT : Highest counts were c175 at Stewartby L on 17th September, 165 at Wyboston GP on 16th September and 150 at Chimney Corner CIP on 20th December.

LAPWING : No really large flocks reported in the year, the highest count being c650 at Wyboston GP on 28th July. The usual hard-weather movements were noted.

RINGED PLOVER : Spring passage : At Bedford SF from 23rd April to 20th May, maximum four on 17th May; at Dunstable SF from 20th April to 1st June, maximum eight on 13th May. Also at least seven at Kempston SF on 14th May, and one at Stewartby L on 22nd April and 6th May.

Autumn passage : Very few; one at Dunstable SF on 13th-14th September, up to five at Bedford SF from 16th August to end of September, and one at Stewartby L from 14th-29th August.

LITTLE-RINGED PLOVER : Spring passage : The first arrival was one at Wyboston GP on 26th March, after which numbers increased to about 10 by the end of April; at Dunstable SF from 16th April to the end of May with maximum of eight on 13th May; at Stewartby L from 29th March to 8th May (mating observed on several occasions, but they did not stay to breed). There were two on 16th April at Vicarage Farm CIP (where they do not breed) and two at Heath and Reach SP on 29th April, but these were not present on later visits.

Breeding : Nine or more pairs bred in the County : four or five pairs at Wyboston GP, but low numbers of juveniles suggested poor success; one pair reared one young on a stony field near Barkers Lane GP; one or two pairs at Harrold GP, but success not known; one pair reared at least two young at Sandy GP; one pair at Blunham GP had a nest with three eggs on 28th May, but success not known. At least one non-breeder summered at Dunstable SF.

Autumn passage : At Wyboston GP until 9th September; at Bedford SF from 16th July to 1st September; at Dunstable SF until 19th August. Very small numbers involved.

KENTISH PLOVER : One adult female and two juveniles were seen at Bedford SF on 16th August. Excellent views enabled detailed notes to be taken. (MR).

GREY PLOVER : One at Dunstable SF on 30th April (KCM, MS, SCS).

GOLDEN PLOVER : Widely reported in the early part of the year, the larger flocks being 500 near Stanford GP on 24th March, 250 near Rowney Warren on 6th January, 220 near Amphill on 20th February, and 350 at Bedford SF on 5th April. The last spring date was apparently 9th April.

First autumn record was five at Bedford SF on 24th August. No sizeable flocks reported in the latter months of the year.

TURNSTONE : One at Dunstable SF on 5th-6th May (AJL, BS, MS, SCS). Three at Stewartby L on 14th May (BL).

SNIPE : Normal distribution. Largest concentrations were 120 on flooded meadows at Felmersham and 150 at Wyboston GP in late February.

GREAT SNIPE : One at Stanford GP on 24th March. Diagnostic features noted (PGK).

JACK SNIPE : In the early months up to six were at Bedford SF and others at Stanford GP, Wyboston GP, Felmersham GP and Dunstable SF. Last spring bird at Bedford SF on 15th April. Autumn records from 24th September, and apart from one at Stewartby L on 7th November, only seen at Wyboston GP and Bedford SF.

WOODCOCK : Recorded during the breeding season in all suitable areas that were visited. Only passage migrant was one at Wyboston GP on 3rd December.

CURLEW/WHIMBREL : One at Stewartby L on 31st July.

CURLEW : One over Howbury Hall on 17th April, five at Bedford SF on 23rd April, and singles at Wyboston GP on 23rd April, Dunstable SF on 30th April, over Warden Hill on 3rd July and at Stewartby L on 30th August.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT : One at Bedford SF on 3rd August (PT).

GREEN SANDPIPER : Very scarce in spring; one at Bedford SF on 12th March, one there on 23rd April, and one at Dunstable SF on 5th April.

Autumn passage : At Bedford SF from 1st July to 17th October, maximum five on 28th July; at Dunstable SF from 23rd July to 13th September, maximum four on 19th August. Also one or two at Stewartby L in late August, one at Sandy GP on 8th September, one at Wyboston GP from 15th July to 5th September, one at Chimney Corner CIP on 20th August and one at Flitwick Moor on 27th August.

Winter records are two over Sandy Lodge on 29th January (JHS) and one at Dunstable SF on 23rd December (BS).

WOOD SANDPIPER : One spring record, at Dunstable SF from 13th-15th May (AJL, BS, MS, SCS). In autumn : One at Bedford SF from 8th-14th August and one at Stewartby L on 12th August (PT), one at Dunstable SF on 30th July (AJL) and one on 30th August (BS). One at Bedford SF from 21st October to 7th November (JND, MR, JTRS et al).

COMMON SANDPIPER : Spring passage : At Dunstable SF from 26th March to 22nd May, maximum two; at Bedford SF from 23rd April to 17th May, maximum three; one or two at Stewartby L from 22nd April to 17th May; at Wyboston GP from 18th April to 13th May, maximum four.

Autumn passage : At Dunstable SF from 4th July to 17th September, maximum six on 2nd August; at Bedford SF from 28th June to 12th September, maximum seven; at Wyboston GP from 9th July to 3rd December, maximum 10 in mid-August. Others at Chimney Corner CIP, Luton SF, Southill L, Vicarage Farm CIP and four at Sandy GP on 8th September.

REDSHANK : Two over Bedford SF on 29th January. First spring birds were at Bedford SF on 25th February, increasing to 22 on 16th March, five pairs remaining to breed on the river meadows. Spring passage at Dunstable SF, Wyboston GP, Stewartby L (15 on 29th March) and many clay and gravel pits, but breeding numbers difficult to assess. Few on autumn passage, the last at Stewartby L on 17th September.

SPOTTED REDSHANK : Reports of one on five dates from 2nd-30th September at Wyboston GP probably refer to the same individual (JND, BL, PT).

GREENSHANK : One at Wyboston GP on 7th May was the only spring record (JND). In autumn, singles at Wyboston GP on 21st July and 1st August and another on 23rd August (PT), at Stewartby L from 29th August to 4th September and another on 17th September, and one at Bedford SF on 18th August.

KNOT : One at Dunstable SF on 26th March (KRW). One at Wyboston GP on 26th August (PT).

LITTLE STINT : Three at Wyboston GP from 19th-30th September, with four on 23rd. Three others at Bedford SF from 30th September to 1st October (BL, PT).

DUNLIN : Two at Stewartby L on 8th-10th January (BL, PT).

Spring passage : At Bedford SF from 5th March to 15th May, maximum two; at Wyboston GP from 15th April to 13th May, maximum three; at Dunstable SF from 19th March to 31st May, maximum 12; at Stewartby L, one from 9th-30th April. One at Wyboston GP on 17th June.

Autumn passage : At Wyboston GP from 1st August to 17th December, maximum five at the end of October; at Bedford SF one from 18th-20th August, then none until 28th October, with eight on 3rd November, and the last four on 5th; one at Dunstable SF on three dates from 23rd July to 20th August. Also one at Chimney Corner CIP on 15th October.

[**CURLEW SANDPIPER**] : A wader seen at Harrold GP on 27th August was possibly of this species (DJS).

SANDERLING : Two at Dunstable SF from 14th-16th May (AJL, BS, MDW et al).

RUFF : One at Dunstable SF on 18th January (BDH). Singles recorded at Dunstable SF on 19th March, 14th April and 11th May, and a male at Bedford SF from 19th March to 6th April.

Autumn passage : At Bedford SF from 16th July to 28th September, maximum five on 28th July; at Dunstable SF from 12th July to 5th September with two on 15th July. One at Wyboston GP from 2nd-13th September.

STONE CURLEW : One heard calling at Pegsdon on 23rd April (KRD).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL : Normal distribution during winter months, maximum count being c100 at Elstow CIP on 10th January.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL : Normal distribution during winter months, but two adults at Chimney Corner CIP in early July was an unusual occurrence.

HERRING GULL : The Stewartby L roost had some 2,500 in November.

LITTLE GULL : An adult at Stewartby L on 6th May (JND). There were six immatures at Stewartby L on 28th August (JTRS), and in the following week many observers saw these birds, but comparing records received, it is obvious that birds were passing through all the time. The maximum count was 15 together, and the last was seen on 13th September.

BLACK-HEADED GULL: Breeding numbers only counted at Chimney Corner CIP (c20 pairs) and Vicarage Farm CIP (c100 pairs). Approximately 15,000 in the roost at Stewartby L in November, but fewer in December.

BLACK TERN: Spring passage: Two at Stewartby L on 6th May and one at Dunstable SF on 6th-7th May. The next wave was a week later with one at Wyboston GP on 13th May, eight at Vicarage Farm CIP and four at Stewartby L on 14th May. (The last two records may refer to the same birds). Also one at Stewartby L on 24th June and one at Wyboston GP on 9th July.

Autumn passage: Three at Dunstable SF on 12th August, then none until 28th August when eight were at Stewartby L, with 11 on 29th, nine on 30th, 10 on 2nd September, 11 on 3rd, eight on 4th, four on 7th, and singles on 13th and 26th. One at Dunstable SF on 16-17th September.

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN: One adult in winter plumage at Stewartby L was first seen on 28th August by JTRS, and subsequently on 29th August, 2nd and 4th September (JND, BL, PT).

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN: One South over Bedford on 11th March was exceptionally early (JTRS). Spring passage: One at Stewartby L on one on 20th, eight on 7th September, six on 10th, one on 13th and one at Dunstable SF on 30th May.

Autumn passage: One at Barkers Lane GP on 16th July. At Stewartby L; one on 3rd July, two on 9th, one on 31st, one on 4th August, one on 20th, eight on 7th September, six on 10th, one on 13th and one on 25th-26th.

COMMON TERN: Four at Blunham GP on 20th May were displaying, but did not stay to breed (JPK). These were possibly breeders on route to Wyboston GP. At Wyboston the first two were seen on 30th April, after which numbers steadily increased to 12 by the end of May. Six pairs are thought to have attempted to breed (probably two pairs at the old workings and four pairs at the new workings). Fledging success was difficult to assess, but of 28 birds seen together in late July, at least 14 were juveniles. Numbers tailed off during August, and none were present on 10 September (JND, MR, PT et al).

LITTLE TERN: One at Stewartby L on 8th May (PT).

SANDWICH TERN: Two at Wyboston GP on 8th July and one or two there on 23rd July (PT, MDW).

WOODPIGEON: A flock on brussels sprouts near Howbury Hall on 26th December was estimated to be approximately 10,000 (PT).

TURTLE DOVE: First spring record was one at Sandy Lodge on 29th April (JHS). At least 100 at Wyboston GP in late July and early August, and possibly many more. The last was at Wyboston GP on 13th September (PT).

COLLARED DOVE: Now fairly widespread in the County, with many reports from the Bedford area, Ampthill, Sandy and Dunstable, and odd sightings in a number of villages elsewhere. Largest flock was c50 in one area of Dunstable in December (BDH).

CUCKOO: First spring record on 22nd April at Sandy Lodge (JHS) and the last at Willington on 6th September (PT).

BARN OWL: Only six reports of this species: at Wyboston GP, Great Barford, Stewartby L, Hexton (three birds together), Streatley and Studham.

LITTLE OWL: Many reports received from widely scattered localities.

TAWNY OWL : Appear to be distributed plentifully throughout the County.
LONG-EARED OWL : Heard at Pegsdon, Knocking Hoe, Steppingley, Luton Hoo, West Hyde, Chiltern Green and Studham.

SHORT-EARED OWL : Four at Knocking Hoe on 1st January and two on 18th January, one at Luton on 8th April and one at Pegsdon on 16th April (KRD, AH, AJL, ACM).

NIGHTJAR : Five singing males in the Sandy Lodge area, 2-3 pairs at Rowney Warren and one heard at Little Brickhill.

SWIFT : First at Dunstable SF on 27th April (BS) and many reports in the first week of May, and an estimated 1,000 were at Stewartby L on 7th (AJL). Heavy southerly movement over Colworth estate at 31st July (JND, MR), and the latest report was two at Dunstable SF on 21st August (BS).

KINGFISHER : Many reports from eleven separate localities, including four birds along a mile or so of stream on the County border near Edlesborough, and two pairs at Wyboston GP, one at the old workings and the other about a mile up the river. Evidently this species has now taken a big step towards regaining its pre-1963 numbers.

HOOPOE : One seen near Thurleigh on 8th May (D. Brown, via MR). The observer, although not an ornithologist, is familiar with this species from time spent in North Africa.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER : Two regularly at Sandy Lodge, one at Howbury Hall and one at Maulden Wood (JND, BL, JHS, MDW).

WOODLARK : Two seen at Sandy Lodge in May (JPK), one at Whipsnade in June (CJC, JJMF, CJM), and two at Rowney Warren in July (MDW).

SWALLOW : First spring record was one at Dunstable SF on 8th April (DG) followed by several reports on 9th, and many in the next week. A late emigrant was at Pegsdon on 5th November (KRD.)

HOUSE MARTIN : First on 20th April at Dunstable SF (AJL) and the last records were two at Sharpenhoe on 4th November and one at Dunstable SF on the same day (BS, SCS).

SAND MARTIN : First were three at Stanford GP on 24th March, followed by many reports in the next ten days. One at Bromham on 1st October was the last autumn bird (GJB).

GOLDEN ORIOLE : One male heard calling at Maulden Wood on 9th April (DG, AJL). [A conversation with a reliable gamekeeper revealed that a pair reared three young in North Bedfordshire about eight years ago.]

HOODED CROW : One near Leighton Buzzard on 20th February (JND).

WILLOW TIT : Records submitted show that this species is far more common in the County than sometimes supposed.

FIELDFARE : Plentiful in the early months of the year with maximum flock of c300 at Bedford SF on 9th April (JND, MR). The last reports were 80 at Biggleswade Common on 28th April, 35 at Bedford SF on 29th April, four there on 30th, and one heard at Heath and Reach on 3rd May. The first autumn bird was at Great Barford on 23rd September. Most observers commented on the scarcity of this species in the latter months of the year.

REDWING : 200 at Sandy Lodge in January and February and 200 at Pegsdon on 8th January were the largest flocks reported, and the last spring bird was at Bedford SF on 29th April. First autumn record was one at Sandy Lodge on 18th October. As with Fieldfare, this species was generally scarce towards the end of the year.

WHEATEAR : With the exceptionally mild spell of weather at the beginning of February, a number of Wheatears were reported in the southern counties of England, and one was seen at Dunstable SF on 5th February

(KRW). The next record was one in Luton on 3rd March, then none until 21st March when two were at Wyboston GP. There were numerous reports in the last week of March and throughout April, with several stragglers in May, the last on Dunstable Downs on 21st.

Autumn passage from 13th August to 12th September, but not many birds involved.

STONECHAT : A female present at Barkers Lane GP until 25th February and one at Sandy Lodge on 26th February were the only reports until 5th October when one was again at Barkers Lane GP. One at Stratford on 23rd October and two at Stewartby L in November and December, and one at Elstow CIP on 20th December.

WHINCHAT : First spring record was one at Wyboston GP on 23rd April, with further birds at Bedford SF, Stewartby L and Barkers Lane GP in May. No breeding records. Autumn records from 4th August to 16th September at a total of eight localities.

REDSTART : First was a male at Sandy Lodge on 18th April. Numerous reports of breeding along the Greensand ridge from Southill to Heath and Reach. Autumn migrants at Houghton Regis in late August, at Bedford SF on 23rd September, at Dunstable SF on 14th September, and at Goldington on 13th September and 1st October.

NIGHTINGALE : One had arrived at Maulden Wood on 30th April, but the only other localities where this species was reported are Hanger Wood, Ravensden and Woburn Park.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER : First heard on 22nd April at Maulden Wood.

REED WARBLER : First at Bedford SF on 30th April and the last at Wyboston GP on 17th September (JND, MR). Breeding distribution not well reported.

SEDGE WARBLER : First at Stewartby L on 9th April (AJL) and widespread by 24th. Last report of one at Radwell on 1st October (PT).

BLACKCAP : The first was a male in full song at Sheerhatch Wood on 12th March (JND), followed by another at Sandy Lodge on 25th March (PGK). A female was seen at City Fields GP on 5th April (ACM), and then there were a number of reports in mid-April. Last bird was one in Luton on 20th September (MS).

GARDEN WARBLER : First birds at Maulden Wood on 30th April (MDW). Widespread by 7th May. The last emigrant was one at Bedford SF on 16th September (JND).

WHITETHROAT : First spring record at Sandy Lodge on 27th April (JHS), followed by one at Maulden Wood on 30th April (AJL, MDW). This species was particularly late arriving in this country, and was not widespread until mid-May. Reports suggest that breeding numbers were well below average. The last autumn birds were one at Wyboston GP and one at Luton on 17th September (JND, AJL).

LESSER WHITETHROAT : First arrival at Maulden Wood on 30th April (JND). Recorded at Wyboston GP, Bedford SF, Felmersham GP, Stewartby L, Flitwick, Tingrith, Westoning, Sharpshoe, Heath and Reach, Charle Wood, Southill and Putnoe Wood.

WILLOW WARBLER : First recorded at Sandy Lodge on 3rd April (JHS), then at Bedford SF on 5th. No reports later than 6th August.

CHIFFCHAFF : One seen at Barkers Lane GP on 21st January. Presumably the same individual was seen at Bedford SF on 22nd, trapped on 29th, and seen again on 26th February (JND). Early migrants at Leagrave on 12th March (SWR), at Sandy Lodge on 14th (JHS) and at Luton on 15th (BS). Well distributed by the end of March. Latest autumn bird was in Luton on 30th September (MS).

WOOD WARBLER : First heard at Sandy Lodge on 8th May. Seen or heard during the breeding season at Sandy Lodge, Millbrook, Tingrith, Charle Wood, Little Brickhill, Kings Wood and Luton Hoo.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER : First recorded at Howbury Hall on 29th April (JND, MR), but no other reports for two weeks. Last two at Barkers Lane GP on 23rd August (PT).

TREE PIPIT : An early arrival was singing at Wyboston GP on 25th March (PGK). Next reported on 9th April at Stewartby L (AJL, MDW). Breeding in most suitable areas that were visited.

ROCK/WATER PIPIT : One at Bedford SF on 9th November (JTRS).

WATER PIPIT : One at Wyboston GP on 1st October (MR).

WHITE WAGTAIL : Spring passage at Dunstable SF from 4th April to 30th May, with maximum of four on 20th April (AJL, BS, SCS, MDW). Two were at Bedford SF from 30th April to 14th May (PGK, PT).

GREY WAGTAIL : No reports during the breeding season. Winter records from Bedford SF, Bromham, Houghton Regis, Dunstable SF, East Hyde and Sandy Lodge.

YELLOW WAGTAIL : First recorded on 9th April at Stewartby L, Wyboston GP and Dunstable SF. A variant male was seen at Dunstable SF on 3rd-5th May (BS). Last migrants were three at Bromham on 30th September and one there on 1st October (GJB, PT).

GREAT GREY SHRIKE : One at Knocking Hoe from December 1966 to 8th January (KRD). One at Sandy Lodge on 4th February and again on 24th February (JHS). One at Barton on 29th October (KRD).

RED-BACKED SHRIKE : At least four pairs bred on the Chalk downs.

HAWFINCH : Recorded at Millbrook (JND), Flitwick (WGS), Bedford (CDWS), Whipsnade and Caddington (CJC, JJMF, CJM).

GREENFINCH : c1,000 roosted at Sandy Lodge in January and February (JHS).

SISKIN : Numerous reports from the Greensand ridge, the largest party being c50 at Eversholt on 7th January (BS).

LINNET : This finch roost at Sandy Lodge had c1,000 of this species from 1966 into January (JHS).

LESSER REDPOLL : c100 roosting at Sandy Lodge in January. Reports from many areas in the county, but mostly on the Greensand ridge. Breeding probably much overlooked, but definite at Flitwick Moor and several localities in South Bedfordshire.

CROSSBILL : Up to 40 at Sandy Lodge early in the year, and three nests were located. In the Maulden/Clophill area up to 10 were seen together, and there may have been as many as six pairs breeding. Also recorded at Aspley Guise, Millbrook, Rowney Warren, Charle Wood, Heath and Reach, Woburn Sands and Caddington.

BRAMBLING : Many reports in the early months of the year, the largest flocks being c600 at Sandy Lodge on 7th April and c400 at Bedford SF on 21st January. Last spring record was from Sandy on 29th April. Of the few reports late in the year, 15 at Pegsdon on 12th November was the biggest party.

TREE SPARROW : The only really big flock was at Bedford SF, peaking at c800 on 22nd January (JND).

NICHOLAS DYMOND.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS IN RETROSPECT, 1946-1967

BY F. G. R. SOPER

It was on Sunday the 29th September, 1946, that 29 persons interested in various branches of natural history met at the St. John's Ambulance Headquarters in Bedford and decided to form a Natural History Society. We elected Keith Piercy to the chair and Henry Key, who had convened the meeting, became secretary. Some of those present never took an active part in the eventual running of the Society but of those who did, mention can be made of Oliver Pike, our first President, Ray Palmer, a splendid all-round naturalist who edited the Journal from its inception until he left for Cornwall in 1952 and Dr. George Metcalfe who was never prepared to accept office but who, throughout the whole of the Society's existence, has been a tower of strength to us. Dr. J. G. Dony and Dr V. H. Chambers also played their part in those early days. Others at the meeting were Miss G. H. Day, Will Bonnett, our first treasurer, and Elsie Proctor through whose influence the Society was enabled to hold the Bedford meetings for so many years in the "Nature Room" at 4 The Avenue. There was also Hugh Southon who, in 1948, became the first secretary of the Ornithological Section. Two other young men present were Peter Taylor now of the Botanic Gardens, Kew, and D. W. Snow who has become an ornithologist of international repute. Two at that inaugural meeting who have given the Society devoted service ever since and are still with us are Arthur Guppy and Ken West.

Six weeks later the first public meeting was held in Bedford, the speaker being James Fisher, and on the 5th December at Luton, the Duke of Bedford presided at a meeting where John Gilmore of the R.H.S., Wisley, spoke on "The History of British Botany". Our Society had been well and truly launched.

The first of our monthly lectures was "Pondlife" by Ray Palmer and meetings were arranged alternately at Bedford and Luton. The audiences tended to be the same at either end as the Bedford members cheerfully made the journey to Luton to provide a worthwhile audience and the Luton members reciprocated. The Council met alternately at Luton and Bedford to draw up rules and other details and as petrol was still rationed, normal transport was by bus. The winter was the severest for many years and those of us who took part in those meetings can still recall those icy journeys when limbs were completely numb with cold.

Nevertheless, the Society grew. In 1947 the Council was strengthened by Dr. H. F. Barnes (of Rothamsted Experimental Station), Brig. C. C. Foss, V.C., an ardent botanist, and also an enthusiastic youngster, Bernard West. New members that year included L. A. Speed, Frank Gribble and S. W. Rodell. The two main items in that year were a lecture by Peter Scott in the Town Hall, Bedford, and a visit to Woburn Park, then a strictly closed preserve, where the Duke of Bedford conducted us round. Incidentally, the Duke was appointed President in succession to Oliver Pike and he gave us a fascinating lecture one evening on "Deer in Britain" which was reprinted in full in the Journal. By his untimely death the Society lost a good friend.

The year 1949 was noteworthy for our first Ornithological Conference where the speakers included B. W. Tucker, W. B. Alexander and Max Nicholson. It was a most memorable occasion. The Botanical Section was also formed that year. In those days we had some keen botanists but death or the inactivity enforced by increased age thinned their numbers and unfortunately no young botanists came along to take their

place. It was a different story with the bird people where fresh young enthusiasts were always coming along to replace those who, for business reasons, had been obliged to leave the district and take up residence elsewhere.

Space will not permit reference being made to all the highlights of the Society's life over the past 21 years but it may be of interest to reflect for a moment on the changes in the Bedfordshire countryside during that time. The need to obtain gravel for runways during the war had led to wholesale excavation in some of our river valleys and whilst the loss of those meadows was regretted it had its compensations. What is now Felmersham Nature Reserve was an unsightly blot in a pleasant rural setting. Now, its scars softened and screened by luxuriant vegetation, it is a place of beauty where coot and grebe, pochard and tufted duck can be seen in a district where 25 years ago they were unknown. Other gravel workings played their part, in fact we owe our first nesting little ringed plover to them. So it goes on, and there has been a continuous change of flora and fauna along the whole of our river valleys. Then again there are the brickfields across the centre of the county. There always had been brick-making in Bedfordshire but the urgent need for bricks to make good the ravages of war led to the opening up of the mid-Bedfordshire plain on a massive scale. Fields where we had rambled in former years now became excavations up to 100 ft. deep and hundreds of acres in extent. Some are wet, others mainly dry. The wet pits have attracted vast numbers of wildfowl and it is doubtful if any Bedfordshire naturalist during the war would have believed it possible that within 25 years gulls would be breeding there in large numbers, and yet that is the position. We now have a vast gull population in the County.

Changes in agricultural practice have played their part too. The destruction of hedges and the merging of small fields with larger ones to permit the more economic use of farm machinery has had its effect but the increased use of chemicals in agriculture has probably made the most significant impact. Many harmless and useful birds have died and although there has been some recovery since the use of the more lethal chemicals has been discontinued, kestrels have not yet recovered their numbers and the sparrow-hawk is now a rare bird. Partridges are few where formerly they were plentiful, whilst the effect on butterflies and bees has been very marked. The use of selective weedkillers has been an anxiety to botanists as some of our more rare and interesting flowers are to be found along those hedgebanks and grass verges that are treated by such compounds.

Such have been the changes in the Bedfordshire countryside since our Society was founded 21 years ago. Who can say what the next 21 years will bring?

GWENDOLEN HELEN DAY, 1883-1967

By the death of Miss Gwendolen Helen Day on the 20th June in her 84th year, the Society has lost one of its two Honorary Life Members and a very competent botanist. She had been a member of this Society since its inception, and of the Bedford Natural History and Archaeological Society for many years before that, having occupied the Presidential chair of the older body as long ago as 1935. As the daughter of a farmer she had spent much of her life in north Bedfordshire, firstly at Roxton and later at Harrold, and she possessed that really intimate knowledge of the countryside and its flora that comes only to those who are prepared to transverse and re-transverse a comparatively small area on foot all seasons of the year.

The results are to be seen in the "Flora of Bedfordshire", wherein her name appears on almost every page and to which she had contributed more records than any other single person, many of them from inaccessible parts of the county, as Dr. Dony has acknowledged. The same authority has also paid tribute to her physical energy, and the lasting impression she gave was always of great vigour, both of mind and body. She was a lively and entertaining conversationalist with an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes and reminiscences, often punctuated with shrewd and pungent comment on people and things.

Above all, one had to admire the cheerful and indomitable spirit in which she showed how to live a full and dignified existence with a minimum of material possessions.

For her part, she has shown her appreciation of the Society by remembering us in her will, an act as touching as it was unexpected. We shall long remember her with gratitude and affection as a great lady and a fine naturalist.

A. W. GUPPY.

STEWARTBY LAKE GULL ROOST

A series of gull counts were held at Stewartby Lake on the second Sunday of each month during the period November 1967 to March 1968, by kind permission of the London Brick Company.

Teams of well-wrapped observers counted the gulls as they flew in to roost, and the results are tabulated below :

	TOTAL	SMALL	LARGE
1967 November 12	20,500	17,500	3,000
December 10	12,500	8,750	3,750
1968 January 14	12,000	10,500	1,500
February 11	18,000	17,000	1,000
March 10	(20,000)		

'Large' gulls refer, of course, to Herring, Lesser Black-back and Greater Black-back, and 'small' gulls to Blackheaded and Common.

Due to poor attendance and adverse weather conditions, a proper count was not possible on the 10th March, but the consensus of opinion was that the total may well have been as high as 20,000, the vast majority of which were Blackheaded.

An interesting point is that over half of the large gulls consistently approached the lake from the north and north-east, the remainder coming from all other directions. Small gulls, however, showed no marked bias of entry.

All records of gulls fighting in early morning or late afternoon in the Bedfordshire area are welcome as much remains to be learnt of the day-time feeding areas of the Stewartby gulls, and further study is also necessary regarding the relative effect of short and long periods of hard weather on their numbers.

B. R. SQUIRES.

BEDFORDSHIRE & HUNTINGDONSHIRE NATURALISTS' TRUST**1965-1967**

BY A. W. GUPPY

The inauguration of the Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire Naturalists' Trust nearly eight years ago was very largely due to the initiative of certain members of the Bedfordshire Natural History Society, a fact which now tends to be overlooked by some of its critics. There are now many members who belong to both bodies, and the Society continues to be well represented on the Trust Council of Management.

The opening of the great reservoir at Grafham, with its elaborate plans, drawn up in close collaboration with the Great Ouse Water Authority and the Nature Conservancy, for the development of a 200-acre nature reserve at the western end, has tended to focus attention recently on the Huntingdonshire aspect of the Trust's activities; one or two other small sites have also been acquired lately in the same county.

By comparison, Bedfordshire has not added to its existing Trust reserves during the past three years, but there has been considerable progress at all of them. Totternhoe Knolls, in particular, will eventually become a Local Authority Nature Reserve; it is now administered by the Bedfordshire County Council and managed by the Trust on its behalf with the aid of a small annual grant. There is a very active local management committee, and for three winters a working party under Dr. V. H. Chambers has been tackling the enormous problem posed by the unchecked growth of scrub for several decades on what was formerly open chalk downland. It is a great pity that the work has been severely curtailed this past winter by the restrictions imposed by the foot-and-mouth outbreak; it will take many seasons of work yet, and active help by as many volunteers as possible, to restore this fine site to anything approaching its pristine condition.

At Sandy Lodge the reserve is managed jointly by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Trust, and this has the very real advantage of ensuring adequate supervision of the site for a considerable part of the week. The agreed management plan is now in operation under a full-time warden, involving, for example, the planting and felling of trees, the control of bracken and the creation of ponds to attract water-fowl.

Felmersham has had more than its fair share of trouble with interlopers and hooligans, and has had to be closed to the general public. Perhaps it was a mistake in the first instance to assume that an urbanised population would use the site otherwise than as an outlet for its worst type of week-end behaviour, and the activities of a loutish minority there might well serve as a warning to those who seek to establish what are euphemistically termed "recreational facilities" on a much wider scale in the Ouse valley. Nevertheless, a considerable amount of general clearing-up has been done, and there is now greatly improved access along the south side of the reserve.

There is a tendency in some quarters to suppose that the Trust, after an enthusiastic initial impetus, has now relapsed into a state of middle-aged torpor in which very little is being either attempted or achieved, but this would be an entirely mistaken view. Much of a Trust's activities is concerned with establishing itself as a reputable and knowledgeable body in its relations with public authorities, such as the County Councils and their Planning Officers, and in close collaboration with the Nature Conservancy. In Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire these objectives have largely been achieved, and the Trust is regularly consulted when plan-

ning permission is sought for development which threatens sites of known natural history and scientific value. It is because the Trust is now recognised as competent to give a fair and unbiased opinion which it is prepared to produce at a public enquiry, if necessary, that it has been instrumental in preventing some gross misuses of some of those places which naturalists have come to know and cherish.

For reasons like these it is obvious that the Society and the Trust are mutually complementary; it is the naturalists who find and record the scientific details of the sites that they visit and study, and who are thus able to contribute expert advice to the Trust in its negotiations; it is the Trust that can ensure the scheduling and protection of the sites which the naturalists most wish to preserve, for the enjoyment and value they will have in future times.

We need hardly say that, despite the lack of recent new acquisitions in the county, there are several very important developments at present under negotiation, but which, for obvious reasons, cannot be specified at the moment. We hope that, when some of them come to fruition, our members will be well satisfied with the choice of sites, and the manner in which they are to be safeguarded.

Meanwhile, it cannot be too strongly emphasised that the influence of both the Trust and our own Society can grow only in proportion to their membership, which is far too low in both cases at present. To those who wish to see as many as possible of our favourite pieces of the Bedfordshire country-side kept unspoilt for themselves and their descendants we can only repeat:

—be an active naturalist in your own county and persuade as many more as you can to become so;

—join the Trust and add your support and informed opinion to those who are trying, against very heavy odds, to secure the scheduling and acquisition of further reserves in Bedfordshire.

FOLLY WOOD

By W. G. GOLDSTRAW

Folly Wood is situated in the north of Flitwick Moor which is the largest boggy area in Bedfordshire and is of considerable ecological interest. The chief purpose of this article is not to give species-lists of the flora but to describe briefly some of the changes which have taken place in the wood since 1950.

Folly Wood developed after peat digging was discontinued towards the end of the last century. Alder regenerated and shortly before a study was made of the area (Flora of Bedfordshire, Habitat Studies 39b, 40) the wood consisted "of trees about 80 ft. high". The report in 1950 described the wood after most of the trees had been felled and at the time alder "was replenishing itself" and a few silver birches (*Betula pubescens*) were growing. A single pedunculate oak was recorded. The composition of the wood in 1968 is quite different. The number of plant species is still relatively small. The acid soil (pH varying between 6.0 and 5.2) and very wet conditions in parts limit the colonisation of plants.

There is now a dense cover of silver birch up to 30 ft. high and a few alder trees about 90 ft. high in the southern corner. Both the number of plants and of species is small in the shrub layer. Rhododendrons, honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) and brambles grow in the north. *Ribes sylvestre*, recorded in 1950, is still firmly established in the south

and with brambles dominate this part of the wood. Elder, holly and honeysuckle are other woody plants growing in the south.

Invasion of herbaceous dicotyledonous flowering plants has occurred mainly in the south of the wood. The species include marsh thistle, stinging nettle, cleavers (*Galium aparine*), rosebay willow-herb, woody nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*), comfrey, valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), foxglove and herb robert.

Without records of scientifically determined frequencies of plants in previous years accurate comparisons of densities of species cannot be made but probably the ferns *Dryopteris spinulosa* and *D. dilatata* have increased and they dominate one section in the north of the wood and have contributed markedly to the soil build-up in the area. Bracken is growing rapidly inwards from the south-west of the wood and will probably continue as the ground gets drier.

Apart from the growth of trees the most striking change in the wood is the development of bryophytes. Although very little of the surface of the litter has become colonised by plants the numerous tree stumps and fallen trees are clothed with mosses. The permanently wet areas in the north of the wood are colonised by bog mosses and a small amount of *Polytrichum commune* whereas on the drier parts of the peat *Plagiothecium denticulatum* and *Dicranum scoparium* are growing in a few places. The dominant mosses on the decaying wood in the north are *Dicranella varia* and *Aulaconnium androgynum*, both of which have shown a surprisingly rapid spread. *Aulaconnium palustre* recorded in 1951 is scarce or absent. *Pohlia nutans*, *Mnium hornum* and *Tetraphis pellucida* are also frequent in this area. In the north zone where the ferns are the main plant of the field layer *Dicranella varia* and bog mosses are the most frequent mosses but *Plagiothecium denticulatum*, *Tetraphis pellucida*, *Pohlia nutans* and *Hypnum cupressiforme* also occur. On the tussocks formed by ferns in the south *Aulaconnium androgynum* and *Pohlia nutans* thrive while *Mnium hornum*, *Plagiothecium denticulatum*, *Dicranella varia* and *Aulaconnium androgynum* are abundant on the tree stumps and fallen trees. Liverworts are scarce. The leafy liverwort, *Lophocolea heterophylla* grows in a few places, generally associated with *Aulaconnium androgynum*. *Marchantia polymorpha* recorded in 1951 seems to be absent although other Marchantiales, *Conocephalum conicum* and *Lunularia cruciata* thrive on the bank of a ditch not far from the wood.

As long as Folly Wood remains untouched by man the chief factors which will influence its development will be the increase in the total area of dry ground as the level of the soil is raised, and also the reduced light intensity during the growing season caused by greater shade from the growing trees. The pH of the soil is unlikely to change to any extent. Further species of bryophytes and a relatively small number of flowering plants should colonise the wood during the next few years.

RINGING IN BEDFORDSHIRE

BY NICHOLAS DYMOND

Early in 1967 I was granted permission by the respective owners to ring birds at Bedford Sewage Farm and Wyboston Gravel Pits. The great majority of the birds are caught in mist-nets. These diaphanous nylon nets up to 60ft long and 9ft high are strung between 12ft high bamboo poles inserted vertically in the ground, and when the birds fly into the nets they lie still in a pocket of net formed by vertical slack

behind taut horizontal shelf-strings. The nets are closely attended and all birds are taken to a base camp where they are ringed, measured, weighed and examined for ageing and sexing criteria, and at certain times of the year for their state of moult. Michael Rogers has accompanied me on nearly all occasions and was himself a qualified ringer by the end of the year.

At Bedford Sewage Farm we have two regular netting spots. One is a small hawthorn thicket surrounded by a scrubby area of brambles, hawthorn, elder, willowherb and nettles, with a belt of sedge and reed along the adjacent river bank. The other site is a narrow strip of elders, nettles and felled poplars along the side of the railway. On a few occasions we have erected nets in more open areas, but these have not been very rewarding.

32 visits were made for mist-netting and a total of 1,085 birds of 42 species were caught and ringed. In addition 44 birds were ringed as nestlings, 13 of these being Lapwings. Some most interesting data is accruing on the weights of certain species, especially Dunnocks, and by retrapping ringed individuals the weight variation from month to month is being studied. Some notable captures during 1967 were four Red-legged Partridges together in one net, a Chiffchaff on 29th January, a Redstart on passage in September, and four Grasshopper Warblers, a pair of which bred near the thicket. Activities were brought to an abrupt halt in November when access was restricted by the precautions against foot and mouth disease.

The most interesting recovery of a bird from the Sewage Farm was an adult Reed Warbler ringed on 20th August and killed at Sagres, Algarve, Southern Portugal, in October. One Blackbird and one House Sparrow have been found dead within a mile of the Farm, and a Song Thrush ringed as a nestling in May came to an untimely death in fruit netting on Brickhill estate in July.

At Wyboston Gravel Pits we have three favoured netting sites, two of them near the river where the nets are erected across gaps in hedges and ditches, and the other in an area of willows, sedges and reeds on the fringe of one of the pits. The latter proved most successful in late summer when we caught many warblers.

Netting days totalled 15 and 670 birds of 35 species were ringed. In addition two Little Ringed Plover chicks and one Common Tern chick were ringed. Noteworthy captures include three Kingfishers (one pair bred at the old gravel workings, another pair at or near the more recent workings a mile to the south), 40 Long-tailed Tits, five Willow Tits (recorded as scarce in the County, but definitely much overlooked), five Treecreepers, a Goldcrest, and no less than 103 Bullfinches. The last species is producing some very interesting data on weights.

On 20th August, at a time when all the Common Tern chicks were fledged, we saw one juvenile tern that could not fly. Mick managed to catch the bird, getting himself rather wet in the process, and we took it back to Bedford with us. Mick hand-fed it for five days on frozen fish, by which time it appeared much stronger, and so after ringing it, we returned it to Wyboston. Its first flight was very shaky and it quickly alighted on the flat fly-ash area, but when we recaptured it and launched it a second time, it flew somewhat further before settling in a rough field out of sight from us but next to the pit where we had originally found it. Neither of us was particularly optimistic about its chances, and I was amazed when a letter reached the British Trust for Ornithology on 11th December reporting that our bird had been found dead on the shore at Abidjan in the Ivory Coast (05°19'N. 4°01'W). There have been some fifty recoveries of British-ringed Common Terns in Africa, but it is remarkable that the Wyboston bird should have reached the Ivory Coast after being in such poor condition in August.

The following table gives a break-down of the species ringed at both Bedford Sewage Farm and Wyboston Gravel Pits.

	<i>Bedford</i>		<i>Wyboston</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sewage Farm</i>		<i>Gravel Pits</i>		
	<i>full-grown</i>	<i>pullus</i>	<i>full-grown</i>	<i>pullus</i>	
Red-legged Partridge	4				4
Moorhen	1				1
Lapwing	1	13			14
Little Ringed Plover				2	2
Common Tern			1	1	2
Kingfisher			3		3
Skylark	2				2
Swallow	24				24
House Martin	1		3		4
Sand Martin	1		8		9
Great Tit	4		15		19
Blue Tit	34		33		67
Willow Tit	1		5		6
Long-tailed Tit	23		40		63
Treecreeper			5		5
Wren	37		18		55
Fieldfare	2				2
Song Thrush	67	5	46		118
Redwing	1		4		5
Blackbird	113	17	82		212
Redstart	1				1
Robin	22	4	14		40
Grasshopper Warbler	4				4
Reed Warbler	15		20		35
Sedge Warbler	53		64		117
Blackcap	1		2		3
Garden Warbler	4		1		5
Whitethroat	11		27		38
Lesser Whitethroat	1		7		8
Willow Warbler	7		4		11
Chiffchaff	4				4
Goldcrest			1		1
Dunnock	124		59		183
Meadow Pipit	1		1		2
Pied Wagtail	3		2		5
Starling	20		1		21
Greenfinch	29		2		31
Goldfinch	40		3		43
Linnet	44		7		51
Lesser Redpoll	1				1
Bullfinch	38		103		141
Chaffinch	15	5	9		29
Brambling	11				11
Yellowhammer	14		1		15
Reed Bunting	4		19		23
House Sparrow	295		60		355
Tree Sparrow	7				7
	1085	44	670	3	1802

LIST OF MEMBERS

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c Corporate Member (Affiliated Institution).

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- Smith, Mrs. A. L., 166 Bromham Road, Bedford.
- jSmith, C. D. W., 166 Bromham Road, Bedford.
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- aSpeed, Mrs. K. N., 36 St. Andrews Road, Bedford.
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- Young, Lt.-Col. E. P., Lawrences Close, Pavenham, Bedford.

OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following members of the Society in the period 1965-1967.

In October, 1967, MISS I. C. BATES of Luton, a member since 1951.

In June, 1965, MR. H. COLE of Luton, a member since 1946.

In June, 1967, MISS G. H. DAY, formerly of Harrold, a founder member of the Society.

In November 1967, MRS. M. E. MANLEY, of Bedford, a member since 1957.

In March 1966, MR. A. D. PENTLAND, of Bedford, a member since 1948.