THE CARDINAL

No. 236 **August 2014**

Nature London

The McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Inc.

"To Preserve and Enjoy Nature"

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: REGULAR ITEMS

FEATURE ARTICLES AND MORE

REMEMBERING FRANK COOK

NOVEMBER 30, 1921 TO JUNE 4, 2014

The message came by e-mail on June 5, telling us that Frank Cook had passed away in his 93rd year, at the Mill Creek Care Centre in Barrie. We had visited Frank there in February, and had continued exchanging e-mails. We were looking forward to another visit later in June, but alas, that was not to be.

Frank filled many roles in his long life – naturalist, conservationist, teacher, friend, professor, mentor, husband, father, church choir member, Kiwanian. The name Frank Cook may not be familiar to some in the current generation of Nature London members, so please allow me to give you a personal perspective on my long-time friend.

I first became acquainted with Frank Cook soon after I joined the McIlwraith Club in 1965. I was in my early teens, and there were not many young people in the club. Monthly meetings took place at the central library on Queens Avenue, and outings were held in and around London, much as they are today. For my first Christmas Bird Count, I was assigned to Frank's group, and found him to be a very friendly and helpful leader. I continued to appreciate Frank's skills as a naturalist and teacher on many field trips over subsequent years. Most of all, I valued his welcoming and friendly manner.

Frank Cook was born in Toronto in 1921. After serving in the RCAF, he attended the University of Toronto, and obtained a Ph.D. in botany. In 1952, Frank came to London to take up an appointment in the Plant Sciences Department at the University of Western Ontario. When Frank moved to London, he also became a member of the McIlwraith Ornithological Club, as Nature London was known at the time.

With a busy academic life, and a young family at home, Frank still found time for club activities. His first contribution to *The Cardinal* was in September 1953, "Summer and Migrant Birds of Lambton County". The article was based on his participation in a 1947 survey of wildlife in the county. In 1958, Frank became Vice-President of the McIlwraith Club, and then, in 1961, President. At the same time, he served the Federation of Ontario Naturalists as Regional Vice-President.

In 1965, Frank took on the responsibility of editing *The Cardinal*. He continued as Editor until 1988 – that is 23 years in all – and remained an active member of the Editorial Committee until 1996. For much of Frank's tenure as Editor, there was no committee; the Editor had full responsibility for the publication. Under Frank's leadership, *The Cardinal* prospered, providing a "cohesive force among naturalists", one of the goals he had identified early in his tenure. Frank was a fine writer, who had an engaging style. When Winifred (Wake) and I inherited the editorship of *The Cardinal* from Frank in 1988, he was a most helpful and gracious mentor.

In recognition of their combined contributions to the McIlwraith Club, Frank and his wife Dorothy received a Saunders award in 1988. In the citation for this award, Spencer Inch wrote the following about Frank's contribution as Editor: "What better person to do this than an enthusiastic, dedicated, well-balanced naturalist, on the one hand, and an aware and concerned conservationist on the other." Frank Cook was indeed a well-rounded naturalist, with interests in all aspects of natural history. Although his academic training was in botany, he had a great passion for birds. He also had a deep commitment to protection of the environment, a concern that he often shared in his editorials in *The Cardinal*. This was very important at a time when many naturalists were content to sit back and enjoy nature, rather than take action to protect it. One of those editorials prompted the formation, in September 1966, of the club's first Conservation Committee.

Frank was a popular field trip leader for the McIlwraith Club trips from the 1950s to the 1990s. In addition, his skills were put to good use at the summer camps operated for many years by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (Ontario Nature), first at Camp Billie Bear in Muskoka, and later at Red Bay on the Bruce Peninsula.

At Western, one of Frank's major contributions was his leadership of the first-year biology course. When I became a student at Western in the early 1970s, we "boomers" had caused the first-year biology enrolment to swell to something on the order of 1200 students. Most of the teaching was done through an innovative system of self-study laboratories, organized by Frank and his team. Later, I had the privilege of studying with Frank in some senior courses, including a field course on the Bruce Peninsula.

In 1979, the McIlwraith Club obtained a grant and hired summer students to document the natural areas of

Above: Frank Cook, Dave Wake and Bill Girling look at a Small Whorled Pogonia, a very rare and endangered orchid in Ontario. (Photo by Bill Stewart, May 29, 1977.)
Top left: Frank Cook in more recent years.
(Photo courtesy of Ian Cook.)

Middlesex County. Frank played an important role in overseeing this work, and was co-editor of the subsequent publication *Significant Natural Areas of Middlesex County*.

Following his retirement from Western, Frank continued to participate in activities of the McIlwraith Club, and was an active member of his church and the Kiwanis Club. From 1992 to 1998, Frank was co-author, with Winifred Wake, of a series of monthly nature columns in *The London Free Press*. These popular columns introduced readers to a wide range of natural history topics.

In 1998, Frank and Dorothy moved to Barrie, to be closer to their son Ian and his family. There, Frank continued to explore nature in his new surroundings in the Simcoe County area. In the obituary that appeared in *The London Free Press*, Frank's family summed him up this way: "He was never happier than when tromping around in a swamp or the base of a cliff collecting mosses, photographing wildflowers, or identifying birds."

One of Frank's particular passions was the study of mosses, a group overlooked by many botanists. In 2011, he donated his collection of more than 2000 specimens to the National Herbarium of Canada at the Canadian Museum of Nature. Frank's son Ian wrote about this in *The Cardinal*, No. 225, November 2011: "So now Frank's life work and labour of love, resides where it should, in the National Herbarium of Canada, along with specimens collected by some of the most important naturalists of Canada, dating back more than 150 years."

Frank is gone now, but his family, friends, fellow naturalists and former students have warm memories of the man and his contributions. Winifred and I both feel very privileged to have had Frank as a mentor and as a dear friend.

The memorial service for Frank Cook will take place Saturday, October 4 at 1:00 pm at Northwest Barrie United Church.

Dave Wake

Reference

Hilts, S.G., Cook, F.S. 1982. *Significant Natural Areas of Middlesex County*. London: McIlwraith Field Naturalists Incorporated and Guelph: School of Rural Planning and Development, University of Guelph. 189 p.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THIS YOUR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Editors' Note: Nature London received this e-mail letter from Mary Lund in May. She has given permission for us to reprint it here.

I read about it in ON Nature, and was very much interested, because my love of birding grew and expanded within the aura of the McIlwraith Ornithological Club in the 1940s. In 1939 my family moved to Byron, at that time a small village to the west of London. My father was minister in the United Church, and one of the members of the church was Eli Davis, who, we soon discovered, was an ardent and knowledgeable bird-watcher, a friend of W.E. Saunders, John Dearness, and many of the other well-known names of that time. Our family became friends with Eli and his family, and the first time we went out bird-watching with them, when I was 10, was to Wonnacotts' farm. I walked along beside Eli, and he pointed out songs to me and told me how to recognize them ("That is a Field Sparrow: it sounds like a bouncing ball, the notes getting closer and closer to each other like a ball getting closer and closer to the ground"). The seed was planted and I was converted on the spot. I lay in bed that night with my mother's old bird book (one that came out long, long before Peterson's), and looked up all the birds I had seen.

After that, I went on many outings, with Eli Davis, with Dr Dearness, with "W.E." to all the good birding locations in the London area. Once I rode my bicycle to Saunders Pond before school, with a friend. We encountered a "warbler wave" and both agreed that it would be a crime to leave it just to get to school (London South) on time. The school secretary was not very understanding and gave us both detentions. But it was worth it . . . we didn't mind. I went to Club outings too, and to Club meetings. During the war, the young birders were all away, in the forces, and Eli took over as president until they returned, and Bill Girling became president.

I left the London area to go to university and then my family moved away from Byron. But I have always kept a very warm spot in my heart for your club, whatever its name, and for the groundwork in birding I received from the club, particularly from Eli Davis.

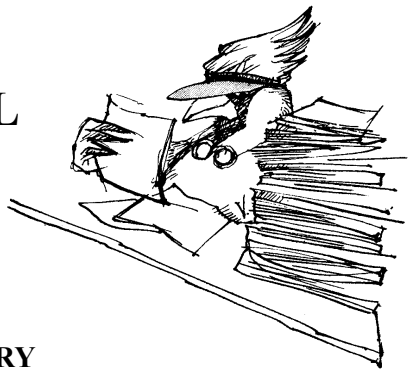
I have been out birding all day today, at Thickson's Woods, in Whitby, and at Second Marsh . . . since I live in Toronto now, these are our favourite close places. I did not hear or see a Field Sparrow, but did hear many warblers that brought back specific memories of sightings with the McIlwraith Club.

Congratulations, and I hope the club continues to thrive and bring the joy to others that it brought to me.

Mary Lund
(nee Mary Harvey)

Eli Davis at Wonnacotts' farm in 1937. Davis was an active member of the MOC, and a close associate of W.E. Saunders. (Photo from the Nature London Archives.)

ASK THE CARDINAL



A BONE MYSTERY

Dear Cardinal,

Last year I was surprised to see deer hooves, with attached leg bones, in trees in natural areas near London. I saw them in three separate instances. The first was in Komoka Provincial Park, on the south side of the Thames River (see photo below). The second was at least three kilometres away, well off a trail on the north side of the Thames in Komoka Park. I also noted a single vertebra in a tree at Komoka. The third instance was well off the trail in Joany's Woods. What happened? How did these deer hindquarters end up in trees?

Surprised by legs

Dear Legs,

Good grief! This is one of the strangest questions I've been asked, and there have been some strange ones. My human friends and I have had to do some thinking and research to try to answer this question.

To start, it's obvious that the bones didn't get there by themselves. And the deer didn't die in the trees – otherwise there would be more of them still there, or at least different parts of the different deer. Someone must have put the bones in the trees after the deer died. We came up with quite a few potential culprits.

First we wondered about big birds – vultures or eagles. Turkey Vultures, while no doubt happy to feed on deer carcasses, do not have the strength to lift such a weight. Bald Eagles do eat carrion but prefer fish. Golden Eagles prey on some mammals, and can lift a fair weight, but manoeuvering a large part of a deer carcass into the branches of a tree would be beyond them. An eagle could not place the leg in such a densely branched shrub though perhaps it could drop it from above.

Next we thought about large wild mammals. Members of the dog family, such as Coyotes, aren't known to cache prey in trees. How about large cats? Although some people think Cougars may cache prey in trees, there's no evidence for this. Bobcats are known to cache prey but a deer leg is a large item for a Bobcat and we are quite far south of Bobcat range. Bears may also cache prey. But the chance of even one Cougar, Bobcat, or Bear being in Middlesex County is very low, let alone three such predators. The chance of one predator putting deer bones in trees in places so far apart is even more remote. The branches in the photo do not look large enough to support a large predator climbing with a deer haunch. So we ruled out large wild mammals as the placers of deer bones in trees.

That leaves humans – perhaps a prankster? Three legs at three different and widely dispersed locations, two well off a trail, would seem to rule out a prankster. Perhaps dog walkers, trying to get the bones of carcasses found by their dogs out of reach of the dogs? The fact that only legs and attached bones were found would seem to rule out this explanation; dog walkers would want the whole carcasses out of the way. Perhaps hunters? But a hunter acquaintance assures us that hunters wouldn't put deer bones in trees. Even field dressing an animal, especially one in a protected area, is not a satisfactory explanation. Presumably a poacher would want to hide the evidence of his illegal kill, not display it. Perhaps someone using the deer legs as bait? This seems possible. A photographer might put bones in trees this way in order to attract Coyotes, crows, or some other scavengers to be photographed. The idea that someone would put poison in such bait occurred to us too, but we hope that's not the explanation!

It seems most likely that people put the deer bones in the trees, probably to attract other animals. Other explanations are possible and it's also possible that each case may have a different explanation. We would like to hear from our readers if they have seen this phenomenon or have another good idea to explain the legs in the trees.

Also surprised,
The Cardinal

CATERPILLAR CAUTION

Dear Cardinal,

In late September and early October last year, fuzzy white caterpillars with a black stripe down the back (I believe they were Hickory Tussock Moth caterpillars) were around, as they have been for some years in late summer. I understand that they have a venom that can cause a rash or possibly an allergic response if you touch the long black hairs at their front or rear. Should one take precautions, and not touch them?

Wary of Caterpillars

Dear Wary,

Ahhh – those hairy caterpillars – just what the chef ordered to spice up a bland diet. Indeed some of those hairs, especially the longer ones on the Hickory Tussock Moth caterpillar, can be irritating for most who sample them – usually not more than once.

For humans, the best thing to do is to avoid touching hairy and/or brightly coloured caterpillars. Touching the wrong spines might give most people a bit of a sting that perhaps might develop into a welt or an itchy rash. But if you happen to carry an epi-pen or are allergic to bee stings, then the results could be much more serious and involve a trip to a nearby hospital's emergency department. Also at risk are toddlers who might be tempted to pop a hairy cater-

Above: Hickory Tussock Moth caterpillar. (Photo by Hugh Casbourn.) **Right**: Adult Hickory Tussock Moth seen during Nature London's "Stalking the Night Garden" field trip in June. (Photo by Fiona Reid.)

pillar into their mouth causing swelling in their mouth or throat.

Here, in temperate climes, there have been no deaths attributed to stings from hairy or other caterpillars. However, if you, like some of my cousins, fly south to the tropics then you will need to be more cautious – some caterpillars have enough toxin in them to deliver a fatal sting.

Neither hairy nor stinging,
The Cardinal

THE SKINNY ON WALKING STICK COLOUR

Dear Cardinal,

One morning last summer, at Pinery Provincial Park, we found this walking stick (below). We watched it for quite a while, and later in the morning we found the skin on our white van (below right). The skin looked almost white. Walking sticks change colour to blend in with their surroundings. When they shed their skins, does the colour stay as the camouflage colour, or does it revert to its true colour?

Walking Stick Watcher

Dear Watcher,

Ah, I thought, there should be a simple answer to this question! After all, I had to find out a lot about how insects moult (shed their skins) to answer "A Ripping Good Insect Question" in the February 2010 *Cardinal*. Well, the answer is not so simple after all.

The walking stick you saw was probably a Common Walking Stick, the only species native to northeastern North America. Common Walking Sticks hatch as green nymphs. As the nymphs mature, they go through about five moults, changing through varied, generally darker, shades of grey and brown, until they become brownish adults.

The hard outer covering of insects is called the cuticle. Underneath the cuticle is the epidermis, and it is the cells of the epidermis that secrete the cuticle. The cuticle includes layers of chitin and protein, hardened in a process sometimes called "tanning". Some insects' colour comes only from the cuticle – the typical brown or black colour of many insects is the colour of the cuticle only, created by the "tanning" process and the pigment melanin. Other insects' colours, however, are caused by pigments in body parts below the cuticle, so that you see the colour through the cuticle, and this is the case for walking sticks.

Green and brown walking stick colours are created by brown, orange-red or yellow, and blue-green pigment granules in the epidermal cells. The green and yellow pigments seem to be scattered throughout the cells and fixed in their positions. But brown and orange-red pigments can move around the cells. If these pigment granules spread out and move near the outer surfaces of the cells, the insect looks dark; if they coalesce and move to the inner surfaces, the insect looks lighter. The basic green or brown of a walking stick, depending on its stage of life, doesn't change during that stage, but how dark or light it is can change. Typically, the colour is darker at night and paler during the day.

Now we come to moulting. The "skin" or exuvia in your photo consists of only the outer layers of the cuticle. Insects are great recyclers: before they moult, the inner part of the cuticle is digested and reabsorbed by the epidermis. The whitish exuvia here clearly did not retain the walking stick's colour. The colour of the newly emerged nymph or adult walking stick would have been its "true" colour, whatever that colour was for its stage of life.

Happy with my unchanging red,
The Cardinal

THE NATURE LONDON STORY

PART III: 1914 TO 1939

Winifred Wake and David Wake

***Authors' Note**: In Parts I and II of this series, we described the founding of the London Branch of the Entomological Society of Canada (Ontario) in 1864, the rise and waning of the Branch and of the four Sections established in 1890 (Microscopical, Botanical, Geological, and Ornithological [McIlwraith Ornithological Club]), and the transfer of the headquarters (administration, library, collections, and monthly and annual publications' programs) of the parent society (Entomological Society of Ontario) from London to Guelph in 1906. We also discussed the period from 1907 to 1913 during which London naturalists did not hold formal meetings but continued to associate through an informal network that saw the establishment of the Christmas Bird Count in London (beginning in 1909) and the ongoing documentation of local and regional natural history by individual naturalists.*

1914: The London Biological Club

A small notice appeared in the *London Advertiser* on Friday, February 6, 1914 inviting interested parties to gather that evening in the office of the Middlesex County Department of Agriculture to organize a biological club. Twelve men attended. At its second meeting, held on March 7, the London Biological Club (LBC) approved a constitution and bylaws, and adopted a motto – "Learn to live and live to learn." The fledgling club had lofty ambitions, making provision for the establishment of 17 possible sections (archaeology, botany, ornithology, bacteriology, agriculture, etc.).

W.E. Saunders and J.F. Calvert arrived at the March meeting with resolutions, which were approved by those assembled. To the City's water commissioners went requests that the firing of arms be prohibited in Springbank Park and that additional waterfowl habitat be created. Federal and provincial ministers were urged to address the plight of native birds whose numbers had been depleted due to overhunting. They were asked to enact gun licensing, enforce existing firearms laws, and establish sanctuaries in which hunting was prohibited. At the club's April 3 meeting, convened at the Institute of Public Health, another resolution submitted by W.E. Saunders was endorsed. It called on the provincial government to recognize and fund Jack Miner's waterfowl sanctuary in Kingsville.

E.M.S. (Mel) Dale was among the most dedicated and competent of the MOC's active field men. He kept the bird records, and organized the Christmas Bird Count.

There is no record of any further meetings of the LBC. During its short lifetime, 20 men were listed as members. A number of these had been active in the Entomological Society of Ontario (ESO) or its Sections prior to 1906 (i.e., J.H. Bowman, John Dearness, J.E. Keays, William Saunders, W.E. Saunders, and Solon Woolverton). In a nod to past associations with the ESO, the LBC named ESO co-founder and current president, Dr C.J.S. Bethune, as its first honorary member. Three new faces in the short-lived LBC went on to become long-serving naturalists in the London community – J.F. Calvert, E.M.S. Dale, and C.G. Watson.

The Ornithological Section was the only section ever established under the auspices of the LBC. It seems to have remained active longer than its parent group. A newspaper account prepared for the Ornithological Section and published on July 4, 1914 lists spring arrival dates for 158 species of birds recorded between January 1 and May 31 of that year. The article indicated the Section planned a public meeting for mid-July but this apparently was not held. Following the newspaper article, no further records of the LBC or its Ornithological Section can be found. After such an auspicious start, one wonders why the club fizzled so quickly. Whatever the reasons, in the early summer of 1914, after only a few months of existence, the London Biological Club slipped quietly into oblivion.

1915: Revival of the McIlwraith Ornithological Club

On February 5, 1915, nine men and one woman met in the home of W.E. Saunders on Central Avenue to officially reorganize under the name of the McIlwraith Ornithological Club (MOC). The MOC had not held a formal meeting since 1903, when it had operated under the wing of the Entomological Society of Ontario. The old MOC minute book was put into service and an executive elected: J.F. Calvert (president) and C.G. Watson (secretary). The reconstituted group decided "to have no constitution or Bylaws but to run the Club in a friendly free and easy style with as little red tape as possible and to meet at the call of the Sec'y." The evening's program, a talk by E.M.S. Dale on the birds of the Kawartha Lakes, had been planned at the final meeting of the Biological Club's Ornithological Section.

Seven meetings of the MOC took place during 1915. Three were held in Saunders' home and four in the Collegiate Institute (where Calvert was a teacher). Attendance ranged from 8 to 24 and averaged 15, with a maximum of eight women present. At the March 4 meeting, a membership fee of 25 cents was set. W.E. Saunders figured very prominently in the club's programs throughout the year – introducing the 1830s journals of wildlife artist William Pope of Port Ryerse, presenting papers on the birds of Pelee Island and Algonquin Park, and using his splendid collection of study skins of birds and mammals to teach the finer points of identification. Two of the formal papers delivered that year were later published in the *Ottawa Naturalist*.

The minutes record two outings during 1915. On April 24 the group travelled to Komoka swamp to hear the song of the woodcock, and, later that season, visited Joe Beck's farm 13 miles northeast of London to observe Cliff Swallows. Club members organized the annual Christmas Bird Census in December. Through the year, individual members were active in the field, alone or in small informal groups. Photos taken at Goldenwing Woods in Byron on May 24 illustrate the tradition of Victoria Day outings, when as many bird species as possible were noted. At each MOC meeting, records were submitted to update the annual Middlesex County bird list and to document the earliest arrival dates of migrants.

Above: From 1915 to 1919, MOC meetings were held in the Collegiate Institute. The school faced Dufferin Avenue, west of Waterloo Street. It was destroyed by fire in 1920.

Below: Group of naturalists at Goldenwing Woods, May 24, 1915. Standing, from left: John C. Higgins, Miss Luta Brown (later Mrs J.F. Calvert), Mel Dale, J.C. Middleton. Seated from left: Mrs Middleton, Mrs Dale, J.H. Cameron, Mrs Cameron. (Photo by J.F. Calvert.)

The December minutes report the revived club's first action on bird protection. A resolution was passed urging the provincial government to enact legislation to protect wildfowl at Jack Miner's Kingsville sanctuary from hunters stationed nearby.

1916 to 1927: Settling into a Pattern

The pattern of activities established in 1915 continued. Monthly meetings were held in the winter and spring, with none in the summer and a few in the fall. From six to nine meetings took place each year. Average attendance was 20. An exception was 1918 when only one regular meeting was held. From 1915 to 1919 the club's meeting place was the Collegiate Institute on Waterloo at Dufferin. From 1920 to 1927, the YMCA on Wellington near Queens served as the regular venue. At meetings, the bird list was updated, interesting observations from near and far were shared, and a program enjoyed. Annual meetings were held in January or February. The president generally held office for two years.

In the fall of 1916, the annual membership fee was set at $1. In 1919, income consisted of $16.50 in membership fees. Disbursements went mainly to a subscription to the *Ottawa Naturalist* ($5) and unspecified printing costs. Thereafter, annual receipts (including membership fees) never exceeded $30. Expenditures generally fell below $20, and covered items such as postage, occasional printings of the annual bird list, advertising for a public lecture, and expenses for speakers from out of town. In 1922 and 1923, only $17 and $7, respectively, were received in membership fees. End-of-year balances ranged from $6 to $33. A perusal of the limited financial information available suggests that no rent was paid for meeting rooms.

Meeting Programs. Over time, some meetings became associated with specific activities. The first fall meeting was devoted to members' reports of their birding adventures and sightings over the summer. In November, W.E. Saunders gave a detailed account of his experiences attending the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU). The Christmas Bird Census was planned in December and reported on the following month. January also saw the commencement of the annual bird list. Lining up interesting programs during the winter and spring was challenging. Knowledgeable outside speakers were welcomed when available. W.D. Hobson of Woodstock visited twice, imitating bird songs and showing lantern slides. In 1917 Jack Miner, also aided by slides, told of his success in protecting wild geese and ducks. Dr C.K. Clarke of Toronto used lantern slides to depict the bird life of Kingston. In 1920, Hoyes Lloyd, Ornithologist with the Parks Branch of the Department of the Interior in Ottawa, explained the new Migratory Birds Convention Act, which came into force in April of 1918. Ten club members later filled in applications to become honorary game wardens under the MBCA.

Over the years, "regular" club members occasionally delivered meeting programs. Mel Dale gave several talks, sometimes telling of a recent trip, or providing instruction in the identification of a particular family of birds. Other members who spoke a time or two included J.F. Calvert, Pete Patterson, J.C. Middleton, J.R McLeod, J.E. Keays, Mrs Dale, and Mrs Berry. Most meetings consisted of informal talks or the reading of prepared lectures, the only props being study skins or occasionally snapshots ("views") that were passed around. Only rarely were technological innovations of the day enjoyed. The first references to lantern slides and moving pictures appear in 1916. The next year, "two records imitating the songs of several well-known birds were rendered by the Victrola." Meeting topics almost invariably related to birds, with a very infrequent presentation on some other aspect of natural history. A talk on reptiles drew an all-time low attendance of eight.

Most years, W.E. Saunders was the main speaker at about three-quarters of the club's meetings. In 1927, he provided the program for all six. During a typical presentation, he focussed on a particular season or group of birds, such as winter birds or sparrows, illustrating his talk with study skins, never lantern slides. Saunders occasionally

diverged from birds to deliver a lecture on mammals, nature in times past, or the wildlife he had seen on his travels. Even when he was not the evening's featured speaker, Saunders was a prominent presence, sharing bird sightings and news from his large network of colleagues around the province and in the United States. Saunders was a born raconteur, and MOC members never seemed to tire of listening to his stories and learning from his inexhaustible and ever-expanding store of knowledge about the natural world.

Public Entertainments. When opportunities arose, the MOC periodically brought in a well-known outside speaker, booked a large venue, and invited the public. Thus, in 1916, Jack Miner showed pictures of his Kingsville waterfowl sanctuary to an audience that completely filled the YMCA auditorium. The same venue hosted another lantern-slide show in 1921, when Harrison Lewis, Chief Migratory Officer for Ontario and Quebec, spoke on the birds of Nova Scotia. The Club paid $7.56 to cover expenses. In 1925 and 1926, Stuart Logan Thompson, one of Canada's most influential popularizers of natural history, gave an address on birds and their songs to audiences of 350 and 400 at the Normal School. His presentation included pictures, as well as demonstrations of his famous ability to imitate bird songs.

Middlesex County Bird Records. Mel Dale was among the most dedicated and competent of the MOC's active field men. It was he who kept the club's bird records and organized the annual Christmas Bird Census. Results were forwarded to the National Audubon Society for publication in *Bird Lore*. At 34 species, the 1926 census was deemed the best since the first London count in 1909. Keeping an annual county bird list was a top priority for the MOC. Periodically, a more extensive summary document was compiled. Dale and Charlie Watson prepared a schedule of average spring first-arrival dates (covering a 40-year period), which was printed in *The Advertiser* in February 1919. Two hundred copies were distributed to members. In April 1927, Dale updated the list of early spring arrival dates based on 17 years of data. This was published in the newspaper, and 500 copies were printed for members.

Some Bird Visitors and Dates of arrival; Compiled from figures of Last 40 years by the McIlwraith Ornithological Club of London, Canada.

DATES OF SPRING ARRIVALS.

First part of the schedule of average spring arrival dates for birds, compiled by Mel Dale and Charlie Watson in 1919.

Bird Feeding and Nest Boxes. In the 1910s, nest boxes and bird feeding stations (often referred to as feeding slabs or feeding platforms) were coming into vogue. Saunders brought reports of the latest innovations discussed at AOU meetings. MOC members took a great interest in these practical, hands-on ways to help birds. They experimented with different feeder and nest box designs and tried out various types of feed. During meetings they reported on their experiences and traded tips.

In February 1917, the MOC asked the Public Utilities Commission to put up nest boxes in Springbank Park. By November, the MOC committee promoting winter feeding of birds at Springbank Park reported it had erected a number of feeding boxes. That winter the boxes were well patronized, attracting goldfinches, purple finches and juncos; the chickadees became tame enough to feed from the hand. In 1920 and 1921 MOC committees arranged an exhibit of nesting boxes and feeding slabs at the Western Fair. In the spring of 1922, the club organized a bird house competition between Ryerson and Lord Roberts schools, attracting approximately 100 entries. The MOC paid out $3.25 in prize money. The next year, the club distributed 200 pamphlets entitled "Bird Houses and Their Occupants" to schools and interested persons.

Protection of Wildlife. In the early 1900s, attitudes were slowly evolving away from the view that species were good (useful to humans) or bad (having negative impacts on human interests). Naturalists contributed to, were a part of, but also helped to drive, the changing philosophy. In 1916, after receiving a submission from Saunders, the Public Utilities Commission agreed to stop the wanton killing of wild birds and animals within Springbank Park. The same year, the club asked City Council to have police destroy some of the large numbers of crows nesting in London. The noteworthy issue in 1917 was the cat, and its harmful effects on wild birds. Saunders read extracts from a bulletin issued by the State Ornithologist of Massachusetts, and the club appointed a Cat Committee. Alas, the committee took no action on the problem.

In October 1923, a committee was empowered to seek bird sanctuary status for three ponds on Wellington Road. The Saunders property around the western portion of Saunders Pond already functioned as a private sanctuary. At a meeting held in 1926, Mr Griffith, owner of the east portion of Saunders Pond, agreed to cooperate with the club in keeping people off that body of water.

An ongoing concern for the MOC was the freedom with which citizens could carry guns and shoot wildlife at will. Representations were made to government in 1919, 1922, and 1925 requesting restrictions on firearms. In 1927, a resolution asking that the killing of hawks and owls be prohibited was passed. The MOC was clearly a dedicated part of a long, slow process that, over many decades, eventually resulted in a great sea change in public attitude.

Field Outings and Picnics. Records of MOC field trips during this period are scarce, probably because outings were rarely planned in advance. Instead, a few members might contact each other closer to a prospective date and meet very early in the morning to maximize good bird sightings. All-day censuses on New Year's Day and Victoria Day are thought to have been carried out in this manner. An exception occurred in the spring of 1916, when club members as a group were conveyed by autos to the Hamilton Road swamp to see nesting Long-eared Owls.

Perhaps because they required more co-ordination, picnics are mentioned many times in the minutes. Destinations were private properties that included features of interest to naturalists and where permission had been obtained

from the owner. A "picnic" consisted of a Saturday afternoon outing, during which people rambled about in small groups noting any aspect (but especially birds) of natural history that caught their eye. Afterwards they gathered around a fire to cook supper and compare notes on what they had seen and to enjoy a social time and friendly conversation. Annual spring picnics in the 1920s were held at a variety of places such as a heronry near Thorndale, a Cliff Swallow colony, and Saunders Pond. On May 30, 1924, 30 persons were conveyed in seven motor cars to a "very charming spot" at Wonnacotts' farm in Komoka where fires were built and the supper spread. This was the first recorded picnic at a destination that soon became a club favourite.

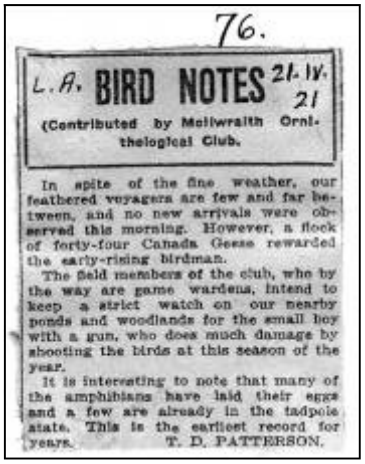
The first autumn outdoor meeting was held in 1926 at the Queen Alexandra Sanatorium at Byron. Wood was provided for a fire on the river bank, corn was boiled and a very happy evening spent by all 22 persons present.

Annually, beginning in 1924, MOC held a "special bird observation morning" for the Normal School. Two hundred student teachers were transported in motor cars to Saunders Pond for a 6 am bird walk. They were conducted in groups by up to a dozen of the club's field men.

Liaison with Other Groups. In 1919, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club (OFNC) called for co-operation among naturalist clubs and urged that its publication, the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*, be the common organ. The MOC became an affiliate of OFNC, sending in an annual $5 fee. W.E. Saunders was a strong proponent of working together to achieve conservation goals and believed the *Canadian Field-Naturalist* to be a viable outlet to which naturalists could submit their work. Although the relationship was not always smooth, MOC continued its affiliation and support of the publication. The MOC was also beginning to develop working relationships at the local and regional level. On several occasions there were communications with the Hamilton Bird Protection Society (established in 1919) exploring the possibilities of working together to advance each other's goals.

The most prestigious affiliation in the MOC's history came about when a letter from Hoyes Lloyd in Ottawa asked the club to appoint a member to the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP), based in Cambridge, England. In January 1927, W.E. Saunders was so appointed.

Newspaper Columns, 1920 to 1923. In April of 1920, W.E. Saunders suggested the MOC place daily bird notes in London's two newspapers. The membership concurred, and the series, which documented newly arriving birds as they returned from the south, ran for four years during spring migration season (late March to mid-June). In all, 158 columns were produced. These were written by the club's most active and knowledgeable field men, each being assigned one day of the week. Over the years, nine members served as authors: J.F. Calvert, E.M.S. Dale, J.R. McLeod, J.C. Middleton, T.D. Patterson, E.N. Perkins, W.E. Saunders, C.G. Watson, and A.A. Wood. The "Bird Notes" were a very visible way in which to engage the interest of the wider community in birds in general and migration in particular.



76.

L.A. BIRD NOTES 21. IV. 21

(Contributed by McIlwraith Ornithological Club.

In spite of the fine weather, our feathered voyagers are few and far between, and no new arrivals were observed this morning. However, a flock of forty-four Canada Geese rewarded the early-rising birdman.

The field members of the club, who by the way are game wardens, intend to keep a strict watch on our nearby ponds and woodlands for the small boy with a gun, who does much damage by shooting the birds at this season of the year.

It is interesting to note that many of the amphibians have laid their eggs and a few are already in the tadpole state. This is the earliest record for years. T. D. PATTERSON.

In the early 1920s, the "field men" of the club wrote a daily newspaper column, reporting on the arrival of migrants. In this column from May 1921, J.F. Calvert reports on a recent sighting of a Cerulean Warbler at Goldenwing Woods.

During the 12 years after its re-establishment in 1915, the MOC developed into a small but solid organization. A band of skilled ornithologists, under the tutelage of W.E. Saunders, was actively increasing its own knowledge, documenting county bird records, educating others through public events, and taking action on conservation issues.

Above: MOC used the Normal School for special public events. On occasion, regular meetings took place here.

Below: Field Trip to Saunders Pond in 1925. W.E. Saunders conducted this bird hike for teachers taking a special summer course on nature study and agriculture.

1928 to 1939: The Late 1920s and the Depression Years

The late 1920s showed an upswing in the fortunes of the McIlwraith Ornithological Club. Average attendance at meetings jumped from 20 to approximately 40, remaining there throughout the Depression. Membership figures are available for just three years: 1935 (40), 1936 (33), and 1938 (70). The number of actual "Bird Club" members is likely higher, however, as some memberships include more than one person. The membership fee continued at $1 annually. Starting in 1938, teens could join for 25 cents. A financial report is available for just one year – 1936. It shows annual revenue consisting almost entirely of membership fees. Predictable expenses included affiliation fees ($10.50), honorarium to caretaker ($5), and paper, enve-

The Wellington Street side of the London Life building in downtown London. In 1928 the club moved its meeting place to the auditorium in the recently opened London Life Building. MOC continued to meet there, rent free, until the fall of 1938. Members entered using this Wellington Street door. During the 1930s, members also met at this doorway to arrange carpools for field trips.
(Photo in 2014 by Dave Wake.)

Three Canadians at the AOU convention in Charleston, South Carolina, November, 1937, from left: P.A. Taverner, J.H. Fleming and W.E. Saunders. Saunders attended the AOU meeting each year, and provided complete reports at MOC meetings.

lopes, stamps, printing, etc. ($11.40), for a total of $26.90. Seven or eight monthly meetings were held each year. In 1928 the club began meeting in the new London Life Building on Dufferin. It remained there, rent free, until 1938, when it moved to the Normal School on Elmwood.

Communications. MOC used various approaches to communicate with its members. In 1928, 500 cards were "printed for notification of meetings in the future". These cards were apparently mailed to inform members of upcoming meetings. In January an annual program was printed and distributed. By May 1929, one-page notices containing details of meetings and field trips were being mailed multiple times a year. They always included a nature poem or two, and, from 1933 on, a bird drawing by Bill Girling.

A monthly two-page bulletin was first published in October 1939. It contained meeting information, and three short articles: banding bats (Keith Reynolds), recent bird sightings (W.E. Saunders), and a fungus discovered by Eli Davis (W.D. Sutton). Bill Lott was named editor.

While it was not an official club undertaking, in November of 1929, W.E. Saunders began writing a popular newspaper column entitled "Nature Week by Week", which ran until his death in 1943.

Regular Meetings. Monthly meetings continued on Monday evenings, following the format established during the previous decade. W.E. Saunders remained the most prolific lecturer, serving as principal speaker more than 25 times, and contributing substantially to the program on countless more occasions. The frequency of his presentations decreased over time, however. He spoke four times in 1928, but only once in 1939. Invariably Saunders talked about birds or subjects related to birds. His array of possibilities seemed unlimited, much like the bird specimens he displayed in conjunction with his talks. If Eli Davis or the Dales had accompanied him to an AOU conference, on their return, they helped present the summary to the MOC. Mel Dale also delivered a number of slide talks on bird identification.

During the 1930s, the use of slides increased greatly. Early ones were black and white, but colour began to creep in. Mrs Calvert's presentations featured her own hand-coloured slides. Moving pictures became more prominent. The federal government maintained an extensive catalogue of films on nature, available for loan to the public. The club frequently borrowed these to show at meetings. Some MOC members were developing skills in nature photography; Bill Girling provided several programs on the how-to's of this topic.

Club members involved in bird banding supplied several meeting programs. In 1938, John Higgins told of his banding operations near Lobo; by then, he had trapped and banded 1500 birds, Song Sparrows being the most numerous, followed by White-crowned Sparrows. In the late 1930s, Gord Cummings established a small banding station near Byron; he told of the venture at a meeting in 1939.

Several biology professors gave presentations: N.C. Hart, botanist; Helen Battle, fisheries biologist; and John Detwiler, entomologist and conservation advocate. Club members Pete Patterson (reptiles and amphibians) and Eli Davis (mammals) also spoke. The inclusion of non-bird topics in meeting programs reflected the growing interest by members in other areas of natural history. The MOC was sometimes visited by professional ornithologists. Dr Harrison Lewis of Ottawa came several times, usually talking about seabirds. L.L. Snyder of the Royal Ontario Museum gave a talk on bird science.

Some programs cultivated the literary and artistic interests of members. W.F. Tamblyn lectured on birds and poets, and G.W. Hofferd spoke on bird artists and their paintings. Travelogues allowed club members who had enjoyed trips to far-flung places to recount their experiences. Members who had spent a lifetime as a birder or a naturalist sometimes told their stories. In a departure from the usual fare of wild birds, Cuthbert Watkin gave a presentation on Carrier Pigeons. "Mr. Watkin brought three pigeons in a cage, two homers and one carrier. The dramatic escape of one homer added zest to the meeting."

The meeting of October 14, 1929 was most likely an awkward one. Past-president J.H. Cameron gave a presentation entitled "Bird Friends and Enemies", illustrated with slides and identifying some hawk species as enemies. Saunders, who at the time was actively campaigning for the protection of all raptors, responded to Cameron's talk by deploring that birds of prey were so rapidly diminishing.

Public Lectures. The MOC continued to organize public lectures. Among speakers, the perennial favourite was Stuart Thompson of Toronto. Between 1928 and 1937, he spoke under the auspices of the MOC five times, drawing crowds of from 275 to 375. His topic was always birds. Three other speakers came once each. R.M. Anderson of the National Museum in Ottawa (large mammals); Edward Avis of Springfield, Massachusetts (coloured slides and imitations of bird calls); and T.M. Shortt of the Royal Ontario Museum (moving picture reel of Alaskan wildlife). These presentations attracted from 200 to 400 people and helped raise the MOC's profile in the community.

Middlesex County Bird Records. As it had done for years past, the MOC maintained an annual county bird list. It encouraged members to list birds observed on January 1 and May 24, and solicited records throughout the year. It continued the annual Christmas Bird Census, during which small groups scoured the valley of the Thames from London to Delaware plus a sampling of spots elsewhere. For 25 years, Mel Dale directed all these efforts. As his health declined, in 1937 the Christmas Census became the responsibility of Keith Reynolds.

Protection of Wildlife. Beginning in the 1920s, it was a personal crusade of W.E. Saunders to seek protection for birds of prey; in this he had the backing of the MOC. The elite Brodie Club in Toronto, of which Saunders was a member, was also a driving force behind the movement. A key problem was Saunders' long-time friend, Jack Miner, who continued to slaughter hawks unimpeded. In light of his conservation work on behalf of Canada Geese, Miner had a huge public following, and his views and actions were highly influential. Things came to a head in 1930 and '31, after Miner issued a misleading pamphlet entitled "Facts about Hawks" in support of his position. The Brodie Club responded with a pamphlet refuting Miner's pamphlet. The MOC passed a resolution demanding that the unlawful killing of birds of prey be halted and deploring the lack of enforcement of laws. This was sent to other clubs, newspapers and government officials. The MOC also established a committee to work for greater protection of birds of prey.

But old habits die hard, and attitudes change slowly. Throughout the 1930s, Jack Miner continued to shoot and pole-trap hawks. In 1936, Saunders was again deploring the lack of government willingness to protect birds of prey. Even in the MOC, attitudes were slow to evolve, with some members clinging to old ways of thinking while others became supporters of conservation of all species. Although Saunders was an early leader in the campaign to protect birds of prey, he continued to shoot other birds for his own collection, though this diminished as the years went by.

Another issue taken up by MOC involved birds killed by flying into lighthouses. In 1929, after Saunders received a shipment of more than 1200 dead birds from the Long Point lightkeeper, government officials were pressured to address the problem. Other groups, including the AOU, were recruited to take up the cause.

In 1930, the MOC aligned itself with the Royal Ontario Museum and the Toronto Field Naturalists in support of their campaign to conserve wildflowers. Locally it established a committee and called on City Council to prohibit the sale of lady-slipper orchids in the London Market.

Field Outings and Picnics. As always, MOC's best field men and women practised their craft on their own time, most often early in the morning when birds were most active. Depending on the season, Saunders, Watson, Davis, the Dales, the McKones, and others might be found at Springbank Park, along the Thames, at Redmond's Pond (Sifton Bog), Saunders Pond, Goldenwing Woods, the Coves, Komoka, Dorchester swamp, or even farther afield. The late 1920s and 1930s, however, saw a marked increase in the number of outings organized by the club. Generally aimed at inexperienced birders, these were held on Saturday afternoons and/or evenings and often incorporated carpooling, a guided walk, a picnic and a social time.

Until well after World War II, there were few high-quality natural areas in the city or close by that were open to the public. There were no Conservation Areas, and parks such as Springbank were operated with the aim of maximizing recreational usage, not wildlife habitat. Private properties owned by friendly landowners were important destinations for MOC outings.

From left: Frances Jacobs, Mel Dale and Keith Reynolds at the "old farm" of W.E. Saunders, overlooking the Thames River, in 1937. In 2014, this location is occupied by the London Hunt and Country Club. Saunders owned this property from 1903 to 1909, but naturalists continued to visit it long after he sold it.

Wonnacotts' Farm in Komoka. Wonnacotts' was the all-time favourite destination for MOC field trips. Bordering a loop of the Thames, the property included fields, woodlands, ravines, extensive marshy flats and a view of an active Bald Eagle's nest. Beginning in the 1920s, a spring picnic at Wonnacotts' became an annual club tradition. This account from June 2, 1928 gives the flavour of the event: "Though the day was cloudy an enjoyable afternoon was spent in rambling through the woods. Fires were built and a delightful picnic supper enjoyed." Fifty members and friends were in attendance. Because of its excellent birding possibilities, many club members also visited Wonnacotts' on their own throughout the year.

Queen Alexandra Sanatorium (on Sanatorium Road; in 2014, the location of CPRI). For several years beginning in 1926, MOC members and friends enjoyed an annual September corn roast at the Sanatorium. The event generally attracted between 20 and 30 people and was entirely social in nature.

Higgins' farm in Lobo Township. The MOC held its first outing to the Higgins' farm in 1930, and soon began holding an annual fall picnic there. The property included fields, woods, a ravine and bottomland along Oxbow Creek. An interesting addition to the September, 1937 picnic was a snake that played dead for several hours before slithering away under cover of darkness.

Komoka Swamp. Komoka swamp was visited annually on a late-April evening to see woodcock and snipe. This wetland was located north of present-day Glendon Drive and east of Amiens Road.

Heronries. Spring outings to heronries were sometimes arranged. Destinations changed as colonies moved around. Sometimes both Great Blue Heron and Black-crowned Night-Heron were observed.

Series of Spring Walks. In spring 1929, the MOC began offering a series of three Saturday-afternoon bird walks in late April and early May. These were primarily for the benefit of beginning birders and the general public. Leaders were Dale, Davis, and Saunders, among the best birders in the club and also strong believers in education and outreach. For the first few years, venues were in or near the city: Saunders Pond, Springbank Park, and Goldenwing Woods. Later, Komoka swamp, Wonnacotts' farm and Thorndale heronries became destinations. The series petered out by 1937. Attendance ranged from 15 to 40.

The Great Pilgrimage of 1934. Billed as "the most daring and stupendous undertaking ever launched by the McIlwraith Ornithological Club", the Great Pilgrimage of 1934 was indeed ambitious. In the depths of the Great Depression, the club had the audacity to plan an expedition to Kingsville, with the expectation that all club members would attend. Scheduled for March 30, the goal was to observe masses of returning waterfowl as well as other spring migrants. On March 12, Saunders and Dale conducted an evening session entitled "Preparations for the Great Pilgrimage". In addition to presenting an overview of what might be expected, they used lantern slides and specimens to instruct participants on the distinctions among various species of ducks (Dale) and hawks (Saunders).

The original plan called for everyone to arrive on the same day, but complications arose when adverse weather delayed the arrival of the swans until March 31. The first three carloads of naturalists (18 persons) journeyed to Kingsville on March 30. Others travelled when convenient during the next week. Some stayed overnight, and others returned the same day. While in the area, their primary activities were visiting Point Pelee, viewing up to 1000 swans along the lakeshore, and seeing geese at Jack Miner's sanctuary. In all, between March 30 and April 8, 53 people participated in The Great Pilgrimage of 1934, a truly amazing achievement in the annals of the MOC.

From left: Charles Maddeford, Keith Reynolds, and Bill Girling at Point Pelee, during the "Great Pilgrimage" of 1934. Charles Maddeford was President of the MOC at the time.

Affiliations. MOC continued its affiliation with the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, publisher of the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. Periodically, MOC collaborated with other organizations, including the Brodie Club of Toronto, the Toronto Field Naturalists, the Kent Nature Club and the Hamilton Bird Protection Society. From 1931 on, the MOC was a member of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, for which it paid an annual membership fee of $3.

Federation of Ontario Naturalists. In early 1931, conservation groups in southern Ontario were embroiled in a campaign to gain effective protection for birds of prey, in direct opposition to Jack Miner's ongoing and indiscriminate slaughter of hawks. During this tumultuous period, the MOC received a communication from Professor Dymond of the Brodie Club, proposing the creation of a Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON). Together, groups would formulate and advance policies promoting the protection of wildlife. Before the year was out, the MOC had endorsed the aims of the new organization and become a founding member.

W.E. Saunders was named the first FON president, a title he held until his death. Saunders was uniquely positioned to hold such a job, as he was widely known and respected across the province and beyond, both in naturalist circles and by academic and government conservationists. In his role as president of FON, Saunders travelled constantly, acting as FON's ambassador to its grassroots membership and delivering the conservation message to countless groups in countless corners of the province. In London, he regularly provided updates on FON affairs at MOC meetings and outings.

In 1934, FON began promoting regional gatherings to help bring cohesiveness to its widely spread members and clubs. That spring five carloads from London attended the gathering at Rondeau Park. In May 1936 the London club hosted more than 200 FON members at Wonnacotts' farm. In September, MOC organized a two-day "school-in-the-woods" FON gathering at Rondeau.

The MOC supplied the field leaders for the regional gathering in Woodstock in June 1937. In June of 1938, it hosted its second FON gathering at Wonnacotts'. A year later it organized the large FON regional gathering held at Kettle Point. Indefatigable and well-organized, E.H. McKone invariably headed up the committee that arranged the MOC-hosted regional gatherings for FON members.

At FON gatherings, people arrived in the early afternoon, always at a place that held promise of interesting finds for naturalists. Leaders who had expertise in numerous departments of nature study were provided, and attendees joined one of many small groups. After the walk, fires were lit and a picnic supper cooked. Later, leaders gave reports of the afternoon's discoveries. Part of the day's agenda always included an address by W.E. Saunders, bringing members up to date on the current issues of concern to the FON and encouraging their enthusiasm for conservation and natural history. Saunders served as a vital link between the small group of Toronto-based FON policy-makers and rank-and-file members.

In May 1936 the London club hosted more than 200 members of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists at a regional gathering at Wonnacotts' farm. Cooking fires were built.

The MOC supplied the field leaders for the regional FON gathering in Woodstock in June 1937. Here, naturalists are listening to W.E. Saunders, bringing members up to date on the current issues of concern to the FON and encouraging their enthusiasm for conservation and natural history.

Outreach. The MOC and its members demonstrated commitment to public outreach by operating field trips for beginners and external groups, organizing public lectures, and providing information on nature through local newspapers.

Normal School Outings. Through the 1930s, MOC continued to conduct a spring outing to Saunders Pond for student teachers. The last such outing, held in 1939, marked the end of a very successful 16-year liaison between the MOC and the Normal School.

Public Health Nurses Outings. For three years in the early 1930s, MOC organized a May nature walk and breakfast picnic for Public Health Nurses. The first destination was Goldenwing Woods, but walks later shifted to Wonnacotts'. Attendance numbered approximately 20.

Other Outreach Initiatives. The May 1929 minutes contain a report of recent lectures given under the auspices of the MOC. Saunders had spoken at West Lorne and Woodstock, while Dale had given presentations at Sharon, Byron and Muncey. Periodically the club discussed ways to increase membership and attendance. One suggestion was to show more bird films. This seemed to work to some extent, as numbers were higher at some meetings where moving pictures on nature were prominently featured.

There was a desire to get more young people involved as members and at meetings. In 1930, Calvert brought six of his students from South Collegiate to tell of their experiences with birds. Over many decades Calvert had a very positive influence in getting students interested in birds and directing them to MOC. Charlie Maddeford, Bill Girling, and Bill Jarmain are examples of students he mentored. At the Normal School, McKone encouraged Frances Jacobs (later Girling) to join the club. During 1937 complimentary memberships were given to a dozen high school students (from Beck, Central and South) who had top marks in biology or nature study. Over the next few years, some of these students became quite involved in MOC.

Banquets. On two occasions the MOC held a banquet to pay tribute to a much-loved member. In February 1929, W.E. Saunders was feted at the Grill Room of the Hotel London. And, in March 1936, John Dearness was honoured at a testimonial banquet at Wong's Café. These events were covered in local newspapers.

Despite very straitened economic times, the decade of the 1930s was a highly successful one for the McIlwraith Ornithological Club. The "Bird Club" ran a series of monthly meetings, occasional public lectures, and an expanded program of field outings. It was heavily involved in the activities of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and, as the decade ended, began publishing a monthly bulletin. Hale and hearty in his 70s, W.E. Saunders continued to be the dominant figure in the group, but several fine young naturalists were increasingly taking on leadership roles. The commencement of World War II, however, foreshadowed an approaching time of loss and retrenchment.

(Winifred and Dave Wake are members of Nature London's 150th Anniversary Committee. They have been instrumental in arranging the anniversary displays and talk [see pages 5 and 36] at the London Public Library and Museum London.)

All photos are from the Nature London Archives, unless otherwise noted.

SOURCES

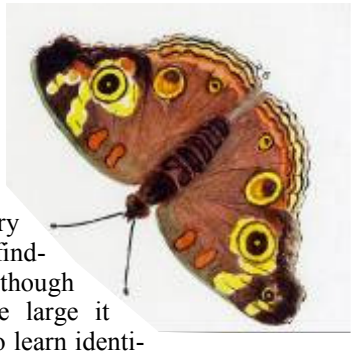
The major sources used in the preparation of this article are the minute books of the McIlwraith Ornithological Club. MOC programs, meeting notices, and bulletins from the 1920s and 1930s were also consulted. Numerous period newspaper columns and articles in the *London Advertiser* and *The London Free Press* proved helpful. Many, many miscellaneous items in the Nature London archives provided additional information.

Articles in *The Cardinal* by Frances Girling (Nos 196 and 197, August and November 2004), Florence Cummings (Nos 199 and 201, April and November, 2005; Nos 203 and 204, April and August, 2006; Nos 206, 208 and 209, February, August and November, 2007), and Winifred Wake (No. 202, February, 2006; No. 224, August, 2011) were the sources of additional material.

Our research was supplemented by a number of publications by W.W. Judd: *More Naturalists and their Work in Southern Ontario* (1992); *Catalogue of Meetings 1890 to 1987, McIlwraith Field Naturalists* (1988); *Annotated Minutes of Meetings, McIlwraith Ornithological Club 1915–1919* (1975), *1920–1923* (1992), *1924–1927* (1994), *1928–1931* (1995), *1932–1935* (1996), *1936–1939* (1997); *Catalogue of the "Spring Bird Notes". . . 1920–1923* (1967); and *Catalogue of Columns on Natural History by W.E. Saunders and J.K. Reynolds . . .* (1969).

The foregoing materials were accessed in the Nature London Archives, the London Room of the London Public Library and in our personal library.

BUTTERFLY COUNTS 2014



SKUNK'S MISERY

Our 14th annual official count was held on Sunday, July 6, in near-perfect weather. When I reached Newbury hospital, the meeting spot, there was already a group of eager participants waiting, even though I was 15 minutes early. Butterflies were scarce all spring after the long, hard winter, so I was expecting fewer participants and fewer species on this count. I was wrong! There were a record 40 participants, including several younger helpers (two from Sweden!), and we saw a total of 53 species of butterfly, about our average number.

Our butterflies included six Hairstreak species, most ever, all the Browns we have on the Middlesex checklist, an early Buckeye (Gladys Carey drawing above) that Garth Casbourn chased across a field before finally netting and identifying it, and several skippers, including Mulberry-wing and four Dions, which Gavin Platt managed to scoop out of a couple of ditches. These are rare in Middlesex. Individual numbers were down in nearly all species. Notable exceptions were Delaware Skipper 68 (previous high 40) and Hickory Hairstreak 40 (8). We just caught the Hickory Hairstreak on the right day. The Delawares have steadily increased their numbers in the last few years. It will be interesting to see if they go on increasing in the future. Not a record, but everyone saw Tawny Emperors, which are beautiful butterflies. They were flying all around. We saw 49 Monarchs, lower than normal but a great improvement on last year, when we saw only six.

Around 4:30 pm people started going to Rodney for the barbecue supper and tally. The Prieksaitis family kindly welcomed us once again to their property, with George there this year to help Bill with the cooking. Our meal gets better and better, with participants' contributions added to the burgers provided by Nature London. This time we even had some sushi to start the meal and a quinoa salad along with a delicious fruit and marshmallow one, and lots of desserts, two of which were made by the young Swedish visitors. With some wine appearing this was a gourmet meal!

We knew at lunchtime when we all met in Little Kin Park in Wardsville that we had 48 species and were very pleased with that. When we did our tally after supper we found five more species were added in the afternoon to give us a good total of 53. Walking the central roads of Skunk's Misery with all our participants ensures finding everything that is present! Although the groups are sometimes quite large it gives new butterfliers a chance to learn identification from experienced ones, and several told me they had enjoyed coming and learned quite a bit. I am really grateful to the latter for their patience.

Next year I believe the first Sunday in July is the 5th, so mark your calendars, and keep the date free!

Participants: B. Baldwin, H. and L. Bildy, R. Braxton, P. Carter, G. Casbourn, S. Caveney, P. Chapman, L. Clancy, N. Corran, M. Cowlard, D. Craig, C. Denstedt, K. and P. Dewdney, N. Douglas, T. Elliot, K. Kirkby, B. and B. Kulon, C. Leys, J. Mackoy, B. Mann, G. and I. Platt, G., M. and W. Prieksaitis, D. Pye, C. Quinlan, P. Read, V. Simkovic, A. Sjoberg, A., C. and J. Summers, A. Thompson, W. Tingle, D. Wake, A. White, B. Wiehle.

Ann White

ST THOMAS FIELD NATURALIST CLUB

On July 12, 2014, the St Thomas Field Naturalist Club Inc. held its 17th annual Butterfly Count. The count area was limited to a 24-km-diameter circle centred at the junction of John Wise Line and Rieger Road. A total of 2042 butterflies of 33 different species was counted. The day was sunny, hot and humid. There were many more Monarchs than in 2013 (89 versus 24).

The participants were: Ron Allensen, John B Anderton, Barb and Thomas Beharrell, Alex, Linda, Neva and Ron Carmichael, Mary Carnahan, Pete Corner, Jim Dunn, Pat Hartwell McLean, Olive Ireland, Bob Johnstone, Christine Klassen, Martha Larson, Gord and Brenda Longhurst, Elaine McArthur, Olga Nemerovski, Dave Nopper, John Partington, Jackie Rochefort, Al Sharpe and Ann Vance.

Ann Vance and Neva Carmichael

On the Skunk's Misery count, Tawny Emperors (left, photo by Sue Thauer) were numerous. There were new high numbers of Hickory Hairstreaks (middle, photo by Gail Dimson) and Delaware Skippers (right, photo by Gerard Pas).

Species		SKUNK'S MISERY BUTTERFLY COUNT									St Thomas
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Count 2014
SWALLOWTAILS (Papilionidae)											
Black Swallowtail	*Papilio polyxenes*	15	3	7	3	19	22	11	1	**3**	**2**
Giant Swallowtail	*Papilio cresphontes*	8	3	9	4	3	28	4	3	**2**	
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	*Papilio glaucus*	100	43	59	48	48	115	96	20	**21**	**20**
Spicebush Swallowtail	*Papilio troilus*	16		6	2	1	4	2		**1**	
WHITES and SULPHURS (Pieridae)											
Mustard White	*Pieris napi*				1						
Cabbage White	*Pieris rapae*	1222	370	1381	289	341	218	430	152	**102**	**510**
Clouded Sulphur	*Colias philodice*	209	116	170	34	137	30	313	19	**84**	**327**
Orange Sulphur	*Colias eurytheme*	37	182	52	27	51	15	404	15	**25**	**299**
Little Yellow	*Eurema lisa*					1		1			
GOSSAMER-WING Butterflies (Lycaenidae)											
Harvester	*Feniseca tarquinius*					2		1			
American Copper	*Lycaena phlaeas*			1		1	3	1			
Bronze Copper	*Lycaena hyllus*				1	1	4				
Coral Hairstreak	*Satyrium titus*	2	7	18	80	9	13	9	22	**29**	
Acadian Hairstreak	*Satyrium acadica*	9	13	8	10	4	20	1	3	**18**	**3**
Edwards' Hairstreak	*Satyrium edwardsii*			2						**4**	
Banded Hairstreak	*Satyrium calanus*	17	29	82	38	42	36	36	10	**69**	**9**
Hickory Hairstreak	*Satyrium caryaevorum*	7		6	1	1	2			**40**	**5**
Striped Hairstreak	*Satyrium liparops*	5		2	1		2	2		**5**	
Grey Hairstreak	*Strymon melinus*										**4**
Eastern Tailed Blue	*Everes comyntas*	11	4	2	12	4	10	9	35	**44**	**22**
Summer Azure	*Celastrina neglecta*	121	28	36	45	16	38	12	13	**39**	**17**
BRUSH-FOOTED Butterflies (Nymphalidae)											
Fritillaries, Subfamily Heliconiinae											
American Snout	*Libytheana carinenta*		2			4		4	1		
Variegated Fritillary	*Euptoieta claudia*					1		6			
Great Spangled Fritillary	*Speyeria cybele*	121	178	175	167	210	98	76	130	**216**	**62**
Silver-bordered Fritillary	*Boloria selene*							1			
Meadow Fritillary	*Boloria bellona*	13	1	14	3	3	8	5			
True Brushfoots, Subfamily Nymphalinae											
Silvery Checkerspot	*Chlosyne nycteis*	3	11	3	6	3		2	1	**3**	
Pearl Crescent	*Phyciodes tharos*	31	10		7	13	11	1	5	**43**	
Northern Crescent	*Phyciodes selenis*	42	34	35	24	11	58	30	35	**30**	**13**
Tawny Crescent	*Phyciodes batesii*						3				
Baltimore Checkerspot	*Euphydryas phaeton*	2		36	33	14	78	7	2	**17**	**1**
Question Mark	*Polygonia interrogationis*	21	23	12	11	27	8	103	2	**8**	**4**
Eastern Comma	*Polygonia comma*	34	17	77	112	6	13	28	3	**18**	**2**
Green Comma	*Polygonia faunus*			1							
Grey Comma	*Polygonia progne*	1		2	27		5	7	1	**9**	
Compton Tortoiseshell	*Nymphalis vaualbum*			7	62	2				**2**	
Mourning Cloak	*Nymphalis antiopa*	24	6	122	20	5	1	11	2	**17**	**13**
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	*Nymphalis milberti*				3	13		1			
American Lady	*Vanessa virginiensis*	1	17	4		6		26	2	**3**	
Painted Lady	*Vanessa cardui*		6	8		1	1	97		**11**	**4**
Red Admiral	*Vanessa atalanta*	6	254	22	9	114	5	180	6	**27**	**21**
Common Buckeye	*Junonia coenia*		3			7	1	88		**1**	
Admirals & relatives, Subfamily Limenitidinae											
Red Spotted Purple	*Limenitis arthemis*	2	1	1	8	3	8		2	**9**	
Viceroy	*Limenitis archippus*	10	4	9	14	9	6	5	8	**8**	**3**
Hackberry Emperor	*Asterocampa celtis*	1			1			11		**6**	
Tawny Emperor	*Asterocampa clyton*	61	16	30	181	15	55	43	7	**261**	

Species		SKUNK'S MISERY BUTTERFLY COUNT 2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	St Thomas Count 2014
Satyrs, Subfamily Satyrinae											
Northern Pearly-Eye	*Enodia anthedon*	11	37	18	5	10	6	11	3	**20**	**1**
Eyed Brown	*Satyrodes eurydice*	2	7	3	17	4		11	2	**11**	
Appalachian Brown	*Satyrodes appalachia*	75	49	12	36	29	13	7	16	**27**	**7**
Little Wood-Satyr	*Megisto cymela*	421	488	449	561	107	426	183	483	**428**	**105**
Common Ringlet	*Coenonympha tullia*	1		2	3		8			**8**	
Common Wood-Nymph	*Cercyonis pegala*	221	287	74	166	300	84	259	209	**273**	**213**
Monarchs, Subfamily Danainae											
Monarch	*Danaus plexippus*	88	56	65	62	141	51	112	6	**49**	**89**
SKIPPERS (Hesperiidae)											
Spread-wing Skippers, Subfamily Pyrginae											
Silver-spotted Skipper	*Epargyreus clarus*	22	15	56	121	52	195	82	30	**42**	**50**
Southern Cloudywing	*Thorybes bathyllus*	1		2							
Northern Cloudywing	*Thorybes pylades*			1							
Wild Indigo Duskywing	*Erynnis baptisiae*					1					
Common Sootywing	*Pholisora catullus*	3	12	6		6		17	5	**3**	
Grass Skippers, Subfamily Hesperiinae											
Least Skipper	*Ancyloxypha numitor*		15	13	8	4	6	5	7	**4**	**1**
European Skipper	*Thymelicus lineola*	3326	709	2323	2042	104	1415	145	228	**412**	**212**
Peck's Skipper	*Polites peckius*	6	1	2	9	7			14	**9**	
Tawny-edged Skipper	*Polites themistocles*	8	5	5	6	17	31	15	16	**11**	**3**
Crossline Skipper	*Polites origines*	8	9	5	12	16	5	6	9	**5**	
Long Dash	*Polites mystic*	1	1	2		3	6	2		**2**	
Northern Broken-Dash	*Wallengrenia egeremet*	27	23	16	30	191	25	649	56	**95**	**10**
Little Glassywing	*Pompeius verna*	6	8	7	11	4	12		6	**11**	**2**
Delaware Skipper	*Anatrytone logan*	25	27	7	35	25	16	39	40	**68**	**1**
Mulberry Wing	*Poanes massasoit*		3	2	1	10	1		6	**5**	
Hobomok Skipper	*Poanes hobomok*	1	4	6	3		2			**3**	
Broad-winged Skipper	*Poanes viator*	5			2						
Dion Skipper	*Euphyes dion*			2		1	1			**4**	
Black Dash	*Euphyes conspicua*	1				1	1		1		
Two-spotted Skipper	*Euphyes bimacula*										
Dun Skipper	*Euphyes vestris*	27	73	8	10	129	15	362	33	**11**	**7**
Total Individuals		6438	3210	5485	4424	2310	3238	3969	1670	**2676**	**2042**
Total Species		52	47	57	53	59	53	53	45	**55**	**33**

COVER: Our cover insect honours Nature London's origin as the London Branch of the Entomological Society (see page 28). **Robin McLeod** took this photo of a **Common Green Darner**. These large dragonflies are indeed common in our area. Look for them hunting smaller insects over meadows or ponds, or migrating southward – sometimes in large numbers – in the fall.

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

NATURE LONDON THANKS TD FRIENDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOUNDATION

This spring, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation gave Nature London a grant to fund tree planting at Cedarcroft. Nature London was able to plant 27 saplings of 13 species of Carolinian trees and shrubs (see page 38 to learn more). The new plantings are enriching Cedarcroft and helping us celebrate our club's 150th anniversary.