THE BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Founded 5 October 1892 | Registered Charity No. 1169733

BOC ANNUAL REVIEW AND ACCOUNTS 2025

Chairman's Review 2025

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2025 was an outstanding year for the Club. The Bulletin continued to expand its global reach, receiving 216,474 hits, a 35% increase on 2024, while the Club's talks programme remained an important part of our activities. Three major initiatives particularly marked the year: our first CASE studentship, the publication of a biography of John Henry Gurney, and Avian Odyssey 2025.

Avian Odyssey 2025 was a significant collaboration between the Natural History Museum (NHM), the Club and leading bird conservation charities, non-governmental organisations and the BBC Natural History Unit. The event focused on research, conservation and education relating to birds and their habitats globally. Robert Prŷs-Jones provides a detailed account of the day in his report on the 2025 meetings programme below.

Douglas G. D. Russell, in addition to planning, facilitating and launching this outstanding event, also saw the publication by the NHM of his book, *Interesting Bird Nests & Eggs*.

John Beaufoy Publishing, in association with the Club and with Robert Prŷs-Jones as Scientific Editor, published *John Henry Gurney: A Passion for Birds* by Clive Slater, Ray Williams and the late Peter Mundy, to great critical acclaim.

The Club welcomed Sam Thompson, our first CASE student. The Club is a project partner and financial supporter of this new PhD studentship at the University of Oxford. Sam will be supervised by Dr Steve Portugal and his work will be carried out at the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology.

The Bulletin Volume 145 comprised 436 pages and 29 papers of broad geographical scope, with particularly strong representation from New World (especially Neotropical), Afrotropical and Indo-Pacific birds. Three new taxon names were introduced in the Bulletin during 2025: a new subfamily nomen for the endemic Philippine genus *Robsonius*, a new species of *Myzomela* from Babar Island, in eastern Indonesia, and a new subspecies of Slate-crowned Antpitta *Grallaricula nana* from north-east Colombia and westernmost Venezuela.

BioOne 2025 report noted that the Bulletin received 216,474 hits, compared with 160,962 in 2024, a 35% increase. Hits are defined as full-text accesses, PDF downloads and abstract views. The most-accessed articles are listed in the Bulletin report below (see p. 6).

During the year, the Club published a number of blogs, including a series of interviews by Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne on a range of topics, the most recent being 'Andrew Richford, Birds of Africa'. This captivating and continuing series comes from the London Natural History Society's newsletter. There were also three research-story blogs by Sam Thompson (two) and Ben Leese.

Our social media following continued to grow. We have 3,400 followers on Facebook, 789 on Instagram and, so far, 122 on Bluesky, up from 52 last year.

During the year, we published five videos of talks on YouTube, which accumulated a total of 844 views, down from 2,386 views in 2024. We now have 324 YouTube subscribers. The PDF of the Spanish translation of The Birds of Cuba has been downloaded from the Club website 4,269 times since its publication in 2021.

Financial Report 2025

R W Malin, Hon Treasurer

The figures reflect transactions recorded in our bank accounts during 2025, rather than allocating income and expenditure to a particular accounting year. The figures are then consolidated to show the combined position of the two BOC charities—the Old BOC and the new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) —although they remain legally separate.

Income and expenditure

Income in 2025 was £23,396—almost £3,500 (17%) above the 2024 level. The greatest increase was in interest, with £4,400 of interest (compared with £111 in 2024) on CIO deposits and loans via the Invest & Fund platform. Herbert Stevens investment income was over £500 higher (3%). Offsetting income reductions were book sales, down 45% to £1,249, and a Gift Aid reclaim of £196, rather than £810 in 2024, which covered three years. Old BOC subscriptions were down again (by £100), only partly offset by £40 higher CIO donations.

Expenditure in 2025 was £24,317, a decrease of £4,545 (17%) during the year. Most of the decrease was due to lower publication costs, which were 36% lower at £6,000, compared with £9,419 in 2024. The annual conference, Avian Odyssey, was again jointly funded by the African, Neotropical and Oriental Bird Clubs, and the Ornithological Society of the Middle East. In 2025, the four Clubs paid their share during the calendar year, whereas in 2024 late billing meant that only one paid before year end. The 2025 conference figure therefore shows income of £840, rather than an expense (£1,460 in 2024). Legal costs incurred through changing the mechanism by which we hold Herbert Stevens investments were £1,990, some £600 lower than in 2024, and are now, thankfully, at an end. Bulletin and BioOne costs were largely unchanged. Website and meeting costs rose by around £350, and our first CASE sponsorship was £1,200.

The resulting deficit for 2025 was £922, approximately 90% lower than the £8,673 deficit recorded in 2024, largely through lower publication costs (£3,400) and higher interest income (£4,300).

BOC investment income stood up well in 2025, and the year would have been in surplus without publication costs. Further publications are in hand, and all costs continue to be expensed as incurred. Unless donation and subscription income rises appreciably, there will therefore be further deficits. BioOne costs are now refunded by Clancey, reducing the Clancey account balance and interest accrual, which produces interest income for the CIO.

Balance Sheet

A combined balance sheet at the end of 2025 shows assets of £511,869, an increase of £40,151 (9%) from £471,718 in 2024.

During 2025, our Herbert Stevens investment units were formally moved from the Herbert Stevens Trust direct to the CIO. Instead of ‘ownership’ in a Trust with external trustees, the new arrangement gives the CIO greater control of our investments and allows us to appoint Investment Advisers, a process which had not been completed by year end. The value of the units increased by £39,066 (13%), due to the strong performance of two of them (an M&G fund and a Newton fund) with a strong equity focus, whereas the value of our two property fund units was largely unchanged. All these units have been held for many years, and a formal review of them is planned for 2026.

Medium-term deposits (Clancey) reduced to £50,965 from £53,286. Higher interest rates led to an interest credit of £2,819, more than half the BioOne cost, thereby slowing the rate at which Clancey deposits are depleted.

The CIO held Building Society deposits of £67,642 at year end, in an instant-access account at Saffron Building Society.

Our account at **Invest & Fund**, a residential property lending platform, showed £41,500 on 31 December 2025, in a portfolio of approximately 15 loans, mainly having lot sizes between £500 and £3,500. The loans pay interest of 6.75% to 8%. Around £1,700 of interest was paid to the CIO by 'our' borrowers on the Invest & Fund platform in 2025.

2025 Financial Summary

	Amount
Income	£23,396
Expenditure	£24,317
Deficit	£921
Total assets at 31 December 2025	£511,869

Detailed income, expenditure and balance-sheet figures may be read in the Club's accounts, in Appendix 1.

The Bulletin

Guy Kirwan, Hon Editor

Volume 145 comprised 436 pages and 29 papers of broad geographical scope, with particularly strong representation from New World (especially Neotropical), Afrotropical and Indo-Pacific birds. The Bulletin remains fortunate that most referees continued to deliver their reviews reasonably promptly, despite the many pressures currently operating on the refereeing system as a whole.

Three new taxon names were introduced in the Bulletin during 2025: a new subfamily nomen for the endemic Philippine genus *Robsonius*, a new species of *Myzomela* from Babar Island, in eastern Indonesia, and a new subspecies of Slate-crowned Antpitta *Grallaricula nana* from north-east Colombia and westernmost Venezuela.

Other papers of special interest included a review of the taxonomic and conservation status of the Ayeyarwady Broadbill *Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchos affinis*, a highly threatened bird endemic to Myanmar; two papers on the extinct Carolina Parakeet *Conuropsis carolinensis*; the third in a series of papers on the breeding biology of Brazilian birds; a neotype designation for Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii*; and a review of knowledge of the extremely poorly known and potentially globally threatened West African Rock Dove *Columba gymnocycla*.

For papers published in 2025, the interval between receipt and publication was 3–14 months, with a mean of approximately 7.2 months, a marginal increase on 2024. The Bulletin received a total of 52 new manuscripts in 2024, of which 15 were rejected and the remainder accepted, in some cases subject to substantial and currently incomplete revision.

Grateful thanks are due, as ever, to referees who have given freely of their time and expertise; the Bulletin's Associate Editors, Bruce Beehler, Lincoln Fishpool, Juan Freile, Flavia Montaño-Centellas, Robert Prŷs-Jones and Chris Sharpe; and Eng-Li Green, of Alcedo Publishing, for her constant dedication to Bulletin duties, including production of the index and updating the website. Chris Storey and Robert Prŷs-Jones helped prepare the cover information and Club Announcements, while staff at the Natural History Museum, Tring, continue to offer much-needed assistance in all manner of ways.

Most-accessed Bulletin articles in 2025

Rank	Article title	Volume	Hits
1	Audubon's Bird of Washington: unravelling the fraud that launched The Birds of America	140	276
2	A taxonomic revision of Banda Myzomela *Myzomela boiei* (S. Müller 1843), including the description of a new species from Babar Island, Indonesia	145	214
3	What's in a name? Nomenclature for colour aberrations in birds reviewed	141	204
4	An ornithological survey of Fergusson Island, D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago, Papua New Guinea: new island records and noteworthy natural history observations	145	157
5	Why are New Guinea's Cyclops Mountains poor in upland bird species?	145	120
6	First records in north-west Europe of two Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* taxa from the Middle East and the Caucasus	145	116
7	The status of *Catharus fumosus* Ridgway (Turdidae)	145	114
8	Photographic evidence of bi-parental nest-building by Schlegel's Asity *Philepitta schlegeli* (Philepittidae)	145	104
9	The world's largest hummingbird was described 131 years ago	144	97
10	The dark side of birds: melanism—facts and fiction	137	93

BioOne readership in 2025

The BioOne 2025 Publisher Report recorded the following leading institutions and countries accessing the Bulletin through BioOne Complete.

Top Institutions

Rank	Institution	Hits
1	Clarivate	2,550
2	University of Illinois at Chicago	236
3	University of Cambridge	165
4	Universidad Autonoma de Chiapas	114
5	Natural History Museum London	106
6	University of Connecticut	91
7	Cornell University	86
8	Universidade de Sao Paulo (USP)	63
9	Durham University	55
10	Louisiana State University	52

Top Countries

Rank	Country	Hits
1	United States	4,210
2	United Kingdom	479
3	Brazil	387
4	Mexico	194
5	Netherlands	172
6	Australia	166
7	Germany	145
8	Canada	125
9	South Africa	70
10	New Zealand	61

BOC Meetings in 2025

Robert Prŷs-Jones

During 2025, the BOC held three evening meetings at its regular Barley Mow venue in Westminster, together with one evening lecture jointly with the Linnean Society at their venue in Piccadilly and a one-day conference, entitled Avian Odyssey 2025, held in conjunction with the Natural History Museum (NHM) at its Flett Theatre, South Kensington. As is now usual, the events were subsequently posted online via YouTube, linked to the Club's website, allowing numerous people unable to attend in person to view them.

The year opened with a talk on 24 March by Douglas G. D. Russell, BOC Committee member, and Senior Curator of Eggs & Nests at the NHM, entitled *Interesting Bird Nests & Eggs*. Subtitled '*writing a popular book on 250 years of avian architecture'*, his presentation was based on the book of the same title that he published in 2024. This highlighted the nests and eggs of 113 different bird families represented in the NHM's enormous collections spanning more than 250 years, and his talk drew on an array of particularly diverse and striking examples among these.

The following talk, on 26 May, featured Hein van Grouw, a Senior Curator in the NHM Bird Skin collection, speaking on *The Founding Feathers of the Barbary Dove Streptopelia risoria*. He discussed the origins of this domestic and feral species and considered its impact on current Eurasian Collared Dove *S. decaocto* populations, which have expanded their range greatly over recent times, increasingly encountering feral Barbary Dove populations. Genetically, the Barbary Dove is closest to the African Collared Dove *S. roseogrisea*, with which many authorities consider it to be conspecific, but all three forms hybridise where they come into contact. Where a Barbary Dove population comes into contact with that of the Eurasian Collared Dove, it tends to experience 'extinction by hybridisation', whereby Eurasian Collared Dove features increasingly dominate subsequent generations.

Avian Odyssey 2025 again brought together global leaders in avian research and conservation, speaking on behalf of the participating organisations. The morning session was opened by Beccy Speight (RSPB) on *Leadership and momentum for nature conservation in challenging times*, followed by Alex Bond (NHM) on *Hope in a time of planetary emergency*, in which he focused on the Adrift Lab's investigations into the impacts of plastic pollution on seabirds. Hugh Hanmer (BTO) concluded the morning session with *Blackbirds, mosquitoes, and disease* – the emergence and spread of the Usutu virus in the U.K.

During the early afternoon session, Fangyuan Hua (OBC) discussed *Citizen science to scale up long-term monitoring of birdlife in China*; Talatu Tende (ABC) spoke on *Leading the fight to save Nigeria's threatened vultures*; and Tohar Tal (OSME) introduced the *Batumi (Georgia) Raptor Count: migration counts as a vehicle for research and conservation on the East African–Eurasian flyway*. The late afternoon talks comprised Lia Nahomi Kajiki (NBC), who provided *A gaze into the curious world of manakins*; Stuart Butchart (BirdLife), with *The state of the world's birds: a positive perspective*; and lastly Giles Badger (BBC Natural History Unit), with *70 years of leading the global conversation on birds*.

It was a very full day, packed with thought-provoking information, and Douglas G. D. Russell (BOC) deserves great credit for organising it.

The joint talk with the Linnean Society is fast becoming an annual event. On 23 October, Dr Richard Broughton, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Wallingford, spoke on *A Quietening of the Woods: the Decline of Woodland Birds*. Richard has been studying woodland birds, and in particular the closely related Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris* and Willow Tit *P. montanus*, for over 25 years, and recently produced an acclaimed monograph on them. Since the late 1960s, the former species has declined by 80% and the latter by an extraordinary 96%. Both are subdominant species whose ability to hoard food for winter formerly gave them a competitive advantage. However, a surge in human provision of bird feeders has caused great population

increases in the ecologically similar Great Tit *Parus major* and Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* and, in different ways, this has greatly affected the subdominant species.

The year closed with a presentation on 10 November by Clive Slater on *John Henry Gurney: A Passion for Birds*. Clive is the lead author, with Ray Williams and the late Peter Mundy, of a volume of the same name published a few months previously by John Beaufoy Publishing, facilitated by a subsidy from the Club. Norfolk-based Gurney (1819–1890) was a wealthy individual from a Norfolk-based Quaker banking family, who worked as a banker but had a passion for bird collecting, especially worldwide birds of prey and southern African birds. Operating largely through a huge network of collectors, he assembled a major collection, now largely held by the Natural History Museum and Norwich Museum, researched it assiduously and produced about 500 resulting publications, predominantly based on it. Alongside his huge ornithological importance, he experienced major events in both his personal and professional life that Clive also managed to touch on in a compelling talk. An excellent end to a highly stimulating year of Club talks.

Trustees and Administration

This is my last report as Chairman of the Club.

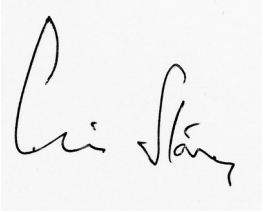
It has been an honour and a pleasure to have been Chairman for the past thirteen stimulating years. The move of the Bulletin to an online, open-access format was not without its critics, but the Bulletin now has a worldwide readership in the hundreds of thousands, and the YouTube videos of the Club's talks programme have similarly achieved worldwide reach. I am delighted that we decided to continue the Checklist series and to launch a biography series, with outstanding volumes on William Yarrell and John Henry Gurney.

I think the Club is in a very healthy situation, but there is still a lot to do.

I am delighted that Douglas G. D. Russell and Dr. Andrew Richford will be taking over as Co-Chairs, and I know they are very alive to the challenges now facing the Club.

My personal thanks are to my fellow Trustees; to Guy Kirwan for his continuing outstanding editorship of the Bulletin; to Nigel Redman, commissioning editor of the Checklist series; and to Eng-Li Green. Sarah Nichols, having largely created the role of Website and Communications Manager, handed it over to Brittany Pugh, who joins us from the NHM and King's College London, where she is doing a PhD looking at the relationships between plant biodiversity and environmental diversity (e.g. in geology and soil). Sarah has successfully completed her PhD and is now an R&D Fellow at Defra and Kew Gardens.

Thanks also to Frank Mullen, who films, edits and posts the YouTube videos of the Barley Mow talks. The Club is greatly in their debt to them all.



Chris Storey, Outgoing Chairman
21 September 2026

Appendix 1. Income, expenditure and balance-sheet figures

2025					
	Old BOC		**CIO BOC**		**Total**
Income					
Herbert Stevens Investments	£0.00		£15,929.50		£15,929.50
Subs / donations	£1,064.50		£493.42		£1,557.92
Book Sales	£0.00		£1,249.20		£1,249.20
Gift Aid	£0.00		£196.51		£196.51
Interest	£0.00		£4,412.71		£4,412.71
Misc.			£50.00		£50.00
	£1,064.50		**£22,331.34**		**£23,395.84**
Expenses					
Editor	£0.00		-£5,397.37		-£5,397.37
Eng-Li	£0.00		-£3,092.00		-£3,092.00
BioOne	£0.00		-£5,140.00		-£5,140.00
Website, Zoom	£0.00		-£1,505.99		-£1,505.99
Meetings / room hire	£0.00		-£381.64		-£381.64
Conference	£0.00		£840.04		£840.04
Publications	£0.00		-£6,000.00		-£6,000.00
Legal	£0.00		-£1,990.80		-£1,990.80
CASE	£0.00		-£1,200.00		-£1,200.00
Misc.	£0.00		-£449.65		-£449.65
	£0.00		**-£24,317.41**		**-£24,317.41**
Deficit for 2025					**-£921.57**
Balance Sheet as at 31.12.25					
Bank	£41.19		£4,387.77		£4,428.96
CIO building society deposits	£0.00		£67,642.48		£67,642.48
Paypal	£0.00		£112.41		£112.41
Herbert Stevens Investments	£0.00		£347,220.22		£347,220.22
Invest & Fund	£0.00		£41,500.00		£41,500.00
Clancey bank deposit	£0.00		£50,965.37		£50,965.37
Total	**£41.19**		**£511,828.25**		**£511,869.44**