

volume is scheduled for April 1998. Julianne Evans has produced the August *Bulletin*, her first as Editor, on schedule. Gerard Boere thanked David Stroud for all the work he has done as Editor of the Bulletin, especially for bringing the Bulletin back on schedule and for improving the quality. The report was accepted.

### 8. Project Co-ordinator's Report.

Ole Thorup reported that the Kentish Plover project is almost finished, but that there is a funding problem and therefore it is not known when it will be published. The Inland Wader Counts project needs people-power. The Red Knots in South America project has been expanding: there has been a successful international expedition along the South and North American shoreline with a huge input from volunteers, but overall funding is still a problem. The project on Breeding Waders has made some good progress. The first phase will be to update the population estimates for Europe: this will be discussed further at a workshop during the conference. There is a good network of national co-ordinators but no National Co-ordinator for Iceland yet. At the beginning of 1997 a new project was proposed by Eddy Wymenga (the Netherlands): the Ruff spring migration project. Unfortunately it was proposed too late for full circulation of details in time for spring 1997. Therefore it was decided to make 1997 a preliminary year to start the project officially as a WSG project in spring 1998. A new project with WSG involvement, the Non-estuarine Coastal Waterfowl Survey (NEWS) will cover many parts of the European coast. The report was accepted.

### 9. Survey Co-ordinator's Report

No report was presented.

### 10. WSG-Wetlands International Liaison Officer's Report.

Nick Davidson reported that the formal link with Wetlands International, in which the WSG acts as Wetlands International's Specialist Group for waders, is valuable to both groups. In September 1996 Wetlands International moved from Slimbridge in the UK to Wageningen in the

Netherlands. The main current task for the WSG in its specialist group role is to help provide new global population estimates for waders: anyone who can help with information on a species or a group of wader species should contact Nick. One of the good things in filling the gaps in knowledge on recent population numbers has been the successful 1997 Mauritania expedition. The urgently needed redevelopment of the Wader Database (managed for Wetlands International by IBN-DLO in the Netherlands) is now progressing through work by Lieuwe Haanstra at IBN. Anyone with midwinter count data to contribute is encouraged to contact Lieuwe. A functional Wader Database is an essential precursor to the production of an "African-Eurasian Wader Flyway Atlas", a project for which the WSG in its specialist group role has been asked to develop a proposal. Nick Davidson is moving in September to work at Wetlands International and will be stand down as Liaison Officer to avoid conflict of interest. David Stroud has been co-opted by the Executive Committee to replace him from 1998. The report was accepted.

### 11. Elections to the Executive Committee

The following were elected for a further term of office on the Executive Committee:

Petra de Goeij - General Secretary

Julianne Evans - Editor

Pablo Canevari - Committee member

Hermann Hötter - Committee member

### 12. Subscription rates for 1998

An unchanged subscription rate for 1998 in English pounds was proposed and accepted. The Treasurer noted that there may need to be changes in the membership fees in some foreign currencies due to recent major fluctuations in exchange rates.

### 13. Future Conferences

The 1998 meeting will be held in October in Hungary (at the north-west edge of the Balaton Lake), hosted by Gyorgy Szimuly. The 1999 meeting will almost certainly be in France. An official offer has been received from the BTO in the UK for the year 2000: the Committee will be accepting this offer. It was suggested that this 2000 meeting should somehow celebrate the millenium. One idea suggested during the meeting was to organise an extra day with the theme: "What has happened in Wader Research over the years? What will happen in the future?" There will be an extra meeting in August 1998 in South Africa connected with the IOC. There are thoughts also about an extra spring meeting in 1999 on the east coast of the United States.

The Chairman closed the meeting.

## OFFICER'S REPORTS FOR 1996

The following Officers' reports were not received in time for the last issue of the Bulletin:

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Not yet received

*Gerard Boere*

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

The total membership of the Wader Study Group at 31 December 1996 was 628 a slight increase on 1995. However, our aim of a 750 membership is still some way off.

As stressed last year in the Chairman's Report, all members can assist the group to grow by persuading colleagues and friends to join. If all members joined at least one new member, the financial base of the Group would allow us to consider a much wider range of activities.

A Group Homepage has been created on the World Wide Web and we expected to develop this facility in the future, making it more interactive with perhaps colour marking sightings requests and the recent publications database being made available. Anyone who has any ideas for the future development of our Web site, please contact me on [rodwest@thenet.co.uk](mailto:rodwest@thenet.co.uk).

Rodney West

## **1997 WSG Annual Conference, Vester Vedsted, Denmark**

The Annual Conference was a great success. Ole and his colleagues worked very hard to make it a highly enjoyable event and the unusually hot weather gave the whole weekend a holiday atmosphere. Many thanks are due to all involved.

### **HOW WE FELT IN DENMARK THIS YEAR**

It was the first ever visit to Denmark for me and the other Hungarians. After sleeping in the car at the German part of the Wadden Sea, we drove towards Vester Vedsted, Denmark to participate in the Annual Conference of the Wader Study Group. We felt very tired but we soon forgot the long, tiring journey after a fine shower and a more delicious dinner.

I was so excited for the next few days because all the guys in the group were very kind to me and so cheerful, like me. I was surprised in 1992, when I firstly attended the AGM in Hajduszoboszlo, Hungary. I thought that every participant would be a strict-looking man without smiles and jokes. Here are some examples of the big contrast between this idea and

what I actually saw. The Chairman, Gerard Boere, is always making excellent jokes, such as during his welcome and also during his presentation on the Slender-billed Curlew Expedition "*There are no roads, there are only directions*". We have other excellent members like Nick Davidson (he looked wonderful on the sandy Danish beach during the excursion this year). Never forget the smile of Julianne Evans. Anyone who heard her laugh could identify her among a huge number of people. *[I was too vain to edit this out! Ed.]*

When I saw the members of the Executive Committee outside the conference venue, I realized that it would soon be time for me to introduce myself to the public. I became a little bit nervous thinking about this. I have never spoken to such a large number of people in English before. On Friday evening I had a long discussion with Bob Loos and Petra de Goeij on the coming year's conference, since BirdLife Hungary is going to organise it. I felt a little bit easier during this time, with the help of some bottles of Carlsberg and Tuborg Beer, when another familiar guy appeared. He was Theunis Piersma. He had a simple question "*Would you, Gyorgy, be the chairperson for the first session tomorrow?*" It was after I had driven more than 1600 km from Hungary to Denmark. What could I say? In the end, there was no problem with this and it was even useful to see people from the stage.

The next big step for me was on Saturday, when I was asked by the Chairman to invite all the participants to attend the AGM in Hungary in 1998. Rodney West kindly asked me to provide a wine tasting in Hungary. Be sure, Rodney!

It was a great surprise for all the Hungarians to see how kind and laid-back the Danish people are. The conference in Vester Vedsted, Denmark was organised very professionally. Everybody could see that it had taken a long time to prepare and was hard work to provide such a good service during the week-end. Ole Thorup looked very tired at the end of the day. His colleagues was excellent guys. I think everybody

should say a big "Thank-you" for this hard work.

Of course, we tried to study this well-organized conference because next year we have to do one a bit better in Hungary. I can tell you nothing now except come to Keszthely, Hungary in the middle of October 1998, and enjoy a week-end together with these funny, kind people, the members of the Wader Study Group. See you all next year.

Gyorgy Szimuly

## **INTERNATIONAL WADER STUDY GROUP MEETING IN SOUTH AFRICA, 12-15 AUGUST 1998**

A special meeting of the International Wader Study Group will be held at the South African Museum, Cape Town, in association with the 22nd International Ornithological Congress. The IWSG meeting is from lunch time on Wednesday 12 August to the evening of Thursday 13 August, with a full day excursion to Langebaan Lagoon on Friday 14 August. A Curlew Sandpiper workshop will be held on Saturday 15 August.

Registration for the IOC takes place on Sunday 16 August, with the opening ceremonies on 17 August. Durban is a two-hour flight from Cape Town, and there are several flights per day.

Any delegates arriving in Cape Town on flights on 11 or 12 August will be met at Cape Town International Airport, provided we know times and flight numbers.

The most cost-effective way of making flight bookings (certainly on flights within South Africa and probably on flights to South Africa), hotel accommodation in Cape Town (as well as in Durban), arranging car hire, etc, will be through the professional conference organizers for the IOC, Turners Travel with whom the IWSG meeting is