

GENERAL ACTIVITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

VISITORS

ON 4th March the Trust was honoured by a visit from H.R.H. the Princess Elizabeth. Some 1,500 geese were still on the estuary on that day and the whole flock was feeding in the Tack Piece—the field immediately adjacent to the Rushy Pen. A few minutes before Her Royal Highness arrived, the geese were inadvertently disturbed and flew out to the estuary. This meant that the Royal Party, instead of seeing the geese at close quarters, saw the flock far out on the sandbanks of the estuary, but it did not, as some Press reports attempted to indicate, spoil Her Royal Highness's visit. On the contrary, the Royal Party had a good view of the ducks in the decoy and spent the morning in most agreeable weather watching and feeding the birds in the Pens. After lunch in the Headquarters Cottage, Her Royal Highness went aboard the Narrow Boat *Beatrice* and visited the Trust's Gypsy Waggon. During the visit the Trust's Staff and a number of local people who have given particular help and support to the Trust were presented.

On 19th January H.H. the Princess Marie Louise visited the Trust. Unfortunately the day was foggy but Her Highness spent some time watching the birds in the pens.

The number of visitors has been double that of last year. Some 10,000 people have visited the New Grounds, including 193 parties, 63 from schools and educational establishments.

The problem of showing visitors over the collection has been greatly eased by the 'Key to the Wildfowl of the World' which has been on sale as a separate pamphlet at 2s. 6d. The problem of escorting them to see the wild geese is still most difficult owing to the shortage of staff.

Once more, however, a number of Members have come forward and kindly consented to act as Honorary Wardens. The following, who are well acquainted with the behaviour of the wild geese, have offered their services from time to time in order to augment the permanent staff:

J. Field, Esq.	J. Russell, Esq.
C. P. A. Garnett, Esq.	J. Savidge, Esq.
B. King, Esq.	Miss C. L. Sansom.
Dr. B. Morson.	K. H. Shackleton, Esq.
J. E. Murphy, Esq.	R. J. F. Taylor, Esq.
J. P. Paige, Esq.	D. Weir, Esq.
Miss A. Pritchard.	G. T. Wilkins, Esq.
A. Richardson, Esq.	

STAFF ARRANGEMENTS

The scientific work of the Trust is being greatly developed. Mr. Hugh Boyd has been engaged as Resident Biologist. The arrangement with Bristol University by which Mr. Frank McKinney is now working at the New Grounds for his Ph.D. has been mentioned earlier.

Extensive experiments for the perfection of the nets for catching and ringing

wild geese have been carried out under the enthusiastic direction of Lord Geoffrey Percy.

The Council wishes to draw particular attention to the service which has been given by the secretarial staff during the past year. The Trust is deeply indebted to Miss P. Talbot-Ponsonby, Mr. E. A. Scholes, Mrs. Scholes, Mr. Douglas Eccleston and Mrs. S. T. Johnstone for the enthusiasm and energy which they have put into the work.

This kind of enthusiasm has permeated the development of the Trust in all its spheres and has, in the opinion of the Council, been responsible for the great progress which it continues to make, and the steady increase in Membership.

MEMBERSHIP

The Council is happy to announce that Her Royal Highness the Princess Elizabeth has been graciously pleased to accept Honorary Membership of the Trust.

The total Membership figures at the time of the Annual General Meeting were as follows (the figures in brackets are the totals at the previous Annual General Meeting):

Life Members	..	..	..	34	(17)
Members	..	..	..	2,518	(1,888)
Corporate Members	..	..	..	54	(34)
Associates	..	..	..	477	(561)
Parish Members	..	..	..	35	(9)
Contributors	..	..	..	33	(25)

The substantial increase in Life Members, at a fee of 50 guineas, is most gratifying. There has also been a considerable increase in the number of Members who have covenanted their subscription for seven years, among them Mr. Bernard Shaw. This arrangement is strongly recommended, as, provided that the Member is able to commit his or herself to remain a Member for that period, the Income Tax on the subscription is recoverable from the Inland Revenue by the Trust. At the present rate of Income Tax this nearly doubles the sum received by the Trust without any extra cost to the Members.

FINANCE

The financial position of the Trust was greatly improved by a magnificent donation from our senior vice-President Lord Dulverton of Batsford, of £1,000 for capital development and a further donation from Mr. Guy Benson, of £500 has already been mentioned. The Newport and District Naturalists' Society and a number of individual Members have come forward most generously with gifts of daffodil and narcissus bulbs, shrubs, a typewriter, binoculars, etc. The Council wishes to place on record its gratitude for the generous way in which Members and contributors have supported the Trust in these various ways.

The Accounts of the Trust's operations for the year ended 31st December, 1949, will be found on pages 71-72, and it will be seen that Income for the year exceeded Expenditure.

The First Annual Report made a profit of £147 and it seems that the Second Annual Report together with the printing of the 'Key' as a separate pamphlet should at least pay for itself. A sum of £180 was raised by the sale of a Christmas

card (printed in black and white). The Council, however, still feels that every effort must be made to increase the Income. It is proposed to issue a Gift Token for a year's Membership, in an attractively printed form, which should make an ideal Christmas or birthday present. Members will be informed as soon as the Tokens become available. Meanwhile, since our principal support must always be derived from a strong Membership, the Council would urge you to enrol at least one new Member this year. The Council is not diffident in making this appeal because it feels that the Trust has something worth while to offer to the community and that those who become associated with its work are not likely to regret having done so.

LEASE AND LICENCE

The Council is pleased to announce that a 25-year Lease has now been executed with the Berkeley Estates Company. This concerns the Headquarters Cottages, the Duck Decoy and the area of the enclosures. In addition a Licence has been granted to the Trust in order to regularise the privileges which Members enjoy of using the observation huts along the sea wall. This licence is designed to allow full facilities for watching the geese, while at the same time safeguarding the interests of the birds themselves and of the farmers upon whose land they feed.

BIRD OBSERVATORIES SCHEME

Now that it is possible to accommodate visiting students, the Trust has been included in the Observatories Scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology. The Director, the Head Warden and the Resident Biologist attended the Bird Observatories Conference at York on 12th February, 1950. This provided a very useful opportunity for an exchange of ideas with others undertaking similar problems although with different groups of birds.

THE DIRECTOR'S LECTURES

In the course of the past year the Hon. Director, Mr. Peter Scott, has given 35 lectures (in the previous year the figure was 48 lectures). The sum raised from these lectures, including the sale of literature, was £1,377 3s. 9d. (in the previous year £1,114 8s. 9d.). Although some of these lectures dealt with the Director's expedition to the Perry River in Arctic Canada, the Trust has invariably been mentioned and lecturer's fees or collections in their entirety have been handed to the Trust. In this connection the Council would remind Members that the Director receives no payment whatever from the Trust's funds for this or any other service to the Trust—on the contrary he contributes £200 annually under Deed of Covenant.

THE CANAL LECTURE TOUR

During April 1950 the Director undertook a lecture tour of the Midlands by canal, travelling in the Trust's converted Narrow Boat *Beatrice*. During the cruise the number of the crew varied between six and nine. Mr. Robert Aickman, Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association, was one of those on board.

Lectures, which were given at Macclesfield, Manchester (2), Southport, Liverpool, Northwich, Chester, Dudley, Birmingham and Worcester, raised £484 for the Trust including sale of literature.

The distance covered was 450 miles including the passage of 273 locks.

The whole journey occupied 31 days. These included five days delay with engine trouble. Three features of the cruise need especial remark. The passage from Liverpool to Weston Mersey Lock, 15 miles on salt water in the open estuary, had not previously been made by a converted Narrow Boat. Fortunately, in spite of the 15 m.p.h. wind, the sea remained fairly smooth and the passage was made without mishap. The same could not be said of the passage of 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ mile Harecastle Tunnel in which *Beatrice* stuck fast about 1,100 yards from the entrance. At this point the tunnel has subsided, owing to adjacent coal workings. After a great deal of hard work loading and shifting brick ballast the boat passed through after 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Previously *Beatrice* had been lowered from the Trent and Mersey Canal into the River Weaver Navigation on the famous Anderton Lift, which moves boats, with 200 tons of water in a caisson, vertically up or down 80 feet.

MARKET HARBOROUGH FESTIVAL

The Council approved the participation of the *Beatrice* in the Inland Waterways Association's Festival and Rally at Market Harborough in August 1950.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISITORS

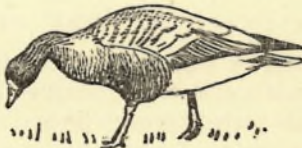
The local rules governing the facilities at the New Grounds have been subject to minor amendment since last year. For this reason and for new Members, they are printed below.

Wild Geese

(i) Members, accompanied by one guest each, shall have access to all observation huts, provided that such access does not disturb the geese, but must be accompanied by a Warden or Honorary Warden. This is a condition of the Deed of Licence concluded with the Berkeley Estate Company. A notice giving the times when a warden will be available in the Orchard Pen to escort parties of Members to the observation huts will be displayed inside the main gate. The object of the scheme is to ensure that every Member spending a morning or afternoon at the New Grounds should know when and where to find a warden, and so have the opportunity of watching the wild geese.

(ii) Associate Members have the same facilities as full Members while at the New Grounds except that they are not entitled to bring a guest.

(iii) Corporate Members (this Membership is only open to educational institutions) shall have access to all observation huts, but must have made prior arrangements for the visit and only receive full facilities when in parties



of not less than 10. Parties are asked, if possible, to avoid calling on the services of the wardens during the lunch hour, and for this reason are specially requested to arrive before 11.30 a.m. or after 2 p.m.

(iv) The facilities for watching the wild geese do not extend to non-Members.

The Decoy

(v) The decoy is closed both to Members and to the public, but the gazebo, or hut on stilts, gives an excellent view of the pool.

The Collection

(vi) Now that the 'Key to the Wildfowl of the World' is available for identification, Members are asked to call on the services of the staff as little as possible for this purpose.

(vii) Visitors who are not Members or Members' guests will be admitted to the enclosures only, on payment of 2s. at the gate (under 16-6d.).

(viii) Parties of non-Members (not less than 10) will be admitted to the enclosures by special arrangement. Thirty is the maximum number and bookings must be made well in advance.

(ix) The New Grounds are open from 9 a.m. till sundown each day. Sunday mornings are reserved for Members only.

(x) Very special care should be taken by all visitors to conform to the notices, follow any instructions given by the wardens and SHUT THE GATES.

'BEATRICE'

The Trust's Narrow Boat has been used since the summer of 1949 as a hostel under the care of Mrs. Monica Flanagan, while lying in the Sharpness-Gloucester Canal at the Patch Bridge, some half mile from the New Grounds.

During the period 13th August, 1949, till 31st March, 1950, 168 visitors have stayed on board. *Beatrice* can accommodate 11 visitors and is available for anyone wishing to come to the New Grounds. Particulars can be obtained from the Assistant Secretary.

WANTS

The Council wishes to thank all those who so generously responded to the appeal made in last year's Report. It feels that Members will not mind being told of the following items for which the Trust would still be grateful:

Microscope.

Binocular Telescopes.

Magnifying Glass

Typewriter.

Small hand lawn mower.

Garden tools.

Carpentry tools.

Wire netting.

Hampers of any size.

Flowering and Evergreen Shrubs.

Bulbs—especially Daffodil, Narcissus, Crocus, Scilla, etc., in short those which can be grown in grass and are likely to propagate themselves.

Local volunteers for putting literature into envelopes about four times per year.