



# SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF NATURAL HISTORY

## Report of Council for 2019

### 1. Objects

The Society is instituted for the historical and bibliographical study of all branches of natural history, including their cultural and social aspects, across all cultures.

In 2019 the Society provided public benefit and met its objects through:

- the continued publication of the peer-reviewed journal *Archives of Natural History*, which makes publicly available the results of relevant research including on-line access to recent articles, and the Society's Newsletter, which communicates less formally with members and facilitates their studies.
- the organisation of meetings which also help disseminate the results of research or promote the use of relevant archival collections
- encouraging the study of the history of natural history by awarding the Thackray and Founders' medals, the W.T. Stearn student essay prize and the Patron's Review
- offering small research grants for relevant research projects

Further details of each of these activities can be found below. Members of Council, as Charity Trustees, have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, especially as it relates to the charitable purpose "the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science" specified in the Charities Act 2011.

### 2. Membership

The Society had 361 individual subscribers at 31 December 2019, including 10 Honorary Members and the Patron; there were 96 institutional subscribers, but through subject collections, consortia and EBSCO, the journal reached a total of 433 Institutions. Online readership of the journal continues to grow; from January to August 2019 33,165 full text articles were accessed. The membership co-ordinator took responsibility for working with Edinburgh University Press in co-ordinating the membership database.

Miranda Lowe, Membership co-ordinator

### 3. President's Report

The focus for much of the year has been the development of our strategic plan. All Council members have been involved in this effort, with small subgroups taking forward specific key issues. We continue to make good progress on all fronts, but especially so in relations to Promotions, PR and Membership; our profile, especially on social media continues to grow and it is very encouraging to see a gradual increase in membership. The team at Edinburgh University Press have given sterling support in revising processes to the management of our membership lists and made great efforts to promote the Society in so many ways. Reviews of other strategic areas (Governance; Co-operation/Links; Awards) also make excellent progress. Governance is a particular focus as we seek to streamline Council to improve our efficiency; this includes detailed examination of our current 'Rules' as they apply to our Awards and the roles and responsibilities of Officers and Councillors. The Council "International Representatives" team has been very busy, and we have agreed a new set of Guidelines with input from our Representatives. New representatives are always welcome, and this year our representative in China (Jiang Che) has been very active on our behalf. Thanks to Che and his colleagues I was able to represent the Society at the "Fourth Cultures of Natural History Forum" in Zhongshan City, Guangdong Province in October 2019. The growth in the interest of the study of the history of science (and especially natural history) in China is remarkable and we welcome our engagement in those initiatives. One feature of our strategic review has been to consider the ways in which researchers in the history of natural history increasingly discuss the critical issues and themes related to the relationships that individuals, societies, civilizations, and nation-states have with nature. Our journal, *Archives of Natural History*, now receives an increasing number of articles reflecting this trend, so promoting our understanding of the nature–society–culture relationship. Council has discussed this trend and agreed a revised mission statement. This now reads: "The Society is instituted for the historical and bibliographical study of all branches of natural history, including their cultural and social aspects, across all cultures".

Inevitably, since March much of my effort, and that of Council, has been finding ways of dealing with the implications of the C-19 pandemic. Like many other organisations, we have had to resort to virtual meetings, holding our April Council meeting using Zoom to avoid unnecessary travel and personal contacts. This current 'Digital AGM' is in many ways a poor replacement for our planned Annual Conference and AGM in Cambridge in June but our obligations to the Charity Commission are such that it is imperative that we hold an Annual General Meeting this calendar year. The virtual world is unfamiliar territory for many of us, and I am very grateful to the small team of people who have helped to deliver this initiative and enabled our AGM to take place. My thanks to all Society members who have joined this AGM. You have enabled us to make some important decisions in addition to hearing about the continuing progress and achievements of the Society.

Professor Peter Davis, President.

#### **4. Publications and Communication**

##### **4.1 Editor's Report.**

During the period under report, June 2019 – May 2020, two issues of *Archives of Natural History* were published, in October 2019 and April 2020, respectively: Vol. 46, Part 2, and Vol. 47, Part 1. Altogether, these two Parts comprised 418 pages offering 25 research papers, two Short Notes, one obituary and 32 book reviews covering 34 titles. Vol. 47, Part 2 (October 2020), is set to publish 15 accepted research papers (including a W. T. Stearn Essay Prize-winning paper) and one obituary; Vol. 48, Part 1 (April 2021), has 13 research papers (including a Patron's Review) and two Short Notes allotted (as always, subject to change). At the time of writing, Vol. 48, Part 2 (October 2021), has three research papers scheduled for publication; at least seven papers that are currently in revision can be expected to be added to the list in the coming weeks, subject to formal acceptance. Sixteen pages of book reviews remain reserved for each issue.

Between 1 June 2019 and 13 May 2020, the Editor received 43 submissions from academic, museum and free-lance scholars and postgraduate students from 15 European countries, Brazil and the United States. Seventeen have been formally accepted to date, seven are currently being revised by the authors, four are with referees, three were withdrawn by the authors before peer review (two because of the queue before possible publication, one because the author was not willing to reduce the word count), and 12 submissions were rejected as inappropriate.

Subscription to ANH (membership and institutional) is highest in the UK, with almost half of all members and subscribers, followed by the USA and the rest of Europe with roughly a fifth each. Members and subscribers in Australasia, the Far East and the rest of the world each account for approximately a twentieth. Of institutional subscribers, the vast majority, over 60, are universities, either university libraries or other institutions devoted to the history of science or medicine. Museums, botanical gardens and public (provincial or municipal) libraries account for about ten subscribers. The only national libraries subscribing to *Archives* are those of Belgium and France (national libraries in the UK receive deposit copies). The Royal Society and a bookshop in Vienna bring up the rear.

Dr Charles Nelson stepped down as Copy Editor upon completing Vol. 46, Part 2; Elaine Shaughnessy (familiar to all as our Newsletter Editor) succeeded him in July 2019. Dr Arthur MacGregor is retiring as Associate Editor in June this year; Dr Isabelle Charmantier and Charles remain Associate Editors, and Maggie Reilly is our Book Reviews Editor. The Honorary Editor would like to take this opportunity to thank all for their unfailing support, as well as all 18 members of our Advisory Board for assistance whenever asked, and 30 referees for insightful, constructive peer review these last 12 months; without their support it would be impossible to deliver our journal. Our thanks are also due to our colleagues at Edinburgh University Press for ensuring timely and reliable publication and distribution, despite all the hindrances created by the current pandemic.

Herman Reichenbach, Editor

##### **4.2 Book Reviews Editor**

Maggie Reilly took on the role of Book Review Editor in January 2019. Initial tasks were the handover from the previous post holders and, as a novice on a steep learning curve, dealing with the reviews for 46.2. Elements of the job – keeping informed of and selecting titles for review, finding and communicating with reviewers and keeping on track for editor's and publisher's deadlines were quickly learned. Also, it was quickly realised that gathering in IPR forms requires a certain doggedness.

I would like to thank all members of Council but especially Herman Reichenbach, Elaine Shaughnessy, Gina Douglas and Charles Nelson for their patient guidance and help in settling me into the role. Thanks also to our colleagues at EUP for support and help.

Seventeen reviews (18 books) were published in 46.2 and 15 reviews (16 books) in 47.1. Reviews are well underway for 47.1, though there have been understandable delays due to the pandemic crisis, from publishers and distribution centres to the dispatch of hard copies. Some electronic versions of books have been made available as a stop-gap. I am very grateful to the 32 reviewers for their time and expertise.

Maggie Reilly, Book Reviews Editor

**4.3 Newsletter.** Two issues of the Society's newsletter were produced in 2019, NL 115 appearing in January and NL 116 in July. Council wishes to express its thanks to Elaine Shaughnessy for editing the *Newsletter* in addition to continuing to manage the Society's website (<https://shnh.org.uk>). The newsletter editor would like to thank SHNH members for their contributions to all our news channels which are always enjoyable and informative, and very welcome.

**4.4 Social Media.** Council also expresses its thanks to Elle Larsson and Ann Sylph who have taken over management of the SHNH Twitter account @SHNHSocNatHist which has grown to 3,416 followers; and to Miranda Lowe and Isabelle Charmantier who administer the Society's Facebook page (facebook.com/SHNHSocNatHist), which has grown to 2,727 followers. Simon Chaplin continued to monitor and support our Jiscmail account.

Elaine Shaughnessy, Newsletter Editor

## **5. Meetings Report**

The 2019 summer meeting and AGM was held at The King's Manor at the University of York, 4 - 5th June 2019, in association with the Geological Curators' Group. The meeting explored the multifaceted theme of **Trading Nature**, a popular theme with 73 delegates present on the first day and 66 delegates present on the second. A total of 21 papers and one poster were presented across the two days, with a wide range of papers and topics presented. Behind the scenes tours of the natural science collections at the Yorkshire Museum also took place as part of the meeting. Many thanks go to the numerous people from both organisations involved in ensuring that the meeting ran smoothly and was a great success. A full report of the meeting was published in July 2019, *SHNH Newsletter*, No. 116.

Owing to the developing situation relating to Covid-19, SHNH Council took the decision to reschedule our annual meeting due to take place in June 2020 in association with the Museum of Zoology, University of Cambridge. This meeting, **Pioneer Naturalists: champions of conservation and environmental engagement** will explore the history and role of naturalists (and others) as pioneers in biological, geological and landscape conservation, protection, environmental advocacy and engagement in its broadest sense. It has proved a popular topic and received an excellent response to the initial call for papers but will be postponed until spring / summer 2021. We will post regular updates on our website, in the Newsletter and through our other communication channels once we have a clearer picture of the possibilities.

Jo Hatton, Meetings Secretary

## **6. International Representatives Report**

As the only international society devoted to the history of botany, zoology and geology, natural history collections, exploration, art and bibliography, the SHNH draws its membership from several countries across the world. The Society's International Representatives (IR) are appointed to facilitate the flow of information between the Society and its overseas members, to promote the aims and objectives of the Society, and to encourage growth of the Society's membership in their region.

The subject of our international representation figured strongly in the work of Council this year as the Society is eager to expand its membership and, accordingly, to have representatives in as many parts of the world as possible to help with this task. We were thus very pleased to welcome Jiang Che as our International Representative for China and Brendan Cole for South Africa. So far, we have been unsuccessful appointing our representatives in Australia, New Zealand, India or Russia. The best representation we have is in Europe with 5 members representing us in Spain, Austria, Italy, Poland and Ireland, but we would welcome the appointment of 'ambassadors' in France, Holland and the Scandinavian countries. Unhappily, this year saw the retirement of our long-standing member, Professor Takeshi Watabe, who for many years represented the Society in Japan, now leaving that position open.

Following wide consultation with the representatives themselves, we have also worked on, and agreed, a revision of the existing IR guidelines concerning their appointments, duties and responsibilities, which were last defined over thirty years ago, in 1985.

We are very aware that in many parts of the world the subject of the history of natural history does not exist as an academic discipline, and it is with great difficulty we can recruit members and representatives who are engaged professionally in this subject. Most of our existing IRs are themselves professionals, variously engaged in teaching, research or looking after collections of museum specimens and archives, spanning all fields of natural history. Others are deeply committed amateurs, who also possess the knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment to contribute to the wellbeing of our Society. Through their work, not always paid, they are well positioned to interact with people to stimulate interest in the history of natural history thanks to their publications, public speaking, and displays. From mounting exhibitions, through meetings and their research work they communicate with a wide audience of people and encourage interest in and thus the aims of the Society for the History of Natural History.

The International Representatives of the SHNH have, as usual, distributed SHNH brochures at professional gatherings, or to library and museum visitors, and answered queries about the Society and its *Archives*. Below are compilations of their individual reports in the past year.

Compiled by Malgosia Nowak-Kemp, International Representatives Co-ordinator

### **Margarita Hernandez Laille - Spain**

Margarita reported that an exhibition "Driving Between Lions" took place at the National Natural Sciences Museum (MNCN). The exhibition was curated by Francisco Hernández, biologist, illustrator, naturalist painter and the artist of the exhibited paintings that were taken in the Etosha Natural Park and many other places in Namibia.

Another exhibition, this time to celebrate Darwin's day, titled 'Darwin - A glance that changed the world' was launched at the Spanish National Museum of Natural Sciences (MNCN) on 12th February 2020. The Museum had given the task of designing and curation of this permanent exhibition to Margarita and her team. She reported that there was a great

interest in this event and the inauguration was attended by many people. The exhibition covers Darwin's life, his journey in HMS Beagle, his work and his theory of evolution with texts, videos and museum material.

On the same day, designated "Darwin's Day", readings of Darwin and Wallace's works also took place at MNCN. These reading events at the Natural Sciences Museum were initiated by Margarita two years ago and since then they take place every year on 12th February.

Margarita reported that her latest book on Darwin was published last year.



Margarita Hernandez Laille at the inauguration of the permanent exhibition 'Darwin - A glance that changed the world' in February 2020

### **Alicja Zemanek – Poland**

Alicja reported that the 58<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Polish Botanical Society was held in Cracow in July 2019. During the congress the History of Botany Section of the Society met in the Pedagogical University of Cracow. The ten lectures given during the meeting covered the history of botany, ethnobotany and botano-cultural subjects. The participants ranged from representatives from various universities and museums in Poland, Ukraine and the UK. The meeting of the Section drew a lot of interest and many Congress delegates attended the talks of the Section.

The History of Botany Section met again in October, 2019. The meeting was held in the Śniadecki Collegium in the Botanic Garden of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. The talks and presentations included biographies of Polish naturalists, including one who adopted the Linnean binominal plant names in Polish botany, plants depicted in Medieval pictures and the history of the Polish name of fungus *Lactarius deliciosus*.



Alicja Zemanek gives paper 'Nadzieja Rojecka – a botanist from Vilna' at the 58th Congress of the Polish Botanical Society in Cracow, July 2019. Photo by I. Krzeptowska- Moszkowicz

### **Leslie Overstreet – North America**

Leslie reported that there are several changes taking place at the Smithsonian Libraries due to the retirement of some staff and the merger of the Libraries with the Archives.

Leslie is particularly happy to report that thanks to the SHNH meeting in York last year, she met Beth Tobin, a SHNH member and author of *The Duchess's shells: natural history collecting in the age of Cook's voyages* (New Haven, 2014). As a consequence, Beth came to the Cullman (the Joseph F. Cullman 3<sup>rd</sup> Library of Natural History at the Smithsonian Libraries) in December for research on a new project.

At the time of her reports there were plans for Kay Etheridge and Henrietta McBurney Ryan to lead a 10-day course on Mark Catesby and Maria Sibylla Merian at Oak Spring Garden & Library (Mrs. Mellon's collection of botanical art and books, located in Virginia) in June this year. Leslie was going to give a guest lecture there, as well as a field trip to the Cullman Library to see the Catesby collection.

Since the Covid-19 lock down the Smithsonian Libraries have been teleworking as there are many things staff can't do without access to the collections, but there was plenty to keep Leslie busy. She has been revising Special Collections policies, writing up acquisition requests from the NY bookfair in early March, video meetings, writing up accomplishments for the half-yearly performance review, and focusing on her Catesby research.

### **Christa Riedl-Dorn – Central Europe**

Christa reported on a range of events that took place over the last year in Austria:

1. May 22-24<sup>th</sup> - the University of Vienna and the Akademie Gemeinütziger Wissenschaften zu Erfurt held a Symposium titled Exchange and Gifts – Scientific Collections as results of European Cooperation.
2. From June 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> the Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander König in Bonn hosted a Symposium about the founding history of Natural History Museums (Gründungsgeschichte naturkundlicher Museen)

3. From May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> the Photo Museum of Bad Ischl held an Exhibition about Historical Animal Photography. “Von Tieren und Menschen” the emphasis of the Exhibition being on the Human Animal Relations.
4. On September 11<sup>th</sup> the Natural History Museum of Vienna hosted a Symposium about Alexander von Humboldt (250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his birth) as well as the Circumnavigation of the Frigate Novara (160<sup>th</sup> year since the return). Humboldt wrote instructions for the Circumnavigation and had a great influence on the publication of the scientific results.
5. The Universal Museum Joanneum in Graz organised a Symposium about the History of Earth Sciences titled Geologie und Künste (Geology and Art).
6. From April 5<sup>th</sup> - September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, an exhibition about Ernst Haeckel (Haeckel On Stage) took place at the Stadtmuseum in Jena.
7. In December 2019 two books dealing with the Austrian Expeditions to Brazil were published in Brazil, both in Portuguese and English. One, titled ‘Natterer’, mostly dealt with the zoologist Johann Natterer who was a member of the Austrian Expedition to Brazil in 1817. Natterer spent 18 years in Brazil and brought back home a sizable collection of animals and ethnographical objects. The second book, titled ‘Imperial Botany in Brazil’, deals with both the Austrian Expedition in 1817 and Emperor Ferdinand Max’s Expedition in 1860. The book features newly discovered botanical paintings and illustrations created by Dom Pedro II and his daughter Isabella. The richly illustrated volume also includes paintings commissioned by H.W. Schott (Aracea), kept in Christa’s Vienna Archives and which are being published for the very first time. These two books were presented to the Museum on March 5<sup>th</sup>, a few days before its closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are plans to make a documentary about Johann Natterer which will be partly filmed in the museum. The film titled Tesouro Natterer will be released in 2022, on the occasion of the 200 year jubilee of the Brazilian State.



Christa Riedl-Dorn at the presentation of the book ‘Natterer’ at the Natural History Museum of Vienna in March 2020

8. As 2019 was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Moon landing, most of the Austrian museums held ‘Moon’ exhibitions. The Natural History Museum in Vienna exhibition dealt with the History of Lunar Observation, the cultural History of the Moon, the Geology of the Moon and last but not least the moon landing itself.
9. On September 11<sup>th</sup> there was a Symposium about the Novara Expedition (1857-1859) and Alexander von Humboldt. SHNH members were among the speakers. There were also several events in Germany honoring Humboldt.
10. All Museums in Austria and most of Central Europe are currently closed due to the corona crisis, but some like the Natural History Museum offer online exhibitions [https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/en/online\\_content](https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/en/online_content)
11. Christa’s museum has put all the written documents of the Johann Natterer part-bequest online <https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/jart/prj3/nhm-resp/main.jart?content-id=1579009068995&rel=de&reserve-mode=active>
12. An additional two Archive collections can now be viewed online:
  - The botanist Theodor Kotschy’s (<https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/jart/prj3/nhm-resp/main.jart?content-id=1560763893105&rel=de>)
  - and Ottoman court physician, linguist and geologists Karl Hammerschmied’s (Abdullah Bey)( [https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/forschung/archiv\\_fuer\\_wissenschaftsgeschichte/sammlungen/abdullah\\_bey](https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/forschung/archiv_fuer_wissenschaftsgeschichte/sammlungen/abdullah_bey))

The Natural History Museum in Vienna has a new director, the biologist Katrin Vohland, formerly of the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, where she was Research Director of the Public Engagement with Science programme; she also held the chair for Science in Society (WiG). She will start her new post on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Elizabethann Boran – Ireland**

Elizabethann informs that over the year the following events took place in Dublin:

1. In the past few months pop-up talks were held on the following topics: ‘Puffins’, ‘Peregrine Falcons’ ‘Basking Sharks’, ‘Jellyfish’, ‘Salmon & Fishing’ and ‘Birdwatching and the Gannet’.
2. The Natural History Museum’s ‘Inspectorium’ outreach series focused on subjects such as sustainability, plankton and how to re-wild gardens.

3. **The Ellen Hutchins Festival:** <https://www.ellenhutchins.com/events-ellen-hutchins-festival/>, now in its fifth year, focuses on 'Ireland's first female botanist'. In 2019 it was held between 17-25 August 2019 and included a range of wildlife tours, exhibitions and talks about Ellen Hutchins (1785-1815).
4. **Edward Worth Library, Dublin: Natural History Events:** <http://edwardworthlibrary.ie/news-and-events/2019-news-and-events/the-edward-worth-library-2019-seminar-series/>
5. In November 2019: Professor Robin Lane-Fox (University of Oxford Fellow Emeritus) gave a lecture on 'Plants and Planning, 1580-1680'.
6. The Dublin Naturalists' Field Club held events every month, such as plant identification workshops and walking tours of urban geology. **Dublin Naturalists' Field Club: Events:** <http://www.dnfc.net/>

The library's newest online exhibition was on 'Mythical Creatures at the Edward Worth Library'. To find out more see: <https://mythicalcreatures.edwardworthlibrary.ie/>

### **Carlo Violani - Italy**

The autumn of 2019 saw the long-awaited reopening of the University Museum of Natural History in Pavia, re-christened "Cosmos" for the occasion. The Museum was founded in the second half of the 18th century by the empress Maria Theresa of Austria and was first directed by the famous Abbé Lazzaro Spallanzani. The specimens, often showing interesting taxidermic preparations, have been restored and are now displayed inside glass showcases, not always following the chronological date of acquisition. The rest of the Museum building is planned to open in the near future.

In late November 2019, the museum curators found 2 metatarsal bones labelled as "Didus ineptus -Rodriguez Island". This inscription mixed up incorrectly the Mauritius dodo and the other extinct bird, the Rodriguez solitaire. Thanks to the kindness of Dr M. Brooke, Strickland curator of Ornithology, and of Matt Lowe, Collections Manager in the Zoology Museum of Cambridge, Carlo ascertained that the Pavia bones belong to a true dodo, *Raphus cucullatus*. Unfortunately, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the archives of Pavia University are inaccessible for any research.



Carlo Violani with Matt Lowe, Collections Manager at the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, November 2019

### **Takeshi Watabe - Japan**

Takeshi in his final report describes the history of growing crops in Ehime Prefecture, Shikoku Island of the Japanese isles. The western part of it is characterized by its typical Triassic coastline and many small bays. There is a thriving fishing industry thanks to the abundance of sea bream and yellowtail in the sea, and an industrial growing of Akoya Pearl, widely aqua-cultured there. On the land there are terraced fields with citrus trees and vegetable plantations.

The terraced field at Yusu, Uwajima City was constructed in the early Edo Period (ca. 400 years ago) with the main purpose of cultivating sweet potatoes, but from the end of the 19th Century, the focus started to change to sericulture industry and the cultivation of mulberry trees. Thanks to the profits made out of the silk production, the distinctive stone walls were built that greatly changed the character of the field. The sericulture economy in Japan ended in the 1930's, forcing the men to go to the sea fishing for sardines, while the women and elderly folk undertook the cultivation of sweet potatoes and barley. It was at this time that the famous saying was coined: people can survive thanks to sweet potato and sardine.

Unfortunately, after the 1950's, the poor catch of sardines and the price fluctuation of sweet potatoes made it very difficult for the villagers to survive. Following an extensive examination of possible vegetables and other plants to grow at Yusu, the cultivation of potatoes was started. The terraced fields facing the Southeast are good at retaining solar heat, and the "Danshaku Potato," a variety of the Common White Potato, very popular in Japan, can be cultivated. When the potatoes are planted in October, a good harvest can be achieved the following April. The Potato at Yusu is very famous not only in Ehime Prefecture but also in the whole of Japan, thanks to its high quality. In Japan, the potatoes are used not only as food staple but also in the brewing industry.

In 2008, the terraced field in Yusu was designated as a national cultural landscape, and so to speak, "Living Machu Picchu Ruins" in Japan.



Living Machu Picchu Ruins” in Japan – the terraced field in Yusu

**Sergio Zagier – Argentina**

In July 2019 the Third International Congress Alexander von Humboldt/ Aimé Bonpland took place in Paraguay’s capitol, Asunción. Amongst the presentations were the following:

- Humboldt and Bonpland in America
- Paraguay in the XIX century
- Science and naturalists in Paraguay in the XIX century
- Indian heritage
- Humboldt and Bonpland in Paraguay today

There are plans for the historian, David Guevara, to publish his book (in Spanish) in 2020 on Aimé Bonpland’s life in South America. The book will cover the topics of aboriginal medicine, reports on the Falklands/Malvinas and Staten Island; and the collection of geological specimens gathered by Aimé Bonpland, all of them being under researched topics. Bonpland (1773-1858), who was imprisoned for ten years by a Paraguayan dictator, rests in Paso de los Libres, Argentina.

In 1980 the Geologist Francisco Nullo discovered sauropod bones in the south of Argentina, close to its border with Chile. It soon led to more discoveries of big dinosaurs by the palaeontologist José Bonaparte. But, it was not until 40 years later that old photographs allowed the rediscovery of the site. Under the team of the renowned Dr Fernando Novas a whole fauna and flora of 70 million years ago came to light, including the 25 meters long *Nullotitan glaciaris*. Remains of giant reptiles, smaller ones, snails, tortoises, birds, mammals, eggs, plants, etc. are now being studied by several experts who are recreating the tropical Patagonian landscape as it was in the Late Cretaceous, before being the flooded by the sea.

The 2019 expedition was sponsored by Coleman Burke, a passionate follower of Charles Darwin in Patagonia.



Dr. Fernando Novas and part of his team

**Jiang Che - China**

Jiang reports that the following events took place in China in the past year:

1) The most important event of this period was the fourth Natural History Culture Conference held in Zhongshan, Guangdong on 12–13, October. This conference was sponsored by the Zhan Garden (詹园, *Zhānyuán*). About 200 people (naturalists, historians and philosophers) attended this conference, including Prof. Peter Davis, the President of SHNH.

During the Zhongshan meeting, we had six symposia:

- (i) History of Natural History in China and in the West;
- (ii) Natural Observation and Writing;
- (iii) Chinese Classics and Natural History;
- (iv) Environmental Education and Science Communication;
- (v) Art of Natural History;
- (vi) Publications in Natural History.

All the symposia touched more or less on the history of natural history: Prof. Fa-ti Fan on Arthur de Carle Sowerby; Prof. Yuan Jian on natural history in China’s borderland regions; Prof. Zhou Jintai on natural history and the history of things; Ms Wang Yangyi and Ms Qi Xiaozhen on Zhanghua’s (c. 290 CE) *Bowuzhi (Records of Diverse Things)*; Ms Li Ruijie on zoological and botanical classification in the late Qing Dynasty; Dr Xing Xin on *ikkaku* (the horn of narwhal)

in the Edo period; Dr Jiang Che on aquatic animals in Pliny's *Natural History*; Ms Yang Xueni on the roles of text and experience in Conrad Gessner's *Historia Animalium*; Mr Chen Chaoqun on George D. Wilder, Hugh Wells Hubbard and their "Birds of Northeastern China"; Prof. Liu Zongdi and Mr Li Shiqiong on *Shan Hai Jing (The Classic of Mountains and Seas)*; Ms Xu Ling on plants in Chinese Buddhist texts; Prof. Cao Hui on illustrated herbals in ancient China; Dr Yang Sha on plant classification in Chinese herbalism; Ms Yu Keqin on ancient imagination of nature in southern China; Ms Yang Shuya on Dolaucothi Gold Mines in Wales; Ms Chen Zhimeng on Feng Chengru's (1896–1968) botanical illustrations; Ms Luo Xiaotu on the history of nature printing; Mr Zhang Chenliang on marine animals in *Haicuo Tu (Atlas of Marine Creatures)* in the Qing Dynasty.

There was also an accompanying exhibition on European botanical illustrations in the Zhan Garden during the conference. Most of the objects of this exhibition were the original plates taken from *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*. Some antiquarian books on botany and zoology were also exhibited there.



2) The 2019 Annual Conference of CSHST (Chinese Society for the History of Science and Technology) was held in Hefei, Anhui on 25–28, October. A panel on the history of biology was organised. Some speakers and their topics are as follows: Prof. Fang Xiaoyang on the species and distribution of hallucinogenic drugs in China; Dr Xing Xin on *ikkaku* in the Edo period; Dr Wang Zhao on drawings of birds-of-paradise in pre-modern China; Mr Ou Jia on the so-called *Jiao* fish (鮫魚) in ancient Chinese texts; Ms Yang Shuya on Theophrastus's description of symbiosis; Mr Liu Guixi on Pyotr Kuzmich Kozlov and Mongolian knowledge of animals and plants; Prof. Fu Lei on Lamarckism in China. Dr Jiang Che presented Linnaeus's historiography of botany on another panel; Prof. Christine LuK also discussed the images of jellyfish in China and in the West.

3) On 30 November there was an interdisciplinary workshop devoted to the history of natural history: "Frontiers and Natural History" organised by the Center for the Study of Chinese Ethnic Minorities & Collaborative Innovation Center for Ethnic Minority Development, Minzu University of China, and Department of Sociology, Peking University. 25 historians, sociologists and scientists attended this workshop. Prof. Yuan Jian from Minzu University chaired the workshop and gave a keynote speech. He underlined the necessity of investigating the changing classification schemes of the natural things (and, to a lesser extent, artefacts) from the frontiers of China. Attendees shared several case studies on natural knowledge produced in or about the China's borderland. Some noteworthy speakers and their topics are: Prof. Duan Zhiqiang on *fengshui* and the geographical understanding of China's frontiers; Mr Yin Kaipu on Ernest Henry Wilson's explorations in China; Dr Wan Xiufeng on Tibetan incense and Pu'er Tea in the court of the late imperial China; Prof. Mao Xiaoling and Ma Chongwei on the folk plant taxonomy practiced by the Yi people in their religious rituals; Prof. Chen Wei on natural knowledge in the medieval Islamic trade literature; Dr Jiang Che on 19th-century naturalists' investigation of the butterflies from China's frontiers; Dr Jiang Hong on the role of female naturalists in the 19th-century colonial botany; Ms Wu Lingjing on the history of classifying the *Santalum* species; Dr Wang Zhao on *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*.





4) A new exhibition “When Science Meets Arts: Botanical Illustrations from *Curtis’s Botanical Magazine*” opened on 2 December in Hanfenlou Art Gallery, Beijing. This exhibition was sponsored mainly by the Commercial Press, a leading academic publishing house in China. Dr Wang Zhao helped install this exhibition. Four public lectures on the history and techniques of botanical illustration were also given.

Jiang reports that there were 4 new significant publications concerning natural history:

1) *Chinese Journal of Natural History*. Vol. 4. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2019. 204pp.

[《中国博物学评论》，第四期，北京：商务印书馆，2019年。204页。]

In this new volume, there are five articles on the history of natural history: Prof. Zhang Lianwei on editing the primary sources on zoology and botany in ancient China; Ms Chen Zhimeng on Feng Chengru’s (1896–1968) botanical illustrations; Dr Jiang Che on 19th-century naturalists’ investigation of Chinese butterflies; Wang Chaoxu, Zhang Lin and Zhang Lianwei on ancient Chinese knowledge of the common blackbird (*Turdus merula*).

2) Tu Xin. *Lu Xun and Natural History*. Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 2019. 346pp.

[涂昕：《鲁迅与博物学》，上海：上海文艺出版社，2019年。346页。]

Lu Xun (1881–1936) is often considered one of the greatest writers and revolutionaries in 20th-century China. In this book, Dr Tu Xin discusses Lu Xun’s interest in natural history, and how Lu Xun practiced, read and translated mineralogy, zoology, botany and evolutionary theory. Tu argues that the knowledge of natural history also influenced Lu Xun’s philosophy, especially his idea of mutualism.

3) Zhang Chenliang. *Notes on “Atlas of Marine Creatures”*. Vol. 3. Beijing: CITIC Press, 2019. 256pp.

[张辰亮：《海错图笔记》，第三册，北京：中信出版集团，2019年。256页。]

This book is the third volume of the series. Mr Zhang, a naturalist and a popular writer, has studied 63 drawings from the *Atlas of Marine Creatures* by NIE Huang (fl. 1698). Having explored several ancient Chinese texts, he systematically identified species appearing on Nie Huang’s drawings. He also examined folklores about marine animals in ancient China in a critical way.

4) Chen Zhimeng. *Natural History and Arts: Studies on Feng Chengru’s Botanical Illustrations*. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 2019.

[陈智萌：《博物与艺术：冯澄如画稿研究资料》。北京：文物出版社，2019年。]

This is a set consisting of two beautifully designed books. The first book surveys the history of natural history and describes the life of Feng Chengru (1896–1968), the father of scientific botanical illustration in China. The second book includes 333 illustrations made by Feng Chengru in facsimile.

Jiang writes that following the Covid 19 pandemic, Zoom has become the main way of contact not only in the UK, but in China as well. It is also used extensively to online lecturing. The social life in China has been stagnant since January, and there are no noticeable events so far. Jiang is working on a new blogging project “Perspectives on the History of Natural History”. The site (in Chinese) is still under construction and can be seen on (<http://sandbox.naturalhistory.net>). It will hopefully go online on May 1 this year with the domain naturalhistory.net. The aim of this project is to create a Chinese platform that contains new events, publications and an archive of various materials for those who are interested in the history of natural history. Jiang also plans to create a page about SHNH on this site (the temporary URL: <http://sandbox.naturalhistory.net/shnh/>) where people in China will be able read about the Society.

**Brendan Cole – South Africa**

Brendan, in his first report as the International representative for South Africa, writes that the number of people affected by Covid-19 in SA is, according to the official statistics, relatively low. The Eastern Cape is one of the least affected provinces, so the towns are not in a panic. The Drakensberg area is so isolated that the virus seems like a distant event. Nonetheless, the lockdown is severe – you are fined or arrested if caught outside your property.

The temperature can get down to -13 °C here in the winter with regular snow in typical years, so Brendan is not sure if the plants he tries to cultivate here will survive. He has also a number of local indigenous plants grown from seed collected in the neighbouring valleys and highlands, so he is very interested to see if they will withstand the temperature.

He has been spreading information about the Society and trying to gauge interest in the SHNH but has nothing really to report so far. Once things return to normality, he will continue this work. He has an article for the *Archives*, which he will submit shortly, but he might hold off until the UK is back in action to avoid the backlog.

## 7. Treasurer's annual report

The financial position of the Society remains healthy and we are within the recommendations of the Charity Commissioners with regard to reserves. They recommend that we keep a reserve equivalent to nine months expenditure. The income from Edinburgh University Press breaks down as follows:

15% of £35232 income on <i>Archives</i> , vol. 35 onwards.	£5284.87
60% of £2286 income on <i>Archives</i> , vol. 1-34	£1717.20
25% membership fees collected	£3359.00
Editorial support	<u>£1000.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£11361.07</b>

The small deficit recorded (in the Trustees Report) was caused by an accounting error at the Liverpool Museums. The 2018 AGM was held in the Liverpool Museum and for some reason - notwithstanding prompting by the Treasurer and our representative in the Museum - we didn't receive their invoice until September 2019. Other features that need explaining are noted in the footnotes to the statement of Financial Activities in the Trustees' Annual Report. It is also worth noting that our income from Edinburgh University Press has risen by 16% over the last five years.

As a result of the Coronavirus there will be very little expenditure on a 2020 AGM and lower spending on Council meetings. It remains to be said that the Society is confident that our assets are safe with our bankers CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Bank.

W. A. Noblett, Treasurer

## 8. Small Research Fund

Disappointingly, there have been no applications for grants from the Small Research Fund since the AGM of 2019. Non-professional SHNH members are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities available, in all fields covered by the society's charitable purpose, in carrying out research to benefit the scholarly community. A "non-professional" in the present context is regarded as having no gainful employment as a historian or bibliographer for the specific purpose of the proposed research.

Guidelines and application forms are regularly provided in the society's newsletters and on the SHNH website. Members may be pleased to note that the following amendments to the rules have been made during the past year:

- 1) Council has approved an increase to the available funding for each grant from £100 to £250.
- 2) The maximum funding available in any financial year is currently £500.

It may also be noted that:

- 1) Inclusivity is emphasized by the lack of any age limit, which is particularly advantageous for amateur retirees.
- 2) Members outside the United Kingdom are welcome to apply for research funding, which can be paid in local non-sterling currencies when necessary.

All SHNH members are invited to assist in raising the profile of the Small Research Fund by reminding colleagues engaged in unaffiliated research of the opportunities thereby presented. Personal contacts can be a very effective way of encouraging applications.

R. B. Williams, Small Research-Fund Co-ordinator

## 9. Stearn Essay Prize 2019

The submission deadline for essays in 2019 was 30 July and judging completed by the end of August. There were 3 entries this year: 'Funerary Archaeoentomology: A journey to rediscover the ancient practice of mummification in Italy', 'It takes a village: The life of Henry Thomas Soppitt and the attempts by provincial mycologists to navigate their scientific legacy' and 'Galenising the New World: Joseph-François Lafitau's "Galenisation" of Canadian Ginseng, c. 1716-1724'. The winning essay, by unanimous decision, was 'It takes a village: The life of Henry Thomas Soppitt and the attempts by provincial mycologists to navigate their scientific legacy', by Nathan Smith, a postgraduate at the University of Cambridge.

The number of entries was slightly disappointing, particularly given the excellent work done by Elle and Elaine and others in publicising the competition and our decision to postpone the submission date to give entrants extra time to complete their essays. Measures are being taken to promote the prize more strongly on social media, and the

judging criteria are being assessed as part of the Prizes Review I am currently undertaking. The deadline for this year's prize is 30 July 2020.

Helen Cowie, Chair of the Stearn Essay Prize Panel

#### **10. Medals 2019**

During substantive discussions in Council on the development of a Strategic Plan for SHNH the awards for the Thackray and Founders' medals were put in abeyance for 2019.