

The British Deer Society



Annual Review 2010





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

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



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chairman's report

The year started in a general state of uncertainty, in the grip of both a financial and climatic winter not seen for many years combined with the political uncertainty of a general election. It made direction of the Society a difficult task. Despite this, the outcome has been a satisfactory year ending with a financial surplus, and perhaps more importantly the same number of members with which we started. The Board never underestimates the support of the members, quite simply because without them we would not exist, and deer would not have the support we provide in a world where few others share our views.

Financially the Society remains strong with cash reserves sufficient to secure the short to medium term, but for the long term the Board is ever mindful that the Society has to justify its existence in a world of shrinking disposable income and ever-rising costs.

May brought a change of government in England and Wales that some had predicted but few had actually thought through. We took the opportunity to see the new Minister, and were left in no doubt as to the government's intentions as to deer - there were none. Whether this is a manifestation of the Big Society, I know not. What was made clear is that where there is a problem, get stuck in and sort it out yourselves. In many ways this is very refreshing, and a clear mandate to do just that.

Despite the media's best efforts to sensationalise, there are relatively few issues today involving deer in England and Wales, and indeed Northern Ireland. Numbers rise and distribution widens, but where there are issues of overpopulation, the absence of management is inevitably identified, and in most cases addressed, whether sufficiently is a different question. Stopping population growth is one thing, reducing to sustainable levels quite another. The

education message has never been more important and remains a major priority, so it is gratifying to see our advanced Deer Management Courses so well subscribed. I believe the biggest issue for the future will be deer in peri urban and urban environments, but I fear the message to local authorities will be heard too late, particularly with so many budgetary pressures.

2010 witnessed two things which I believe indicate a change in perception towards deer. The 'Emperor' story was a journalist's delight, but as it progressed a welcome maturity entered the reporting as deer management issues were debated. A consensus emerged on the necessity of culling to maintain balance, borne out by only a handful of signatures on a House of Commons early day motion for emotive measures. The second, unrelated event was the report of concern over a regional reduction in roe numbers. Whether such concerns are justified remains to be seen, but the sentiment was a first.

In Scotland government attitude towards deer could not be more different. The Deer Commission for Scotland was amalgamated within Scottish Natural Heritage, and a Deer Panel of four members appointed to advise the Board. Three of the four appointees are BDS members, including our Chairman of Scottish Council. It is a very good start and bodes well for the future.

During the year the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill progressed through its various stages. We worked effectively with other land-based organisations and achieved a satisfactory outcome with the final Bill containing none of the draconian and bureaucratic proposals that had been aired. However, the agenda for 2011 has been set by the requirement for a Code of Practice for Deer Management to be produced by September, and for the industry to agree competence levels, the effect of which will be reviewed in 2014. This gives every opportunity for some outlandish ideas to re-emerge. We

will continue to work with government to ensure proposals are sensible and workable but the fact that deer in Scotland are politically linked to the rumbling land debate could mean some different pressures emerging after the May elections.

Heavy snowfall saw the year out north of the border, with more confirmed reports of significant local red deer culls principally by the Forestry Commission. Despite some still talking up ever rising numbers and damage, a very different picture of red deer numbers will emerge. The facts are different, with decreasing numbers in many areas, but in the absence of reliable figures for the country as a whole, this message is difficult to get across. What will suffer is the stalking industry, where I foresee letting difficulty, as blank days sometimes without even seeing deer, will become a norm.

Our training efforts continue and 2011 will see the launch of a new CD preparing students for Deer Stalking Certificate Level 1. Hopefully it will help increase the numbers of those taking Level 1 assessments. We worked closely with many new media contacts, and briefed presenters of both BBC Autumn and Spring Watch during the year. A measure of our involvement in this area has been a significant increase in requests for guidance before, rather than after, publication!

Taken overall, an uncertain year became one of consolidation and then progression, which could not have been achieved without the support of our members, the help of our volunteers, and the graft of our employees, to whom our thanks and gratitude cannot be overstated. 2011 should be a year we approach with more confidence, and we look forward to it with relish.



Mark Nicolson



Photo courtesy of George Trebinski

public benefit

The continuing difficult economic circumstances within the UK presented the Society with a challenge in 2010. The Board and Management Team has worked hard to ensure that this situation has not affected the Society's programme and our membership has remained solid allowing us to maintain activity levels.

We have continued to engage with a large number of interested organisations, bodies and individuals in order to promote deer welfare. We attend meetings, offer lectures, respond to consultations, liaise with government, campaign to raise awareness and influence public opinion, commission and support research, deliver high-quality training and commit to education and advertising to help deliver those aims. Our fundraising activities help provide the additional funds necessary to carry our agenda forward and we rely on our members and volunteers both to help fund and deliver a wide range of activities. An ambitious programme and heavy workload will be recognised by many charities working to deliver their charitable aims. For the British Deer Society, ensuring the future of all our wild deer species, in balance with their environment, remains our defining principle.

Anti Poaching campaign 'Shine a Light on Poaching'

This is an ongoing Society campaign retaining national focus on an ever-increasing problem and widespread reports of poaching incidents. The Society has continued pressing for media exposure and coverage at both national and local level, as well as highlighting the issue at shows and events across the country. The Yorkshire branch has taken a further step and, with the guidance and support of the BDS training team, developed a training package for delivery to the police and wildlife liaison officers. This is particularly aimed at those who work in rural

and wildlife crime and includes instruction on legal issues such as the Deer Act and Firearms Act and also on more practical areas such as how to differentiate between poaching and legal deer management. During 2010 representatives from three of the four Yorkshire constabularies received training and the branch has promoted the project to other Society branches within the English and Welsh Council. The Society has additionally given support to forensic science projects looking at establishing proof where crimes have been committed.



Deer Vehicle Collisions

The Society continued to be actively involved with the increasing problem of Deer Vehicle Collisions particularly in certain accident hot spot areas around the UK. Our original 2009 campaign materials produced under the banner 'Look out for Deer' on display at shows and events across the country, were augmented in 2010 by an additional campaign 'Be Deer Aware' by the Deer Initiative. Due to lack of further funding, the DI campaign has stalled, and the British Deer Society will again step up its campaign in 2011 with a new hard-hitting poster.



Game Fairs and Countryside Shows

A BDS presence at game and country events throughout the UK is a key element in the Society's strategy of reaching the public and providing education on deer related matters and awareness of the issues of the day, current campaigns and initiatives. There was no change to this commitment in 2010 which was again a particularly busy year with the Society and its branch volunteers attending over 50 shows and events. New display materials and initiatives for the shows have given the Society an enhanced presence and these have included the use of multimedia flat screen televisions and audio-visual displays. The aim has been to provide an attractive, informative range of material which branches can utilise in support of their activities.

A new early season event in the show calendar resulted in a BDS team at the British Shooting and Countryman Show at Newark. This brought the first key event of the season into February with events occurring most weekends from then right through till the Autumn mists.

Branches

The structure of the Society allows for geographically grouped sections of the membership to meet and discuss deer-related issues, engage in debates and lectures and to undertake training and social events. In addition, many branches choose to attend shows to promote the educational remit of the Society and help deliver our campaign and awareness raising initiatives. The Society backs these branch-based efforts with both display material and equipment as well as financial support for infrastructure and attendance costs. In return, the branches make some contribution to fundraising efforts, a significant contribution to our educational remit and the volunteers who attend these shows and events make an enormous contribution in kind to the work of the Society.



public benefit

Working in partnership

Monitoring, responding and influencing governmental and non-governmental consultations where they affect deer welfare, research or best practice in deer management remains a vital function of the Society.

During the course of the year, and in pursuit of its aims, the Society has met with the following organisations and groups including:

- All Party Shooting and Conservation Group (Westminster)
- Association of Deer Management Groups
- British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC)
- Cairngorm Deer Advisory Group
- Cairngorm National Park Authority
- Country Land and Business Association (CLA)
- Countryside Alliance (CA)
- Cross Party Animal Welfare Group, Holyrood
- Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS)
- Deer Management Qualifications (DMQ) Board meetings
- Deer Management Qualifications Quality Assurance Group
- Deer Management Round Table Group
- Defence Estates (DDM)
- Defra Wildlife Health and Welfare
- Deer Initiative (DI) Partnership and Ltd Company meetings
- DI research group
- Deer Initiative Best Practice Steering Group
- DI Wales
- England Implementation Group (EIG) Animal Health and Welfare Strategy
- European Commission
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
- FACE (UK)
- Food Standards Agency (FSA)
- Food Standards Agency Game Meat Group
- Food Standards Agency Meat Hygiene Policy Forum
- Forestry Commission (FC)
- Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (various)
- Heather Trust
- John Muir Trust
- Lantra, Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector
- Mammal Society
- Mammal Trust
- Moorland Forum
- National Gamekeepers Organisation (NGO)
- National Rifle Association (NRA)
- Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime (PAW)
- Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime (PAW) Scotland
- Police Wildlife Liaison Officers meetings
- Police Firearms Licensing Liaison Groups
- Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD)
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
- Scottish Gamekeepers Organisation (SGA)
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Standing Conference on Countryside Sports
- Tracking Mammals Partnership
- Various university/regional council specialist interest and biodiversity groups
- Veterinary Deer Society
- Wildlife Trusts (various)
- Zoological Society of London



Photo courtesy of Steve Westlake Guy

A key essential of BDS philosophy is working in partnership with other organisations – pooling knowledge and sharing costs for the benefit of all. A prime example of this is The Best Practice Guide, a concept originally delivered in Scotland in 2008 following considerable work and input from a small nucleus of deer industry partners including BDS. This was redrafted during 2009/10 into a version compatible with legislation in England and Wales and produced by the DI Partnership. Following demand from users a hard copy version is now available and the Society has become one of the two distribution agencies. The Best Practice guides provide a highly tangible example of working in partnership and the benefits this provides to all parties.

At another level, progress in Scotland on the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill moved forward and with the absorption of the Deer Commission for Scotland in 2010 into Scottish National Heritage (SNH), there was a resultant gap in sound deer advisory support. SNH appointed a new four-man deer advisory panel to provide advice to its own Board and staff on a wide range of technical issues relating to deer welfare, public safety and sustainable deer management. Three of the panel, John Bruce, British Deer Society Scottish Council Chairman; Richard Cooke, factor for Dalhousie Estates; and Niall Rowantree former FC Chief Ranger and DCS Board Member; are all members of the

Society. The fourth member, Pete Maydew is from the RSPB.

Working together was highlighted during the extreme Scottish winter conditions in late 2009/2010 when conditions affected deer badly and a Deer Mortality statement was produced by contributing organisations for use in cases of identifying extreme suffering. In the event the consequences of the weather were not as tragic as they might have been, but provision has been made for possible future circumstances.

Further south, in March the Deer Initiative staged a conference with input from its partner organisations, of which BDS is a founding member with a place on the DI Ltd Board. Wide-ranging topics were covered including a session on Urban Deer chaired by BDS Society Chairman Mark Nicolson with a contribution from Veterinary Adviser Peter Green. Another discussion, on Non-Native Deer was chaired by BDS Scientific Adviser Professor Rory Putman with contributions from members Dr Jochen Langbein and Norma Chapman.



public benefit

Media and Communications

The Society's communications strategy is influenced by the need to reach the public with an often difficult message – deer welfare includes planned and expert management of the population. To reach as wide a range of individuals as possible the Society focuses this through the internet, its own publications and by influencing the general media in the press and on radio and television. It attempts to be a proactive as possible but events will often demand a reactive stance to news or short notice events.



The General Media

2010 has seen the Society achieve a significant amount of media exposure building on the previous year's achievements. It has been credited in, and has acted to influence, a wide range of television, radio and press content. This includes appearances on BBC television, BBC News, ITV television, BBC Radio 4 Today programme, and virtually every national newspaper. This has included a wide range of features and articles on Deer Vehicle Collisions, Poaching campaigns, deer numbers and distribution and the effects of the hard winter on deer ecology. The principal story in 2010 revolved around the culling of a locally iconic stag on Exmoor upon which the Society engaged in a defence of necessary deer management whilst offering a balance comment

on the actual circumstances of the incident. Overall the opportunity to place a rationale for deer management in front of an audience of millions gave the Society a platform that allowed us to achieve a significant increase in our general profile. The Society is undoubtedly the first port of call for all of the national media on deer related issues.

The Internet

The Society website continues to grow and has become the leading web based resource for deer and deer related issues. Visitor numbers are buoyant and this has been helped by new links following BBC Autumn Watch and Spring Watch support work, from the BBC Nature website and also from news websites across the world in the aftermath of the Emperor of Exmoor story. The large number of sections and topics has been increased and the site contains over 50 links, more than 30 downloadable documents and offers detailed advice and information on all aspects of deer management, training and the six deer species. Video clips too have been added to the Society's website and YouTube following filming at the CLA Game Fair and on location at a BDS Deer Management Course. The Society also issues an email newsletter – Deer Bytes which aims to inform subscribers about all the latest developments and news items.

Publications

The quarterly Deer Journal continues as the principal method of reaching our members and other interested groups and individuals. Over 300 further copies are sent out each quarter to universities, colleges, companies, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and individuals to act as a resource on deer matters and help to maintain the Society as the leading authority on deer in the UK.

For the first time this year Deer Journal news pages were also included on the BDS website as a taster of the quality of information contained within the publication. ■



Photo courtesy of George Trebinski

Genetic and ecological characteristics of invasive success in deer species

Richard Fautley is undertaking a PhD at Imperial College, London, on the various factors that may explain differences in success of establishment, and differences in rates of spread, of populations of deer introduced or reintroduced to different parts of the UK (or elsewhere in Europe). While much of this may be due to suitability of habitat or other ecological factors, he is also exploring whether genetic differences may play a part in explaining why some populations establish and spread more rapidly than others. His PhD is a collaborative project co-sponsored by the BDS.

Richard has now concluded his first year's work and finalised plans for future directions to explore. He has completed a desk-analysis of the ecological factors (and life-history factors) which seem to be associated with successful establishment where deer are introduced into a non-native area. He has also prepared a new phylogeny of the Cervidae (based on genetic material lodged in the public domain - GenBank - and some new analyses of his own). These will be being submitted for publication shortly - and he will subsequently be preparing a more populist account for 'Deer'.

He has assembled a series of samples for DNA analysis from different populations of roe deer in England (sampled from populations known to derive from separate introductions in different places



Photo courtesy of Tracey Rich



Photo courtesy of George Trebilski

which seem to be expanding at different rates) and will be subjecting these to genetic analysis, with a view to seeing how rates of spread relate both to ecological and genetic differences between the areas. To increase statistical power he has also been obtaining data (and DNA samples) from introduced populations in other parts of Europe, including Spain, Italy, France and Sweden for comparison. He will also seek samples from Germany and Austria (the purported sources of origin of roe introduced to England) again for comparative purposes, to see how much English populations differ from the supposed origin.

Richard has also compiled (part of) a sample set for Chinese Water deer in the UK. Here - while also looking for factors associated with spread (or lack of it) - he also wants to compare UK populations with those in China and Korea - and he has made some useful contacts in China with a view to exchanging data in due course. This is of significance given the recent steady decline of Chinese Water deer within their native range and the fact that the UK now supports a very significant part of the world population of this species.

In addition to collecting samples from the Roe and Chinese Water deer populations, Richard is also collecting samples from Sika - since this is a clear case where some populations are expanding fast (Purbeck, the Somerset/Devon borders, Argyll, Sutherland, etc) while others are not (Bowland, New Forest, Morar). A comparison of why there is such a difference is clearly fundamental to his overall project and Richard has been in contact with stalkers in these different areas to arrange samples for analysis.

A full genetic analysis will then be undertaken with a view to completing this exciting project which will tell us a lot about the factors affecting the establishment and spread of deer in new areas.

Game as food: game and sustainable development in rural communities

Nottingham University postgraduate researcher Graham Riminton has completed his third year of research sponsored by the British Deer Society and the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust and is currently writing up his thesis whilst working on the Deer Initiative East of England Wild Venison Project.

His update follows:

Wild Venison Networks

Investigating the rural and commercial networks involving wild venison meat on its journey from woodland or field to the final customer's plate means interacting with and participating in its complex supply chains.

This encompasses individual stalkers (who may also be divided into many different categories), individual landowners, large landowners' enterprises and clubs who cooperate with or organise stalkers, as well as small dealers in game, large Approved Game Handling Establishments and restaurants, butchers and supermarkets who distribute the product to final customers. This is in addition to the policymakers in organisations dealing with all aspects of the network.

The landowner is pivotal to how both deer management and the venison food chain operate.



Deer management is often motivated by the desire to reduce the negative impacts that high densities of deer have on both human and natural systems. In addition the potential income from letting shooting or taking paying guests out shooting can be significant in some cases. The most numerous actors in the system, the stalkers, also shape how the chains operate. Many networks are 'truncated', as a recreational stalker may not take many animals per year; only sufficient to keep his home freezer stocked for his own and his friends' and family's requirements. Others both provide for themselves and sell on to local outlets or dealers. Another group may work alongside professional stalkers to deliver a cull plan for the landowner, who has an arrangement to sell carcasses into the distribution network, whilst in some areas a group of landowners can agree to work together to achieve the planned cull and to cover their costs by cooperating with marketing initiatives to gain added value.

As the majority of stalkers are in the first instance 'recreational', a cull in sufficient numbers to reverse the trend of negative impacts may not be possible. Where landowners leave the stalkers to set cull targets it is human nature that individuals tailor the target to suit their own motivations and the time they can devote to stalking. Resources are also a key factor. Once an individual stalker's freezer is full what happens to the next carcass? The smaller species like Muntjac and Roe can be kept in domestic or 'retail' size fridges. Larger beasts and greater numbers require investment in 'commercial' sized larders/chillers. With the investment required for stalking itself (e.g. firearms and related equipment, licences, training and travelling) and paying for permissions, costs are already high. Perhaps more significantly it is also a time-expensive activity. Many hours can be spent simply stalking. With success comes the responsibility of removing the carcass from the field in a safe and hygienic manner, a further drain on time. That process can be made simpler and

easier with equipment such as winches, quad bikes or mules; in turn making more time available for stalking. Once the deer has been extracted, then comes the added chore and expense of getting the carcass to the dealer. As businessmen, quite rightly the dealers' prime motivation is to make a profit in an environment where there are fluctuations in supply and demand. The level of that market is set by the price of imported farmed venison, mostly from New Zealand. It is understandable that stalkers see the market in a different way. Many stalkers and landowners express a disconnection with, and a lack of trust in, the current system. They feel that they are being 'ripped off' when they see the price of venison in large retail outlets. They are critical of dealers who encourage head/neck shooting by reducing the price paid for chest shot meat taking no account of the costs of setting up and running an AGHE, the cost of complying with regulations, the proportion of good venison taken from each carcass, dealing with the waste content of each carcass, the variability in supply and quality and the necessity of meeting customer demands.

When considering the market for wild venison, the consumer may be influenced by the nature of the business. In comparison to the 'wild' food generated by driven bird shooting the rationale for culling and consuming deer can be presented more positively. There is evidence of growing and expanding populations and the negative impacts that result, so the need for management can be more easily explained and accepted. Where training is effective 'best practice' is followed and the process can be presented as humane. As stalkers are required to perform the gralloch and internal inspection, the next step of cutting and preparing the carcass is an easy one. Even where the resultant venison does not reach a recognisable commercial network it can be argued that stalkers do a better job at local distribution than game shooters (where the participants are reluctant to take the birds unless

already 'oven prepared'). A potential difficulty in this rationale regards the consumer perception of 'trophy hunting'; the deer stalking equivalent of 'thousand bird days'.

Consumers are more concerned with food safety. One of the reasons for large retail chains to be nervous about stocking wild venison is that the source is the 'unregulated and uncontrolled' part-time stalker. Again this heightens the need for training in best standards and investment to ensure, for example, that the chilled chain is kept intact, although the findings of this study suggest that policymakers are more concerned with a general lack of knowledge about (all forms) of venison amongst consumers. Few people know

about the qualities of venison (especially when compared directly with beef, pork or lamb), and most are likely to think that it is tough, difficult to prepare and too strong tasting. Few know about the existence of different species of deer, let alone the differences in the taste and texture characteristics. It was reported from one study that only 30% of people were aware of the potential health benefits of venison (e.g. high-protein, low fat, high omega-3 content). Overall, venison is perceived as an upmarket, expensive, niche product; features that might limit its potential market.



Photo courtesy of Stan Kemish

Despite these apparently negative perceptions it is generally agreed that with better communication about the characteristics of venison there is great potential for additional sales that could be driven by the production of everyday recognisable forms such as venison sausages and burgers, leading to more general acceptance of venison meat. Promotions in restaurants and by TV chefs have made great advances and could be continued. Wild venison sellers need to manage the expectations of retailers. Whilst their ideal may be absolute, consistent availability this is a natural system. Some seasonality is inherent in the exploitation of this resource and could be promoted as an advantage. Large suppliers could focus on control systems so that older and male animals are channelled into cuts for long cooking; younger and female animals into fast cooking cuts. Although difficult to manage, much more could be made of labelling for different species, the place of origin, its traceability, and provenance related to its 'wildness'. Deer are wild species they have 'a life', they choose what they eat, do not contain medicines or additives, and do not have to experience the stress of visiting an abattoir.

Everyone in these complex networks holds some responsibility for ensuring that the best quality standards are applied to all processes. In that way incentives can be gained by adding value to each link in the chain, making this an economic as well as an environmental sustainable harvest.

Recovery of Human DNA from Poached Deer Remains

Forensic Science has become a 'hot' area, and there has been much discussion and interest around its possible use in the fight against wildlife crime. Poaching is lucrative with low conviction rates for very simple reasons. It occurs usually at night and in some parts of the UK, particularly Scotland, over vast tracts of land away from public view. Naturally it is difficult to prove. BDS, along with Deer

Commission for Scotland (now Scottish National Heritage) and BASC has given support funding to a feasibility project coordinated by Dr Lindsey Welsh of the University of Strathclyde and Jim Govan from the Scottish Police Services Authority to ascertain whether it would be possible to find and test human DNA left by poachers (or in this case the stalkers taking part in the project), taken from the deer remains left behind after poaching. Preliminary results look interesting but full information is yet to be published.





Photo courtesy of Tracey Rich

Quantification of the role of UK deer in the epidemiology of arthropod-borne infections

Collaborative research continued into 2010 involving co-investigators Dr Silvia Alonso, Royal Veterinary College London; Dr Richard Birtles, Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Liverpool; and Dr Chris Oura, Institute for Animal Health, Pirbright with specific epidemiological investigations covering:

- **Silvia Alonso, RVC:** Lyme Disease emergence in the UK - the role of wild deer
- **Richard Birtles, University of Liverpool:** Quantifying the role of deer in tick-borne fever and red water fever transmission in the UK
- **Chris Oura, IAH:** Assessing exposure to bluetongue virus among the UK deer population

Sample collection funded by the British Deer Society and coordinated by the Deer Initiative with assistance from BDS stalkers and Forestry Commission culls resulted in good sample sizes - over 800 bloods were received by Silvia Alonso. Blood testing at Liverpool and London continued with work in varying stages of completion. Research results are in the process of being submitted for publication and peer review.

Genetic Research into Origins of British Roe Deer

PhD student Karis Baker's research into Temporal and Spatial Population Genetics of Roe Deer in the UK was completed, written up and her thesis submitted in the autumn of 2010. Karis was the first Whitehead PhD student, jointly funded by the Society, at Durham University.

Scientific Conferences and Seminars

Scientific events are an excellent way of sharing information with others working in the field, whilst simultaneously disseminating knowledge to a wider public. BDS is fortunate to have within its

membership a strong body of deer scientists who contribute regular papers or chair sessions at events both in the UK and abroad. Within the last couple of years BDS has hosted an Urban Deer Seminar, and supported both the European Roe Deer Conference held in Scotland and the Deer Initiative Conference in England providing various session chairs, speakers, financial and administrative support.

In the summer of 2010, the International Council of Archaeozoology's annual conference took place in Paris and BDS sponsored a session, Cervids and Society – Deer in Time and Space presented by Dr Naomi Sykes, University of Nottingham and Professor Marco Masseti, University of Florence. The Society additionally provided a bursary enabling our doctorate sponsored student Karis Baker to attend, and prepared ten posters for the event. Further afield, BDS members and scientists were to be found in Argentina at the 7th International Deer Biology Congress.

For 2011 Dr Naomi Sykes, University of Nottingham is organising an international conference: Deer and People - Past, Present and Future in collaboration with the British Deer Society to be held at the University of Lincoln in September 2011.

Future Research Programme

The Society held off funding any major new projects in 2010 whilst reviewing its research protocols and programme. Among various outcomes, it was agreed by the Board to set up a corresponding committee of scientists under the Chairmanship of the Society's Honorary Advisors Professor Rory Putman and Peter Greene to make recommendations and assist the Board with its research choices. Future deer science projects will thus be planned and prioritised more effectively. Research can involve significant cost and it is important that the Society's limited budget is used to best effect whether this involves funding in partnership with other bodies or sourcing additional grants to support worthy projects. ■



training

Training continues to be an important and significant part of the British Deer Society's work particularly with regard to deer management activities, fulfilling as it does essential elements of the Society's charitable remit concerning deer welfare.

Whilst most training activities are targeted toward the training of stalkers and deer managers, the Society is always looking to increase its training activities and diversify into other deer related interests. An example of this was the production and launch of a BDS venison cooking DVD in Scotland at the 2010 Scottish Game Fair. This features well-known speciality cook Nichola Fletcher, and the four-hour, double DVD set covers detailed demonstrations of different recipes plus tips on the use of various venison cuts. The DVD is crammed with simple and useful hints which leave the viewer wondering 'why didn't I think of that?'

The Society's earlier DVDs covering gralloching, skinning and butchering continued to sell well throughout 2010 and remain of particular interest to new entrants to the deer management scene.



In December the Society's on-line Deer Stalking Certificate (DSC) 1 training course was closed to new subscribers. First introduced in August 2003, the distance learning programme was provided via the Lantra website and one of its key attractions was the availability of working through the DSC1 syllabus without committing four days to a traditional course with its associated travelling and accommodation costs. Originally produced by Sparsholt College in collaboration with BDS and gifted to the Society, the Distance Learning Course was constructed when internet access was achieved through slow speed 'dial up'. The advent of faster internet services, ability to carry larger data sets, and the limitations of editing the existing product eventually signalled an end to its useful life. Extensive work was carried out by the training department throughout 2010 to create a suitable replacement. The new product, Ultimate Deer Data, will be available in 2011 and not only replace Distance Learning but also take computer-based learning to levels not previously seen in the deer industry.

Traditional DSC1 courses continued to remain the highest single activity within the department and during the year 24 courses were delivered throughout the UK, attracting several hundred students. In addition to students benefiting from



four-day courses delivered by the department's team of Course Managers, many more individuals opted for DSC1 assessment only with the Society, contributing to the national total of 1000+ individuals achieving a DSC1 award.



The Society ran two of its 'flagship' Deer Management Courses during the year at Catterick in the north and Elveden in the south east. Backed by Lantra (the nationally recognised awarding body for the land-based and environmental sector) as an Accredited Award, the course focuses entirely on deer management (rather than stalking) and teaches a wide range of subjects including census, population dynamics, economics, ageing, forestry and park deer management. The Elveden course featured a particularly interesting Elveden Estate tour conducted by Forestry Manager Jim Rudderham, explaining how the estate integrates its deer management policies within a high intensive farming industry over an area of 22,000 acres.

The Society is committed to supporting Deer Management Qualifications Ltd (DMQ) principally through its role as an approved assessment centre. The Society's Training Manager has a place on the small DMQ Quality and Assurance Group (QAG) and had a particularly busy year supporting that group. In addition to a review of the DSC1 assessment question bank involving over 100 changes, DMQ introduced a new DSC2 portfolio and made changes to the accredited witness structure supporting the award. This necessitated a re-briefing of all accredited witnesses to achieve 'approved' status and approximately 500 individuals were given a two hour presentation on system updates and the finer points of their roles as approved witnesses. Our BDS Training Manager and Nick Lane from the BASC assessment centre (a member of QAG and a DMQ external verifier) spent several weekends delivering the updates throughout mainland Britain and Northern Ireland.

In keeping with the Society's policy of delivering continuing professional development (CPD), all assessment centre staff including administrators, assessors and internal verifiers attended an update meeting in June. Where applicable Course Managers attended first aid courses to renew qualifications and BDS Lantra approved instructors renewed their annual Lantra instructor qualifications.

Development work progressed steadily on new training initiatives during the year in preparation for introduction in 2011.

Training support continued to BDS branches throughout the year with assistance in preparing presentations, range approvals and other activities when required. The training department also continued supporting the Society at several country shows during 2010 most notably the Scottish Game Fair and the CLA Game Fair. ■



how we work

Organisational Structure of the Society

During 2010 the Society's Trustee/Directors held two formal full day meetings and two virtual/conference call day meetings to set and direct Society policies. Much routine work was also conducted by the Board throughout the year by email.

The Management Team completed another full year of activity under the Chairmanship of the General Manager. The members consisted of Mark Nicolson, Society Chairman; Philip Mackenzie, Treasurer and Financial Director; Sarah Stride, General Manager and Company Secretary; David Goffin, Training Manager; David Kenyon, Head of Communications and Marketing; John Bruce, Area Director for Scotland (acting); and Phillip Rosslee, Finance Officer. All Trustee/Directors are ex officio members and invited to attend meetings and on occasion individual Trustee/Directors contributed specialist input to these meetings.

Management meetings were held regularly and, during 2010, the majority were virtual meetings, with a number of single and multiple agenda item meetings conducted this way. Budgets and a Business Plan with quarterly targets were produced for 2011 with work in progress subject to continual review. New initiatives were developed through the year.

Risk Management Policy

The Society's Trustee/Directors have always taken a responsible view of risk management, and in accordance with the provisions of SORP 2005 (Statement of Recommended Practice) Accounting for Charities, have every year, as a matter of course, examined the major risks to which they consider the Society might be exposed, reviewing and putting in place systems and procedures to manage and mitigate them.

In 2010, the Board adopted more formal and methodical procedures to record the risks in a register under which Likelihood and Severity of risk were assessed on a 1 to 5 scale (low to high). By multiplying scores together, risks are assessed from high impact/high likelihood through to low impact/low likelihood so allowing the Society to prioritise its approach to risk management. The register is reviewed at meetings throughout the year

FUNDRAISING

Despite the universal problems experienced by all organisations in fundraising as belt tightening continued, BDS was able to mount a number of successful fundraising initiatives. All BDS projects require financial support and often initiatives and commitments have to be undertaken with little or no chance of recovering expenditure. It is recognised that delivering our core messages costs money.

Internet Auction

The Society ran its annual internet-based auction of promises and donated lots in May. The bulk of the lots were donated by generous members and supporters based in the rural community and reflecting the interests of both the donors and many of our own members. During 2010 over 100 lots were donated and a total of £20,000 raised. This was down on the previous year, but in the circumstances an extremely good result. All funds raised during this auction are ring-fenced for the delivery of our education and research programmes.

Draws

Three rifles from RPA International were featured in the main BDS draw for 2010. RPA fielded a technical team on the Society's stand at the CLA Game Fair and helped considerably in boosting ticket sales. The winter draw featured a range of goods from Swarovski Optik, Chewton Glen Luxury Hotel and Spa, Clock House Furniture, Greenfields of Salisbury, The Present Finder, K&A Services, and Simon Trinder.

Stalker's Dream Ticket Draw

This year BDS trialled a limited ticket high value draw with the opportunity to stalk for four different species on private estates in the South of England - Englefield, Beaulieu, Middleton and Hamptworth. All the stalking was for cull animals as part of the estates' management plans and tickets proved extremely popular. The Society plans to repeat the draw again in 2011 when 100 £50 tickets will again be available.

Online Shop

Sales continued steadily through the online shop and at Shows with membership, deer management and stalking items all popular purchases as well as the more traditional books, DVDs and membership goods.

Following review of the product range, a smaller, more focused range of Essentials stalking items was sourced. It was recognized that there are many competitors in the field, some with huge and often confusing arrays of kit available. With many deals around, some better than others, it was agreed that a relatively simple 'starter' kit for a new recruit to deer management would be useful. Sales are steady.

Insurance

In 2009 the Society acted to improve the cover offered by its optional Non Professional Stalking Insurance policy. This has been further developed in 2010 and the Society is actively seeking further enhancements in 2011 including the search for an alternative broker to give us a coordinated

package across the full suite of policies. Deer welfare is in many cases achieved through sound deer management and the Society believes that a contribution to facilitate good practice and offer a specific insurance policy must have a positive effect on that outcome.

Trusts

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

Legacies

Legacies were gratefully received from the estate of David Bowser and Miss Cynthia Drewery.



Photo courtesy of Sue Westlake Guy

how we work

AWARDS

The Jim Taylor Page Trophy for 2010 was awarded to well known wildlife artist and BDS member Elizabeth Halstead who for many years was active both as a member and committee member, latterly in South West Scotland. Elizabeth for some years exhibited her paintings on the BDS stand at key shows, where she could be found sitting at her easel working on her latest oil. She has generously donated several paintings and prints to the Society over the years and her work has regularly featured on Society Christmas Cards.

The Jim Taylor Page Award in 2010 was again allocated to continuing bursaries for Deer Stalking Certificate Level 1 for young students in full time education.

The Balfour-Browne Trophy in 2010 was in the gift of Forestry Commission and awarded to the Deer Commission for Scotland.

THE BRANCHES

For the Society's Annual General Meeting in 2010, members were treated to a weekend event organized by North East Scotland Branch Chairman Doug Hieghton-Jackson assisted by Simon Blackett, Factor at Invercauld Estate. Centred on Braemar and Mar Lodge, with estate visits, a whisky distillery and Balmoral on offer, on the Saturday night over 100 people sat down to dinner followed by a speech from Andrew Thin in the spectacular Mar Ballroom.

Interestingly, we know from information given in our last BDS questionnaire in 2007 that the majority of our membership is happy to direct its support for the aims and objectives of the Society through the national body, but has little interest in making local contact. The remaining active members run the branches and/or attend branch events.

As part of the ongoing review of the branches - how they originally came into being, their current structure, usefulness and focus - the Area Chairmen and branch committees conducted a review of their own activities throughout the UK to establish what exactly is provided for members. They estimated that during the year, branch members participated in over 330 events - exhibiting at over 50 Shows, organising over 55 range day and training events, staging 15 butchery/cookery/ barbecue experiences, 15 estate/deer watching visits, 30 public speaking meetings, 80 branch committee and members evenings, numerous police support training events, humane dispatch callouts, working parties, product demonstrations, photography and much more. Quite impressive.

All this effort provided by a relatively small but determined body of volunteers is greatly appreciated by the Society. ■





Photo courtesy of Jochani Langbein

financial report

Financial Review for the Year ended 31 December 2010

The 2010 Accounts set out overleaf are the consolidated financial statements of the British Deer Society including all branches and the wholly owned subsidiary Sales and Services Ltd. The Accounts are presented in the same general format as last year. The support costs have been re-allocated over the direct charitable and other expenditure in accordance with the current best practice for Charities and SORP 2005, and on a consistent basis to previous years.

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

Sales and Services produced a small surplus for the year and this has been passed over to the Charity. The venison cooking DVD has not sold as well as had been anticipated although the two original

DVD's continue to sell well. As noted last year we terminated the agreement with our outside supplier of stalking goods and moved the sales back in house. This transition was achieved smoothly but it has resulted in a reduced range of goods for sale. These two factors have led to reduced turnover and profit but at least the final result was positive.

Charity

As reported last year the Charity Accounts now incorporate the training activities of the Society. We continue to account for training as a separate division for internal purposes and I have to report that training has recorded a loss this year owing to reduced demand for courses and low uptake on some of the courses that were run. Having said that the Charity has recorded an overall surplus for the year and training is a very important part of the operation of the Charity as it remains a steady source of new members. Overall membership numbers are holding up well in these difficult economic times and I believe our retention of members is better than that of some similar organisations. In overall terms the Charity remains financially strong and the Board is currently looking at new areas of research into which the surplus can be best utilised. On the training front we have taken on a new assistant, Martin Hailstone, who will be of great help to Dave Goffin.

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

Philip Mackenzie

Treasurer



Photo courtesy of Rob Moon



Photo courtesy of Stan Kemish

Financial Report 2010

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

Our Auditors, Messrs Fletcher & Partners, have given an unqualified audit report on the full Statutory Accounts, which were approved by the Directors (who also act as trustees for the charitable activities of the British Deer Society) on 9 March 2011. They will be presented for approval of the members at the AGM on 15 May 2011. The full Statutory Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005) Accounting by Charities.

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

Signed on behalf of the Board
Philip Mackenzie
Treasurer

9 March 2011

financial report

Group Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 December 2010

	Total 2010 £	Total 2009 £
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds		
Voluntary Income		
Members Subscriptions and Donations	358,915	350,088
Legacies and Specific Donations	5,993	6,000
Grants and Sponsorship	8,043	14,784
Total Voluntary Income	372,951	370,872
Charitable Activities for Generating Funds:		
Fundraising Events, Auctions & Draws	46,923	42,704
Trading Income	96,338	119,917
Sundry Income	75	834
Total Charitable Activities Income	143,336	163,455
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities		
Training Income	146,180	178,132
Branch Activities	34,098	28,616
Investment Income	6,898	7,891
Total Incoming Resources	703,463	748,966
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Costs of Generating Funds		
Direct Costs of Fundraising Events	40,553	30,136
Membership, Marketing and Data Management	65,795	74,274
Trading	64,828	79,157
	171,176	183,567
Charitable Activities		
Research and Public Education	54,852	63,261
Technical and Advisory	96,485	103,255
Media and Publications	79,235	77,013
Training	163,187	173,366
Other Activities	93,570	86,644
	487,329	503,539
Governance Costs	20,412	22,596
Total Resources Expended	678,917	709,702
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources Before Transfers	24,546	39,264
Transfers Between Funds	-	-
Net Incoming Resources After Transfers	24,546	39,264
Net Movement in Funds	24,546	39,264
BALANCES AT 1 JANUARY 2010	464,302	425,039
BALANCES AT 31 DECEMBER 2010	488,848	464,302

Group Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2010

	Total 2010 £	Total 2009 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible Assets	104,952	94,107
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	24,665	17,144
Development Costs	20,940	18,595
Debtors	33,053	27,830
Loans to Subsidiaries	-	-
Deposits with Banks	375,000	-
Cash at Bank and In Hand	131,752	479,298
Total Current Assets	585,410	542,867
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	159,158	120,457
NET CURRENT ASSETS	426,252	422,410
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	531,204	516,517
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due after more than one year	42,356	52,215
NET ASSETS	488,848	464,302
Representing:		
INCOME FUNDS		
Restricted Funds	157,983	151,924
Unrestricted Funds:		
Designated Funds	28,785	28,703
General Fund	302,080	283,675
	330,865	312,378
TOTAL FUNDS	488,848	464,302

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

We have examined the summarised accounts for the year ended 31 December 2010.

Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Auditor

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

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

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised accounts are consistent with the full annual consolidated accounts of The British Deer Society for the year ended 31 December 2010 and comply with the applicable requirements of section 427 of the Companies Act 2006, and the regulations made thereunder.

Fletcher & Partners

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors

Salisbury, 24 March 2011

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



acknowledgements

AUCTION & DRAW DONORS

Alan Shannahan
Andrew Mackenzie
Blackmore Vale Shooting and
Conservation Society
Camerson Manson
Capreolus
Charles Fenn
Charles Smith-Jones
Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa
Clockhouse Furniture
Coch-Y-Bonddu Books
Colin Dunton
Colin Mackie
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Derek Stimpson
Dieter Dent
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Dr John Fletcher
Euston Estate- Duke of Grafton
Forest4wheeldrive
Gap 180 Woodland
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Gerber UK
Glyn Ingram
Graham Downing
Greenfields Gun Shop Salisbury
Hockham Deer Management
Group

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Holkham Estate
Holland & Holland
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Jan Andrews
Jo Jo Glass Design
John Bruce
John Fletcher
John Johnson Digitalwildcams
John Shields
John Thomas
K&A Services
KRD Wildlife Productions
Lee Dart
Lethen Estate
Lonsdale Estates
Maitland Rankin
Major Philip Hope-Cobbold
Marco Pierre White
Mark Nicolson
Michael Bruce
Michael Strang Steel
Mike Bagnowicz
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Paul Kenyon
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Roddy Ando
Roger Wadsworth
Ross Minerva
Roy Viccari
RPA International Rifles
Shampers Restaurant
Silky Fox Saws
Sir Andrew Walker-Okeover
Sir Edward Dashwood
Sparsholt College
Swarovski Optik
The Beaulieu Estate
The Earl of Dalhousie
The Essex Shooting School

The Englefield Estate
The Game & Wildlife
Conservation Trust
The Hamptworth Estate & the
Shoot Lodge
The Invercauld Estate
The Lonsdale Estates
The Marquess Of Aberdeen
The Middleton Estate
The Present Finder
The Rutland Group
The Viscount Cowdray
Tim Cooper
Tim Weston
Todd Beardsworth
Tony Cook
Tony Dalby-Welsh
Trevor Hughes
Victor Beamish
Will Browne-Swinburne
York Guns

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David Kirk
Donations in memory of
John Roffey
Estate of the late David Kirk
Estate of the late David Bowser
Estate of C M Brewery
West Hove Terrors
CIC Head Measurers
The Bavarian Mountain Hound
Society of GB
Peter Donnelly
Andrew Mineyko
Raymond Bulbeck
Rhian Dore
Chris J Manning
David Knight

**Grateful thanks to
these donors listed
and to the many
more who support
BDS.**



Photo courtesy of Stan Kemish

Patron

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

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President	Sir Michael Strang Steel Bt DL
Chairman	Mark Nicolson
Vice Chairman	Roger Wadsworth
Treasurer	Philip MacKenzie
English/Welsh Area Chair	Hugh Davis
Scottish Area Chair	John Bruce
	Roddy Ando
	Will Browne-Swinburne
	Dominic Griffith
	Dorothy Ireland
	Ray Mears
	<i>(Appointed May 2010)</i>
	Maitland Rankin
	Charles Smith-Jones
	John Thomas
	Andrew Wilson
	<i>(Retired May 2010)</i>

Branches:

England

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

Scotland:

South East Scotland, Central, Highlands, North East Scotland, South West Scotland

Northern Ireland

Services (Defence Deer Management)

Honorary Advisors:

Veterinary

Peter Green BVSc, Cert EO, MRCVS

Professor R J Putman

Wilsons, Solicitors

Scientific

Legal

Staff:

General Manager

Sarah Stride

P/A, Sales Administrator

Sue Varvill

Head of Communications & Marketing

David Kenyon

UK Training Manager

Dave Goffin

Training Coordinator

Cheryl Seymour

Finance Officer

Phillip Rosslee

Membership Secretary

Annie Nadin

Vice Presidents:

Major The Hon PC Baillie

Major CS Kilpatrick BSc (For)

JA Willett FRGS, FZS

Fellows:

Raymond Chaplin BSc, MIBiol, FZS

John Childs

Dorothy Ireland

Jeanette Lawton

VJA Manton MRCVS, FIBiol

Hugh Oliver-Bellasis, FRAG

Richard Prior CBiol, MIBiol, MIEEM

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JA Willett, FRGS, FZS



The British Deer Society



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CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Registered as a charity in England and Wales,
registered no. 1069663
Registered as a charity in Scotland,
registered no. SCO37817

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