

**MINUTES OF THE 900th MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB
JANUARY 17, 1995**

This celebration to mark the 900th meeting of the Brodie Club was held in the elegant surroundings of the Faculty Club of the University of Toronto. It began with a social hour during which 21 members and 24 guests viewed a display of photographs of meetings long past (arranged by Bill Carrick). Photographs were taken of members and guests present before we entered the dining room for an excellent meal. The photographer was Bernice Carrick.

The meeting was chaired by Bill Carrick, who is the member of longest standing among those currently active in the club. Ann Falls acted as secretary. Norm Martin asked the blessing.

Guests (of member): - Bernice Carrick (Carrick); Margaret Bodsworth (Bodsworth); Kathryn Falls, George Bryant (Falls); Louise and Paul Herzberg (Savage); Jennifer Young (Young); Betty and Heather Speakman (Speakman); Ruth Fallis (Fallis); Bea Churcher (Churcher); Maudie Reynolds (Reynolds); Rob Nisbitt (Huff); Mary Tasker, Kate Graham (Tasker); Yvonne and John Bendell, Robin Kyle (Bendell); Margaret Aird, Wendy Ripmeester, Leanne Leith (Aird); Katherine Lindsay (Riley); Jewel MacDonald (Bertin); Lister Sinclair .

Carrick spoke briefly of his early days in the club when the Brodie room at the museum would be filled with dense smoke from member's pipes by the end of each meeting. He served as secretary for a year soon after joining when the longtime secretary Russ Rutter retired to Huntsville. He noted that the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Toronto Ornithological Club (TOC) were offshoots of the Brodie Club, and welcomed George Bryant, secretary of the TOC to the meeting.

Regrets from Russ Tilt, Bob Ritchie, and Paul Catling were noted.

Bruce Falls read the minutes of the 800th meeting which was celebrated by a dinner at Hart House in December 1983. He also read the names of members who had passed away since the 800th meeting: Bill Gunn (15 October 1984), Herb Southam (14 May 1985), Rod Stanfield (July 1985), Charles Long (1 April 1986), Terry Shortt (28 December 1986), Ike Temple (4 February 1987), Dick Ussher (1989), Fred Fry (22 May 1989), Pete Petersen (29 October 1989), Leonard Bertin (26 January 1990), Ott Devitt (20 January 1992), Jack Satterly (1 March 1993), Elliot Auger (25 May 1993), Art Boissoneau (19 April 1994), Wm. Swinton (15 June 1994). A minute of silence was observed.

Members Notes and Observations: This part of the meeting was organized by Ron Tasker.

Mary Tasker reported that Joan Murray, director of the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, and author of a recent book on the artist Tom Thomson, had written about the influence of William Brodie on the artist who was his nephew. Brodie often took Thomson and other young people on hikes and introduced them to an appreciation of natural history. He was also an influence on the lives of Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles Currelly. Brodie was also deeply involved in the founding of Algonquin Park in 1893.

Murray Fallis, who joined the club 60 years ago, told of his gratitude to Professors Dymond, Coventry and MacIlwraith for inviting him to join the club, and of the pleasure he had had from the club and the very diverse interests of its members. He urged members to encourage young naturalists to join the club and ensure that its valuable tradition continues into the 21st century.

Bendell, an active member who very recently moved to a rural property in the Ottawa valley near Almonte, reported on the differences in birds and mammals seen there and at his previous home in Mississauga. Notable was the absence of house sparrows, starlings, house finches, rock doves, mourning doves, cardinals, red-breasted nuthatches and grey squirrels. Birds seen at the

new place included lots of black-capped chickadees, blue jays, juncos, tree sparrows. Also seen were evening grosbeaks, white-breasted nuthatches, hairy woodpeckers, ravens, red squirrels and white-footed mice.

Riley spent last November working on a CIDA project in the Mexican state of Aguascalientes as an advisor on parks and conservation strategy. This state recently declared 20% of its area as protected natural area, mostly privately owned high mesa and sierra. He was asked to recommend protective zoning for the most significant natural areas and advise on methods for selecting representative natural areas. He had interesting experiences looking for natural areas which only exist in the most remote regions. The state suffers from extreme soil erosion due to overgrazing, natural surface waters have been driven underground, and groundwater aquifers are declining dramatically. In hopes of improving the situation, the volunteers stressed to local media and politicians "the very sorry state of their environment".

Lumsden gave an update on the Trumpeter Swan Restoration Project in Ontario which is achieving considerable success. All early explorers mentioned trumpeter swans. The restoration program started in 1982, now sponsored by the Ont. Federation of Anglers and Hunters and since 1991 has had generous support from Scott Paper Ltd. At first eggs were obtained mostly from Grand Prairie. Swans are so aggressive that they must be spread out. There are now 19 cooperators who look after pairs. Cygnets are kept until 2 years old, and then released either at Wye Marsh or at Metro Toronto Zoo. Eggs of captive birds have a poor hatch rate, possibly because of inbreeding. In 1993 Alaska allowed them a quota of 50 eggs which allows some crossbreeding. In 1993 a pair of birds from the program bred in the wild at Wye Marsh, laid 7 eggs of which 6 hatched. This year the pair re-nested and hatched 3 young of which 2 later died of lead poisoning from shot picked up in other marshes. An inventory last fall counted 35 trumpeters in the wild in southern Ontario. In January 1995, 30 were found. Minnesota has a similar program also started in 1982, and some of these birds have spread into northern Ont. Several broods were seen last summer near Kenora. There is hope that lead shot will be prohibited in Ontario by 1996.

Paul Aird, the main organizer of the meeting, thanked the Speakmans for their help. He spoke of the Kirtland's warbler which is very rare and known to nest only in young stands of jack pine in Michigan. However birds have been found at Petawawa by Harrington in 1916, 1939, and 1946. Aird found single males there in 1977 and 1978. In Michigan the birds have increased to a high of 663 singing males from 167 in 1987, helped by habitat management, cowbird control, and a fire which got out of control and produced a lot of good habitat.

Speakman reported on pileated woodpeckers which have used beech trees at his cottage (Lake Simcoe) for roosting for 7-8 years. They regularly arrive 1/2 hour before sunset and inspect the tree before entering the hole. They are sometimes heard tapping inside the roosting hole - are they feeding?

Introduction:

Fred Bodsworth introduced the speaker, Lister Sinclair. He was born in India, schooled in London, England. Came to Canada in the 1940's, got a BA at UBC and an MA in mathematics at U of T. At one time he lectured in both math and opera at U of T, before switching to acting, playwriting, and broadcasting. Has had a long career at the CBC, for a while being vice-president in charge of program policy and development. Has very wide interests and knowledge, was associated with 'Nature of Things' for many years, and is currently host of the radio program 'Ideas'. Bodsworth welcomed Sinclair to the Brodie Club.

Speaker:

Lister Sinclair started his talk by reminiscing about his friend Jim Baillie with whom he shared many birding trips and adventures. He also told an anecdote about Roger Tory Peterson being

bitten by a tortoise while filming on the Galapagos Islands for the CBC, complete with imitations of tortoise intention movements.

His topic was emergent properties, "the things that happen that you do not intend to happen". His first example was how the steam engine was first developed to pump water out of tunnels in Cornish tin mines which were below sea level. James Watt improved the efficiency of the steam engine greatly by adding a condenser. The intention was dry feet for Cornish tin miners, the result was the Industrial Revolution. Actions can have unpredictable consequences. A branch of mathematics called Chaos Theory investigates this topic.

Another example dealt with paleontology - notably the discovery of the coelacanth, previously known only from fossils. This ancient fish has what appear to be stumpy legs. Why would a fish develop legs? Probably this happened to enable fish to reach another body of water if their own pond dried up, not to enable them to live on land. But the consequence was the development of land vertebrates.

It is generally accepted that birds evolved from reptiles and that feathers are modified scales. Possibly the feathers first function was insulation but they led to the emergent property of flight.

Stephen Jay Gould is interested in the emergent properties of logical thought and language, and how they developed. Spoken language is more rapid than reaction time. Music and language comes in long streams of motion and action which he thinks must be developed and planned in the brain. Apes can throw things accurately, an ability which requires a brain which can string a sequence of actions together. This ability may be a precursor to development of language skills, according to Gould.

Kuru, a rare, incurable, nervous system disease occurs only in 1 or 2 villages in Papua New Guinea. Scientists showed it is not caused by bacterial or viral agents. Anthropologists found more women and children got it. (They prepared corpses for burial, and handled brains). A veterinarian pointed out the similarity to 'scrapie' in sheep and 'mad cow disease' in cattle. It is now known to be caused by infection with a *prion* (protein with no DNA). The early investigators did not anticipate where the story would lead.

In closing, the speaker remarked that he has been fortunate to work in natural history. He returned to his friend Jim Baillie, as an example of the saying 'those whom the gods love die young'. That is, at whatever age they die they have a youthful outlook. He quoted Newton who said that he perceived himself as "a boy playing on a seashore now and then picking up a prettier pebble or a brighter shell while before me is a great ocean of truth". When Einstein died his ashes were eventually scattered in a stream. A reporter who asked what had become of him was told that Einstein had gone to join the ocean on whose shores Newton had played. So it was with Jim Baillie and all those whom we remembered.

Bendell thanked the speaker for his superb talk and also for many hours of enjoyment provided on the CBC.

Howard Savage mentioned some highlights in the history of the Brodie Club - a unique and venerable club which has persisted through 900 meetings with no president, no phone listing, no office address. Held together by a common interest in natural history, in life and the events around us. In the 20's and 30's the club criticized Jack Miner who advocated destruction of hawks and owls. He wanted to sue them but his lawyer could not find them!

William Brodie was the son of a Scottish immigrant who settled near Stouffville in the 1830's. He qualified as a dentist in the early 1900's but his intense interest in natural history led him to give up dentistry and become the first provincial entomologist. He was described by Prof. Thompson,

a charter member of the club as being broadminded, sympathetic, with a deep appreciation of truth and beauty, and intolerance of insincerity and dishonesty. Brodie published few papers but in 1902 published the first systematic faunal analysis in Ontario using material from archaeological sites. A biography of William Brodie by Louise Herzberg will soon be published.

The club began in 1922 when a group of naturalists met in the basement of the provincial museum and formed the Toronto Naturalists Club. The name was changed within weeks to the Brodie Club, to avoid confusion with the newly formed Toronto Field Naturalists.

The first woman member was elected nearly 60 years later in 1980 (botanist Sheila McKay-Kuja, present tonight). Recorded minutes are a cohesive factor in the life of the club. Earlier secretaries kept the job for many years, but in 1986 members started taking turns at recording the minutes, much to the relief of the elected recording secretary.

We now look forward to the 1000th meeting which should occur in 2007.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.

Members present: Paul Aird, Oliver Bertin, Fred Bodsworth, Jim Bendell, Bill Carrick, Rufus Churcher, Bruce Falls, Ann Falls, Murray Fallis, Don Huff, David Hussell, Harry Lumsden, Norman Martin, Norma Martin, Sheila McKay-Kuja, Keith Reynolds, John Riley, Howard Savage, John Speakman, Ron Tasker, Don Young.