

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Leicestershire Wildfowlers' Association, the BASC centenary, and the 21st anniversary of the LWA's Priory Water Wildfowl Project.

Back in the late 1950s there was a group of Leicestershire wildfowlers who used to meet up on a Friday night in Doug Poli's shop in Marfitt Street, Leicester. The shop sold fishing tackle, electrical goods and shotguns. Among the fowlers was Frank Wildman. When up at the coast with a pal he met two fowlers from Doncaster who said they had just set up their own wildfowling club and that contact with WAGBI should be made. Frank and his friends had their own worries that increasing restrictions could put paid to the sport that they loved. They decided that Leicestershire wildfowlers should also get together to defend their interests. Frank put an advert in the *Leicester Mercury*, notices were placed in the national sporting press and adverts were placed in a couple of shop windows inviting interested sportsmen to a meeting. He had expected to host it at his home but the response was so overwhelming that in November 1957 they held their first meeting at the *Fish and Quart* in Churchgate, Leicester. A Colonel Vallance from WAGBI came down and a local committee was formed with Richard Bream as Chairman, a position he was to hold for 34 years. Thus, the LWA was born. The Association was affiliated to WAGBI and later, in 1963, the LWA hosted their annual dinner where it was agreed that the LWA would observe WAGBI's full membership rule without dissent. This pioneering decision was to give WAGBI increased membership and provide them with a valuable injection of funds. The lead was to be followed by many other clubs and syndicates and it underlies the strong affinities between the LWA and WAGBI/BASC. In 1990 Tony Dakin took over the chairmanship, a position he was to occupy for another 17 years so that in the first 50 years the LWA had just two chairmen. Tony Dakin also continued with the onerous duties of Hon. Sec. at the same time. Today the club contains many long serving members who are still active in the club; they include Harold Hall the membership Secretary and Geoffrey Grant whose long term as Speaker Finder is only just coming to an end. Long may such examples of dedication to the sport and the encouragement of others continue within the LWA.

On the 27th of September 2008 the LWA celebrated the 50th anniversary at a lunchtime reception at the Association's Priory Water, the location of its highly successful Wildfowl Conservation Project. It was a perfect autumn day, the early morning mist cleared and in the background we could hear the music of wildfowl on the reserve. Once the guests had arrived we settled down in the marquee to be welcomed by new LWA Chairman Anthony (Tony) Warner who asked the LWA President Lord Crawshaw to open the meeting.

The reception was held jointly with BASC and formed part of the Centenary celebrations. Coming from Marford Mill Headquarters we were joined on the occasion by BASC Chief Executive John Swift and Simon Hamlyn Director of Operations.

Steve Bloomfield (Midland Regional Director) and Liz Lamb (Regional Officer) joined us from Doveridge. The reception celebrated not only 50 years of the LWA and the BASC Centenary but we were also there to mark the 21st Anniversary of the Priory Water Wildfowl Project.

Following Lord Crawshaw's opening remarks, John Swift began by emphasising the strong bonds between the LWA and BASC and complimented the Association on its achievements which he said gave it iconic status.

Richard Bream described the history of the club from its formation until the present day. The list of achievements was very impressive. Over the last fifty years the club has provided its members with inland wildfowling, duck shooting on the Ouse Washes and fowling on the East coast. Vermin shoots have provided members with pigeon shooting at a large number of venues in and around Leicestershire. There are sections devoted to ferreting, gundog training and fishing. The Association started a clay shooting ground with a small bore rifle range. The clay ground at Kibworth is still very successful although no longer owned by the LWA. On top of this the Association holds monthly meetings where distinguished members of the sporting world are invited to speak to the Association. It also has a conservation programme that is second to none.

Tim Goodlife is the current Chairman of the LWA's Conservation Committee. He described the remarkable conservation activities of the club. In the early days these included the rearing of 38,000 duck that were released on sanctuary waters throughout Leicestershire. For that work the Association was awarded the coveted Stanley Duncan Trophy for conservation by WAGBI. This was followed by a snipe conservation project at Grace Dieu for which the LWA was awarded a Certificate of Merit by the Laurent Perrier Champagne Awards for Wild Game Conservation. More recently conservation efforts have been directed into the running of the Priory Water Wildfowl Project. Back in 1987 Tony Dakin came forward with the idea that the LWA should consider a more ambitious project that would permanently benefit wildfowl. The search for a site where habitat improvement could have a lasting benefit was sought. Priory Water was made available to the LWA through the generosity of Mr Ron Jelley a Vice-President of the Association. The LWA has repaid his generosity and trust by developing one of the best wetland reserves in the Midlands. Over the years some 16,000 trees have been planted on the 200 acre site, flower meadows and reed beds have been planted, a field centre has been built and habitat improvements have been made on a grand scale. The bird list for Priory Water is remarkable and includes some 234 different types. There has been a monthly bird count at Priory Water since its earliest days and the LWA is indebted to local ornithologist Dave Gamble for carrying out this work. 61 types of bird have bred at the reserve including 17 species of waterfowl and 44 terrestrial species. Regularly breeding waterfowl include greylag and Canada geese, mallard and tufted duck; occasional breeders include gadwall and pochard; non-breeding winter visitors include wigeon, teal, goldeneye and shoveler. As well as the birds, the habitat improvements and the

increasing diversity of flowering plants have made the reserve an insect haven. No fewer than 30 species of butterfly and more than 250 species of moth have been recorded. The dragonfly species list now totals 23 with a number of significant sightings. Thus, in July 2006 130 specimens of the small red-eyed damsel fly provided the first Leicestershire record of this species. Over the years the reserve has been awarded several awards for conservation. It received The Stanley Duncan Trophy for a second time and twice it has been awarded The Ted Scruton Memorial Shield by the local branch of FWAG. In 1991 we were prize winners in the BFSS Jubilee Conservation Competition. In September 2008 the LWA were finalists in the prestigious Purdey Awards for Game and Conservation.

Speeches were rounded off by Steve Bloomfield who introduced himself as the recently appointed BASC Regional Director for the Midlands; he emphasised the services and help that they could provide from their Doveridge Headquarters.

Presentations followed with BASC Director of Operations Simon Hamlyn presenting Lord Crawshaw with a signed copy of Graham Downing's latest book. He also presented Centenary Presentation packs to a number of LWA notables. Next, LWA Patron Sir Lyonel Tollemache presented John Swift with an engraved crystal tablet inscribed with the words: *In recognition of the BASC centenary promoting wildfowling and conservation 1908-2008*. Tony Dakin was then asked to present Vice-President Ron Jelley with a crystal vase inscribed with the words: *In recognition of an outstanding contribution to wildfowling and conservation at Priory Water 1987-2008*. A presentation of a crystal book to Frank Wildman whose initiative was instrumental in setting up the LWA 50 years ago rounded off this stage of the meeting. The book was inscribed with the words: *In recognition to Frank Wildman who founded the Leicestershire Wildfowlers' Association in 1957*. On the spine of the book are engraved the words: *The Leicestershire Wildfowler by Frank Wildman*. An excellent buffet lunch followed. In the afternoon Tim Goodlife took many of those present on a tour of the reserve. Migrant hawkler dragonflies were busy and plentiful numbers of duck and geese were seen; there were significant numbers of green plover. Special and successful efforts were made to find a grass snake for one of the youngsters who was keen to see one for the first time. The walk gave a good opportunity for members of the LWA to discuss future areas of cooperation with members of BASC. Liz Lamb from Doveridge felt that Priory Water would provide an excellent site for the BASC Young Shots to learn about conservation and the identification of wildfowl. All in all an excellent day, the weather was kind to us and this historic occasion will be remembered for many years to come.

This celebratory publication will serve as reminder of what was a truly historic occasion. It includes photographs of the event and the speeches that were made.

Peter MJ Shelton
(Hon. Sec. LWA)



ARRIVAL OF THE BIG GUNS





AND KEY PLAYERS,





MEMBERS OF BASC, MEMBERS OF COUNCIL,





FERRETTERS, PIGEON SHOOTERS, ECOLOGISTS, THOROUGHLY GOOD EGGS





AND STILL THEY CAME





NOW, HAVE I REMEMBERED EVERYTHING?



Formal Proceedings

The Rt. Hon. Lord Crawshaw, President of the LWA:

Opening remarks and welcome

J. Swift M.A., M.Phil., BASC Chief Executive:

Celebrating 100 years of WAGBI and BASC

R.D.F. Bream T.D., D.L., LWA Chairman 1957-1990:

50 years of the LWA

T. Goodlife Esq., Chairman LWA Conservation Committee:

21 years of Priory Water

S. Bloomfield Esq., BASC Midland Regional Director:

BASC in the Midlands

Presentations

S. Hamlyn Esq., BASC Director of Operations:

Presentation to the LWA by BASC

Sir Lyonel Tollemache Bt., J.P., D.L. LWA, Patron:

Presentation to BASC by the LWA

A.W. Dakin Esq., LWA Chairman 1990-2007:

Presentation to LWA Vice-President R.A Jelley Esq.

A.W. Warner Esq., LWA Chairman:

Presentation to LWA Founder member F.W.Wildman Esq.

Lunch

Tour of Priory Water



Lord Crawshaw

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. It is very nice to see you all here. Thank you all for coming and supporting this big event – our triple celebrations: the centenary of BASC, 50 years of the Leicestershire Wildfowlers' Association and twenty one years of Priory Water. A big day for all of us. We are particularly pleased to welcome the representatives of BASC: John Swift, Steve Bloomfield and Simon Hamlyn; very nice of you to come today and be with us. On the home front I am very pleased to welcome Sir Lyonel Tollemache our patron, Sir Timothy Brooks who was my predecessor for many years as President, two past Chairmen - long standing Chairmen - Richard Bream and Tony Dakin, very good to see them here, Tim Goodlife Chairman of the Conservation section and of course Ron Jelley. If it wasn't for him we wouldn't be here today. I suppose wildfowling must be about the oldest and most natural form of shooting sport and we owe a great debt of thanks to the founders of WAGBI one hundred years ago and their successors at BASC for all that they have done to promote and protect our sport – all forms of shooting – against the various threats from politicians, the environment and everything else. So it is a great chance to celebrate their one hundred years. I suppose that Leicestershire isn't a county that most people would associate with wildfowling but after this year – the weather – I am not so sure. Fifty years ago a brave band of men set up the Leicestershire Wildfowling Association; I bet some of them don't think it is fifty years ago. Since then, thanks to the generosity, enthusiasm and hard work of a lot of

different people, here we are at Priory Water celebrating twenty one years since this was started all that time ago. So today is a great opportunity for us all to have a look around and see what has been going on here over the past twenty one years. We have a big team to speak to you – a heavyweight team - in the politest possible sense and I will now hand over to Tony Warner our Chairman who will now introduce the speakers.



Tony Warner

Good morning - thank you for coming. I feel very honoured today to be able to stand here in front of you, to see these two great shooting organisations come together to celebrate what I think is a great achievement – fifty years of The LWA and one hundred years of BASC. It is days like today that we should be building on and working together so that future generations in fifty years time can stand here again and celebrate their anniversaries. I would now like to hand you over to the man at the forefront of protecting our sport: Mr John Swift.



John Swift

Thank you very much. My Lord, ladies and gentlemen, I think that the Leicestershire Wildfowlers' Association have excelled on this occasion not only by staging this event but by having the speeches before rather than after lunch – it makes so much more sense to be able to enjoy the lunch! Can I assure you that the fire lit by Stanley Duncan – the fire for wildfowling - one hundred years ago still burns very brightly in BASC. And when he started one hundred years ago – because we are going through our centenary as well – he talked about the perpetuation, the purification and the preservation of wildfowling. But there are other “p”s that one could add to that: there’s provision of wildfowling opportunities, and there are people. And it is that provision of wildfowling opportunities and the people that the LWA has been strong in providing over the last fifty years certainly. And from my personal experience, the LWA, and I always refer to it as the LWA, has been what I might call an icon club within BASC and WAGBI before it – not least due to the inestimable contribution that Richard Bream made in those connections in those early days. The LWA provided both the moral and financial support to WAGBI in those early days and it would not have been WAGBI developing into BASC if ideas and the moral drive that came from people like Richard and Tony Dakin over those years – and Harold Hall who used to run the film tent on our Game Fair stand. Harold, I remember those dark and dingy corners where the flicker of the film could be seen; that really attracted people – got people involved in what



we were doing – that is just an example but in this now past year we have been running our own centenary events. It has been a time for reflection on the contributions of the type that I have just mentioned. It has been a time reigniting the enthusiasm that we feel for wildfowling and



for all forms of shooting nowadays because that is what we stand for. It is a time for refocusing on what is really important as distinct from the gossip and perhaps scaremongering that one hears about. What is the job that really needs to be done? The difference between the right and good values of our sport and those that we need to catch up on to the right level. Of true values, of truth, and above all if I can say these few words in this august gathering, to have confidence in the future. We should have confidence in the future because nowadays there are more perhaps than ever before involved in shooting sports of one kind or another. And it is not overstating it to say that clubs like the LWA with their values, their people,

Priory Water – what a lovely place – are at the centre of shooting and conservation. So, I’m delighted and privileged really to be here and speak to you on this occasion – certainly a double occasion from my point of view because together we can make things better and we can provide a legacy of real value for our children who come after us. Now, I have spoken with great seriousness at this happy lunch. This is a celebration but when I woke up this morning and I went in to my wife who was still in bed she said “What is that tie that you are wearing?” And I said “This tie was invented by Richard Bream” and I am proud and delighted to be wearing it again today. Thank you very much.

Richard Bream

My Lord President and Patrons, founder members and members of the LWA., Mr John Swift, Chief Executive of BASC formerly WAGBI and his officers; I stand before you all, somewhat flattered to be asked to speak about the last/first fifty years of the LWA.



Looking for detail I came across an article by David Grewcock about this place which he entitled 'A shining example'. I really do believe that the LWA has always been a shining example in the sporting world and why do I say that? Well hear me on. I was advised by an enthusiast in waterfowl collections of a forthcoming gathering of local wildfowlers in October 1957 in Leicester which would be chaired by the chairman of WAGBI. The wildfowlers were concerned for their sport and felt the need to close ranks and unite wherever.

This meeting was well attended and those of us willing to be labelled for service got our heads together and the scene for action was set.

Somewhat I got a request to chair that meeting which I agreed to but I really hadn't much clue what the sport was all about. I had a lot to learn and for the next thirty four years I was totally committed to the affairs of the LWA.

I may, therefore, be in a good position to make this contribution but it is absolutely impossible within five to ten minutes to give a detailed account of fifty years of endeavour; more like five days would be needed.

We formed a committee and we got down to the business fast and furiously, all of course along the lines set out by WAGBI and its affiliated club procedures, and we have never stopped following their lead ever since even though there have been differences in recent times. That's life.

We were quite clear in our aspirations to give sport whenever possible at a very reasonable price mindful of our environment and above all the setting of standards second to none and available to many of all ages, all of which have

earned us a fine reputation for reliability and respectability from the start to the present day.

These criteria by way of codes of practice were vital as we set out to provide vermin shooting for all and to solicit the support of landowners, tenants and farmers who at that time were looking for vermin control particularly as pigeon populations had doubled/trebled and the Ministry of Agriculture was offering cartridge rebate schemes. Crops needed to be protected, for the food chain was hungry. We were especially successful in his regard; support came from all over the county and much fun was had by the members. Vermin was being accounted for and an annual activity cemented; indeed one might say that this activity became the backbone of our operations – it was nothing to be fielding forty/fifty guns on a Saturday afternoon in at least five different locations and also inside and outside the shooting season. We had really made a mark and were well placed to move forward.

By 1959 membership was 126, 15s subs had risen to £1.00. A monthly bulletin provided members with information and other activities; this became the 'Pintail' journal. By 1963 membership was three hundred and we had moved our clay pigeon friendly meetings from the butts of the Six Hills Rifle Range to a disused railway station at Halstead but this was not to be, so we purchased a six acre field on the A6 at Kibworth and here we progressed very quickly indeed. Clay shooting was of great national interest by then and we soon built a clubhouse, purchased another six acres next door and encouraged rifle enthusiasts by building a twenty five metre small bore range to boot.

However, by the 1980s the running of the same was becoming too much for the ever willing and fewer helpers, the legal requirements for competition shooting, not to mention health and safety, so we sold the complex to a member who was enjoying national prowess with his over and under.

In the meantime many other activities were taking place. Duck rearing was the 'in thing' within WAGBI and we very quickly set up our own scheme and over the years we had ringed and released many thousands of mallard and others onto local waters. This earned us much respect and also



the Stanley Duncan Trophy for Conservation. Our best return came from Seyscar Island in the Gulf of Leningrad.

Some members had dogs and very soon we were into dog training courses, tests and even trials, being founder members of the East Midlands Dog Training Club.

We had set up a fine library in a local gunsmiths, this was a membership attraction and was very popular, books being taken out and returned at monthly meetings.

Rabbit control by means of ferreting was very popular with so much ground at our disposal and still is today.

Membership continued to grow and by the late 1970s and '80s we had to cap membership at 500 and introduce a waiting list. The Hon. Secretary could not cope happily beyond that. Much activity was taking place outside of the monthly meetings and it seemed we really had achieved an enviable record of endeavour. Those committee members who were responsible for all such activities had built up a big responsibility for themselves and encouragement from the top was vital. We have run a Junior Section for decades but it has always been a struggle – so much being on offer to the young these days they do not need to take anything too seriously.

Always looking for new input activities we tried leasing of would-be rough shooting with game shooting possibilities but always came unstuck in the overall management of same so this facet was put to bed in the knowledge however that members still had ample opportunity to wildfowl using our joint wash at Earith and because of our membership of other joint council clubs on the Wash and elsewhere being full members of BASC.

Special activities abounded thus spreading the good name of the LWA. Education was always a by-word and proficiency award schemes in the art of gun handling were popular and of course Kibworth was a Mecca for such activities and also the opportunity to enhance the exceptionally fine accord we've always had with the local constabulary. We even headed up their own Firearms Consultative Committee after Hungerford. Conservation too was and is always at the heart of our endeavours. We were the first recipients of the Laurent Perrier Award for our Snipe Project at Grace Dieu. Then out of the blue came an offer of old gravel workings in the Wreake Valley by a long standing, highly supportive and generous member. We visited the Sevenoaks Wildfowl Reserve in Kent to broaden our outlook. So the scene was set and I refer of course to this very place where we are standing, which we are justifiably very proud of indeed. Tony Dakin will enlarge on Priory Water later.

This overview seems to me to be a less than a generous appraisal of the Association but it is quite impossible to be specific otherwise it becomes a sort of potted history. I have deliberately avoided the naming of names for the list is endless. The buzz word however to sum up our supporters and benefactors is "*Fantastica*" and unbelievable support for ever.

I speak of support in but what about support out? Locally we have always supported the local foxhounds/beagle packs in their fight for freedom of choice. We were always in full flood at the many sporting rallies both locally and in Hyde Park. We have contributed to many an agricultural show and still do but by far our biggest support since day

one has been for the parent body WAGBI/BASC. This was firstly by following their lead and emerging as an inland wildfowling club and secondly by observing their Full Club Membership rule without any dissent. This we did at their 1963 annual dinner which we hosted in Leicester. It was a move of the greatest significance and was soon followed by other affiliated clubs. It gave WAGBI the much needed membership increase and helped their minimal coffers to boot. Thirdly, more than two handfuls of our members have assisted the parent body by being on their Executive (later Council), one even took the vice-chair for a couple of years or by running their film library, by attending game fairs as stand stewards, by supporting their Proficiency Award schemes, by hosting Safari, offering and hosting Sporting Draw winners to days on the hill. It's been a real bonus for the LWA that BASC should wish to support our first half century here today but also by including us to celebrate in their 1st century celebrations - we are justifiably proud of this. No doubt more will be said in a few minutes.

I have so far left out any mention of the ugly word finance, because most will know that the Association's assets have been well and truly hard earned and are respectable in size. The balance sheet isn't however anything like as rosy as it used to be but ground rules laid down in the beginning have never changed. Our finances have always been in the hands of accomplished and professional members and will continue to be so.

And now as I draw these remarks to a close I must admit that I have been extremely lucky to have had the opportunities the LWA has afforded me, the chance to lead

and encourage like minded sportsmen and women, to be able to stand forward with confidence and to feel that I was always making my own contribution by way of endeavour or putting back. The sheer privilege of utter devotion by so many officers and committee members for almost all of my thirty four years and then of course for the magnificent and continuing support we have always enjoyed from our Presidents, Patrons and Vice-presidents. I truly believe that the LWA is a 'Shining Example' for it has embraced so much in these last fifty years of like-minded people working together for the good of others, our environment and for the sport of shooting.

And so, my Lord President, I do hope that you feel you do actually preside over an organisation that has always been and continues to be a 'Shining Example' of endeavour to the outside world and beyond.



Tim Goodlife

Before I begin with a brief history of the aims and achievements of Priory Water, I would like to acknowledge those whose roles have been vital in the development of the reserve we see before us. We are primarily most grateful to Mr Ron Jelley, without whose generosity and support, we would never have achieved what we have today. We must also thank Steven Williams, Geoffrey Grant and Kevin Wilcox who took an exhausted gravel working and carefully put together a nature reserve from scratch. There have been many others along the way who have contributed but time does not permit me to mention them all. They know who they are and know they have our sincere thanks.

The LWA has had a long association with conservation and during the early years the Wildfowling and Conservation committee reared and released over 38,000 Mallard, Pintail and Gadwall onto sanctuary waters. This was then added to by the creation of the award winning Grace Dieu Snipe project. In 1984 the then Chairman, Richard Bream and Honorary Secretary, Tony Dakin had the idea of a large scale wildfowl sanctuary. These discussions led to the generous offer of this site by Vice-President Ron Jelley, for a peppercorn rent. A few years ago the Association finally paid up by presenting Mr Jelley with a jar of peppercorns. The lease was officially handed over on the 3rd of May 1987. A field centre was built and opened on the 22nd of September 1991 by Sir Timothy Brooks. In 1993 the field centre was extended to include what we now call the boat store. In 1999 a further extension was added for storage on



the rear of the building. To accommodate our much loved if slightly unreliable tractor, the aptly named Giraffe house was added in 2004. Once again we are deeply indebted to Mr Jelley for his generous help with these extensions.

Over the years the Association has planted over 16,000 trees on the site and created 2 flower meadows. We have laid around 400 yards of hedgerows and carried out a large amount of coppicing and canopy thinning. Following the discovery of a dead otter cub in 2,000, the Environment Agency helped establish 2 reed bed areas and following this signs of otters have been found and several people have been lucky enough to have had otter sightings since then. A tern raft was built and floated into position in spring 2004 and there have been many broods of common terns reared on the raft since.



Over the years extensive records have been kept of the various species using the reserve and we are very grateful to Dave Gamble, Mark Rossell, Oscar Orridge, Steve Houghton and Frank Clark for their work. To date over 200 species of birds, 250 species of moths, 30 species of butterflies and 23 species of dragonflies and damselflies have been recorded. Priory Water is without doubt the premier site in the county for dragonflies and damselflies and we have recorded 2 county firsts with the discovery of the small red eyed damselfly and 2 records of the lesser emperor dragonfly. As you can see the hard work of the membership and the foresight of the management

committee has produced a reserve that has few equals in the county. But this does not mean we have achieved all we can. As the site matures further we will continue to manage it to the best of our ability with the belief that if you provide the right habitat, more species will come. Plans are being made to improve Priory Water not only for our enjoyment but for the generations to come. Priory Water is something we can all be justifiably proud of. It shows what can be achieved in the relatively short space of 21 years. Who knows what the next 21 years can produce.

Steve Bloomfield

Can I just start by echoing what we have already heard and congratulate you all on fifty years of your anniversary and particularly the creation of Priory Water? I have recently taken over the role of Regional Director for the BASC in the Midland Region. I started in February of this year after a career in game-keeping and I have to say that it is a privilege to work in this role having been a member for many years myself, also, serving on the Gamekeepers' Advisory Committee for BASC as a keeper. When I left game-keeping I was asked "What exactly is it you are going to be doing here in your new job?" One keeper actually said "What is it going to be like now that you have retired?" I've got news for him! It is not something that you could answer in one or two words and it got me thinking about the role. It is a big move for me and basically because we are a members' organisation my job is to ensure that the members in our region feel that they are well represented and feel that they are having the job done for them.. Our organisation has around 127,000 members nationally and in the Midlands alone we have in the region of 20,000 members across eleven counties. And we stretch from Hereford and Shropshire on the Welsh borders all the way across to the Lincolnshire coast and north into the grouse moors and Peak District. In the Midlands we have nearly 500 gamekeeper members, 2000 club members and 70 syndicates. So the Midland team, myself, Liz Lamb who is here today, and Viv our administrator at the office, aim to provide our members with a service in the Midlands. We are here to answer your questions and assure you that we

are here to do all that we can to defend and protect the way of life we are all so proud of, introducing youngsters to the sport and teaching them the skills needed to be competent and safe, lobbying MPs, organising game fair events, members' evenings, educating others, promoting the eating of what we shoot, visiting clubs and syndicates, helping to solve problems – sometimes just listening to what our members want to say to us. I am proud to say that our organisation is strong and well respected due mainly to the wise thinking and brave decisions made by our council. As you know this is our centenary year and we have come a long way. We are strong and able to face the challenges. The decision to build a communications centre at the Head Office is a right and proper one. From there the regions and countries will be able to get our voice heard even louder and clearer than we have already. The future looks good for shooting, for our sport, for the youngsters, and for the conservation that we work so hard at. I would like to finish off by saying: "Please remember that the Regional Office and staff are only a 'phone call away". Thank you very much.



Simon Hamlyn

I have been at BASC for only seven years unlike my boss John Swift who has been there for thirty, but in that short time I have been privileged to meet so many wonderful shooting people and volunteers and so I put the members of the LWA that I have met right at the top of the list. It is a privilege to meet you and work with you to ensure that today is such a success. My father, God rest his soul, was a passionate shooting man. He was a WAGBI and BASC member and he believed very strongly that shooting was supported by good food, good wine and good company. And from what I have seen of the LWA you have got a lot of that in spades. Before I make the presentations I would just like to reflect on why I am here this morning; that BASC had its roots and its foundations in wildfowling. Its strength grew from volunteers and those that shot and the future is secure with the loyalty of members and shooting people and we wish you all the best for the next fifty years. Thank you very much.



Simon Hamlyn presenting Lord Crawshaw with a signed copy of Graham Downing's latest book

Souvenir boxes were presented to: Lord Crawshaw, Richard Bream, Sir Lyonel Tollemache, Tim Goodlife, Tony Warner, and Tony Dakin.



LWA Patron Sir Lyonel Tollemache presented John Swift with an inscribed crystal tablet.



John Swift replied as follows:

Thank you very much. For those who haven't seen this it says: *"In recognition of the BASC centenary in promoting wildfowling and conservation 1908 - 2008"*.

This is terrific. Thank you to all very, very much. It will go in the library at Marford Mill in a place of honour where important pieces of memorabilia of the Association's history are kept. So thank you very, very much indeed.

Tony Warner then asked Tony Dakin to present Vice-President Ron Jelley with a crystal vase inscribed with the words: *In recognition of an outstanding contribution to wildfowling and conservation at Priory Water 1987-2008.*

My Lord President, Sir Lyonel, Mr Chairman, fellow members and guests, on occasions one is asked to make a speech and you get the usual excuses, it's the wife's birthday, I shall be away etc. On this occasion I was only too pleased to accept Tony Warner's request to say a few words.

My eulogy will be short, precise and to the point - I have been warned in no uncertain terms from those above, behind and indeed in front! Some of what I would like to say has already been briefly mentioned by Richard Bream and Tim Goodlife.

Over twenty years ago Richard and his committee decided that our main conservation effort of rearing and releasing wildfowl on to sanctuary waters had, after attaining the fantastic result of over 30,000, needed a new challenge. It was decided that we should look for a disused gravel pit with land and water. Being the Hon. Sec. at the time, it was therefore my task to find an appropriate area. After numerous meetings over several months with firms and landowners in both the Wreake and Soar valleys, all efforts proved fruitless. I then decided to set up a meeting with the Chief Planning Officer at County Hall. During that meeting he mentioned that one firm in particular was most responsive to matters of conservation. The owner of that firm was at the time a Vice-President of the LWA. I could have kicked myself for not realising this fact. A meeting

was set up with myself, Richard Bream and the gentleman in question and the rest, as they say is history.

In the past twenty years, the advice, help, whatever the problem, planning, building works, anything that arose from such an ambitious project, his support has been 120% and continues to this day.

That person sits here and I trust that he will accept this presentation as a token of or sincere thanks and appreciation for all that he has done.

Ladies and gentlemen: Mr Ron Jelley.



There followed a presentation of an engraved crystal book to Frank Wildman whose initiative led to the setting up of the LWA 50 years ago. The book was inscribed with the words: *In recognition to Frank Wildman who founded the Leicestershire Wildfowlers' Association in 1957*. On the spine of the book are engraved the words: *The Leicestershire Wildfowler by Frank Wildman*.



In thanking the Association Frank responded by saying **“Maybe it is time to take a leaf out of WAGBI’s book and and include the words “conservation” and “shooting” in the name of the Association.**

This rounded off the formal stage of the meeting.

AND SO TO LUNCH





AFTER ALL THOSE SPEECHES,





WE ARE VERY HUNGRY



WHAT AM I BID?



Painting kindly donated to the LWA by artist Harry Spencer



THE MAIN THING IS: "WE'RE ALL ENJOYING OURSELVES"





AFTER LUNCH BIG GUNS REFLECT ON THE LAST 50 YEARS





LET'S HOPE THAT THE NEXT 50 YEARS ARE AS GOOD AS THE LAST



IF YOU ARE QUIET WE MIGHT SEE A RUDDY DUCK



I HOPE HE KNOWS WHERE WE ARE GOING



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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