

# THE SYSTEMATICS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

## DRAFT MINUTES

**28<sup>th</sup> November 2012** Council Room, 5 pm  
Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0LQ.



**Present:** *Council:* J. Brodie (President), R. Scotland (President elect), P. Wilkie (Secretary), P. Olson (Treasurer), D. Gower (Editor-in-Chief), R. Wilson (WebMaster), J. Bennett (Membership Secretary), R. Mounce, M. Vorontsova, E. Lucas, T. Sarkinen, M. Genner, E. Michel, J. Todd, plus 10 non-council attendees.

Apologies: A. Monro (Programmes Secretary), R. Jenner (Newsletter Editor), B. Klitgaard (Grants & Awards Secretary), M. Kuhlmann, G. Novarino, **C. Costu?**

### 1. Minutes of 2011 AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted and approved as a fair and accurate representation of the meeting.

### 2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### 3. President's Business

The President formally opened the meeting by thanking those attending. She highlighted the three main goals she had set when starting the presidency three years ago. The first was that the Young Systematists' Forum (YSF) would continue to flourish. She was happy to confirm that it had indeed done so and that it had become even more popular over the past few years and had clearly established itself as a highly respected meeting. The president wished to thank E. Michel, J. Todd, M. Vorontsova and J. Droop for their hard work and commitment to making this meeting such a success.

The second had been to keep science at the heart of the Systematics Association. She was happy to report that through a varied and interesting meetings programme this had been achieved with well attended meetings that had been testament to the speakers and the scientific content of their talks. The President wished to thank James Cotton and the current Programme Secretary, Alex Monro, for making these such a success. The President also mentioned that the biennial meeting in Belfast had been excellent but rather smaller than usual. She was aware that the new president had already started discussion about the form future biennials might take and that she looked forward to attending these.

The third was that the financial situation of the SA would be stable. She was happy to announce that through improved interest rates, royalties from SA books and income from SynTax administration the SA was indeed in a stable financial footing and had been able to deliver what it had wanted to. She thanked Pete Olson for his efficient and helpful handling of the SA accounts.

She highlighted that relationships with the Linnean Society had been good over the

past three years and that although she would not support merger of the Societies she envisaged a very good and productive relationship over the coming years with the possibility of developing some new joint initiatives.

A highlight of the past year had been the SA 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and the President thanked the speakers, Dave Williams, Richard Fortey and Sir David Attenborough. She also wished to thank council members for their hard work in making it such a success.

## **Q&A**

None

## **4. Treasurer's Report**

Peter Olson presented the following report:

The finances of the Association are healthy and have seen a modest upward trend for the past 3 years, with our overall net worth increasing by over £2K during the 2011-12 financial year. In particular, royalties increased substantially (£6,559 cf. £3,768), as did stock dividends and subscriptions, albeit we are still losing income through a significant percentage of members paying previous rates. We also received our final instalment of annual administrative income (£2,500) from the SynTax scheme which has been important in offsetting expenditure in recent years. Nevertheless, substantial increases in our recurrent revenue streams (i.e. publishing royalties, subscriptions and investment earnings), that account for almost 78% of our total income, suggest that we will continue to be able to meet future income requirements based on our present levels of expenditure. Total expenditure remained roughly the same as in previous years. However, a significant increase in room hire and catering was seen as a result of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and officer's expenses increased as a result of Council including officers needing to commute considerable distances to attend meetings. Nevertheless, nearly 70% of the Association's expenditure went toward direct charitable expenses, and only 17% was spent on running costs, with 13% reinvested toward future earnings. I thank our Membership Officer Jonathan Bennett and Web Officer Rupert Wilson for their assistance in financial matters throughout the year, and the Linnean Society's Treasurer, Priya Nithianandian, for helping to ensure smooth running of the joint SRF scheme. Lastly, I wish to thank Neil Greenwood, NHM Director of Finance and Corporate Services, for charitably offering his time and expertise to examine our accounts, which have been approved for the 2011-12 financial year.

THE SYSTEMATICS ASSOCIATION

Accounts for the Year to 30 April 2012

1. Receipts & Payments Account (General Funds)

Income Receipts	£	£	cf. 2011
Member Subscriptions	£5,880		£4,389
Royalties	£8,559		£3,768
Investment Income			
Bank Interest	£21		£21
Dividends- cash	£1,180		£1,176
Dividends- units	£2,384		£1,650
		£16,024	£10,984
Other Receipts			
Administrative Income (CoSyst)	£2,500		£2,500
Biennial Income incld. Donations	£1,662		£4,273
Refunds (grants, etc.)	£323		£1,000
Donations	£20		
Sale of Investments	£0		£0
		£4,525	£7,773
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£20,549</b>	<b>£18,757</b>
Direct Charitable Expenditure			
Conference & Course Support	£4,612		£4,088
Grants & Awards	£8,000		£8,000
Newsletter/WWW	£1,413		£1,178
AGM/Huxley/Policy/YSF	£805		£1,464
		£12,630	£12,710
Other Expenditure			
Secretarial Expenses	£97		£42
Officers Expenses	£717		£0
Council Member's Expenses	£0		£0
Hire of Rooms & Catering	£2,361		£1,457
Biennial Expenses incld Symp Support	£40		£365
Bank Charges	£29		£27
		£3,244	£2,491
Payments for Investment Assets			
New Investments	£2,384	£2,384	£1,650
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£18,258</b>	<b>£16,851</b>
<b>Net Receipts for Year</b>		<b>£2,291</b>	<b>£1,906</b>
<b>Bank Balances at 30 April 2011</b>		<b>£28,065</b>	<b>£28,159</b>
<b>Bank Balances at 30 April 2012</b>		<b>£30,356</b>	<b>£28,065</b>

2. Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 30 April 2012

Monetary Assets	£	£	
Bank and Cash balances			
HSBC Treasurer's Account	£9,346		£7,076
Triodos Savings Account	£21,010		£20,989
Total For General Purposes		£30,356	£28,065
Investment Assets as of 30 April 2012			
Charinco	£12,379		£11,871
M&G Charifund	£48,312		£48,472
COIF Charities Investments	£11,952		£12,196
		£72,643	£72,539
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>£102,999</b>	<b>£100,604</b>

Peter D. Olson, 01 May 2012  
For and behalf of the Council of the Systematics Association

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE  
COUNCIL OF THE SYSTEMATICS ASSOCIATION

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

\* to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and

\* to prepare accounts which accord with accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act

have not been met; or

2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to obtain a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name: Neil Greenwood CIPFA  
Position : Director of Finance & Corporate Services, Natural History Museum  
Address: Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, UK  
Date:

## Q&A

The President thanked Pete for his continuing efficient management of the SA finances.

## 5. Programme Secretary's Report

The president presented the following report in Alex Monro's absence:

The Association's program this year consisted of the three named lectures, a special anniversary event, the Young Systematists' Forum and one stand-alone meeting.

April: The 5th Annual biodiversity policy lecture (joint with Linn Soc) was another success and given by James Marsden of Natural England 'Marine Protected Areas in English Waters'.

June: A special event was held on the 20th June to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Association, including a talk by Sir David Attenborough and Richard Fortey and a reception held at the Natural History Museum. Footage of this should become available through the Association's website soon.

July: there was a stand-alone meeting (symposium) part-funded by the Systematics Association, 'Planarians to Parasitism: Development and Stem Cells in Flatworms' organised by Pete Olson (NHM) in Lisbon. The meeting was co-sponsored by BMC Parasites and Vectors and all funds went toward offsetting the registration costs of the guest speakers. There was a good and lively audience of around 45 people. Unfortunately no book proposal will be forthcoming.

October: *Julian Huxley lecture* was given by Prof. Peter Linder, of the University of Zurich. Entitled 'The evolutionary history of the danthonioid grasses: dispersal, niche evolution and radiation in the Southern Hemisphere'. This talk is available to listen again at: <http://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2012/10/h-peter-linder-the-evolutionary-history-of-the-danthonioid-grasses-dispersal-niche-evolution-and-radiation-in-the-southern-hemisphere>.

November: In tonight's "*President's lecture*". Prof. Juliet Brodie will speak on 'The Big Bang: the impact of twenty years of molecular systematics on understanding the algae'. The final event of the calendar – the *Young Systematists Forum* – the 14th - will be held tomorrow (November 29). Thanks to the organisers of the Young Systematist's Forum - Ellinor Michel, Jon Todd and Maria Vorontsova.

### Composition of the Programme's Committee

Over the past couple of years Programme Committee membership had reduced somewhat. It is with pleasure therefore that I welcome Robert Scotland and Stefanie Klug as new members.

### Looking ahead to 2013

18 April 2013, 6th Annual Biodiversity Policy Lecture (Joint with Lin.Soc.), Julian Hosking, 'Integrated mediators in domestic and wild species'

20 June 2013, Sir Julian Huxley Lecture, Mike Benton, title to be confirmed but likely on vertebrate palaeontology.

14 November 2013, joint with the Linnean Society we are hoping to hold a debate between George Monbiot and Roger Scruton along the lines of whether environmentalism belongs to the political right or left.

Early November 2013, a stand-alone meeting proposed by David Williams (NHM), 'Willi Hennig (1913—1976): His Life, Legacy and the Future of Phylogenetic Systematics'

## **Q&A**

The President thanked Alex for his hard work over the past year and for helping develop an exciting programme for next year. She also thanked the YSF organising committee.

## **6. Editor-in-Chief's Report**

David Gower presented the following report:

The main news for the year since 30 November 2011 (note: all sales figures correct only to October 2012):

(1) Two SA Special Volumes have been published since the 2011 AGM:

**81. Patiny, *Evolution of Plant-Pollinator Interactions*.**

HB @ £75.00, published by CUP, December 2011.

348 copies sold including 24 e-sales

**82. Gower, Johnson, Richardson, Rosen, Rüber and Williams *Biotic Evolution and Environmental Change in Southeast Asia***

HB @ £70.00 – Published by CUP, July 2012.

122 copies sold including 8 e-sales

(2) The sales figures for the four SA Special Volumes published in the previous year are as follows:

**77. Upchurch, McGowan and Slater, *Palaeogeography and Palaeobiogeography: Biodiversity in Space and Time*.**

HB @ £76.99, published by CRC Press, October 2011.

218 copies sold (43 since last AGM)

**78. Hodkinson, Jones, Waldren and Parnell *Climate Change, Ecology and Systematics*.**

HB @ £75.00, published by CUP, April 2011.

535 copies sold (226 since last AGM)

**79. Fontaneto, *Biogeography of microscopic organisms. Is everything small everywhere?***

HB @ £60.00, published by CUP, May 2011.

296 copies sold (102 since last AGM)

**80. Wanntorp and Craene, *Flowers on the Tree of Life***

HB @ £60.00, published by CUP, September 2011.

243 copies sold (118 since last AGM)

These sales figures do not seem as high as for some of the best-selling, previous (pre-CUP) volumes. CUP are satisfied with sales. Total sales since the last AGM are 959 volumes at a total value of £68,100.57. This represents royalties of over £6,000.

(3) The manuscript for one additional Special Volume has been submitted and is now in production with CUP:

**Wilkin & Mayo, *Early Events in Monocot Evolution***

(4) Two additional CUP volumes are at an earlier stage, with contracts already signed and editors and authors working on manuscripts.

*Descriptive Taxonomy; the foundation of biodiversity research*, edited by Mark Watson and Chris Lyal.

*Next Generation Systematics: Studying evolution and Diversity in an Era of Ubiquitous Genomics*, edited by James Cotton, Joseph Hughes and Peter Olson.

(6) The manuscript for one textbook (contract signed) is also in preparation:

*Cladistics: a guide to systematics in biological classification*, by David Williams

(7) Previous Association volumes continue to sell and raise revenue for the SA, though at slightly slower rates. For example, the two most recent pre-hiatus volumes (*Unravelling the algae*, Nov 2007; *The new taxonomy*, April 2008) sold 37 and 50 copies, respectively, between October 2011 and October 2012 (35 and 71 copies, respectively in the same period for the previous year).

(8) The issue of modernising SA publications has been discussed in 2012 in Council Meetings and in correspondence between the SA Editor in Chief and our CUP point of contact, Dominic Lewis. Two main issues have been addressed: (1) data accessibility – CUP have agreed to allow authors of SA Special Volume chapters to deposit underlying data with publically freely available online databases, (2) Open Access –academia is moving swiftly on this issue, underlined by the Finch Report, changes in the UK universities' Research Excellence Framework (REF) and forthcoming changes to grant-holder requirements by UK Research Councils and the EU. Currently CUP has no plans to make SA Special Volumes Open Access because books tend not to be rated by the REF. The SA plans to continue dialogue with CUP and to request further changes that would increase the ability to discover, access, and cite SA Special Volumes. DG thanks Ross Mounce, Ronald Jenner and Matthew Wills for help with this.

**Q&A**

Richard Bateman commented on the slower sales than usual and asked if CUP had provided information to establish if this was caused by fewer institutional or

individual sales? DG responded that this information was not available to him and that he would investigate this further. He suggested the SA/CUP may have to modernize its offer to the reader in future and highlighted that SA volumes will be advertised at the BioSyst conference in Vienna.

Pete Olson asked if open access would mean less income to which DG responded that Council had and will continue to look at the implications of this to SA finances. DG would be talking to CUP to try and encourage them to relax their rules and to hopefully make some chapters freely available on-line 6-12 months after publication

DG mentioned that for the latest SA volume 348 hard copies and 24 e-books had been sold. PO expresses surprise that e-books were not cheaper than actual books to buy.

The President thanked David for his continued work on SA volumes and for developing a very good working relationship with CUP.

## **7. Grants and Awards Secretary's Report**

Juliet Brodie read out the following report on behalf of Bente Klitgaard and Tom Richards:

### **SRF:**

In June 2012 the Linnean Society Officers agreed to increase the Linnean Society grant from £19k to £25k which was a really nice surprise to the SRF secretary. Adding the £ 6k from the Systematics Association gave a total of £ 31k, which allowed us to fund 30 proposals of the 63 legitimate applications. The increase in funds is not a permanent feature.

The reviewers this year were: Alex Monro, Wolfgang Wuster, Jon Todd, Eve Lucas, and Bente Klitgaard for the Systematics Association, and Sylvia Pressel, Dave Williams, James Tosh, Tiina Sarkinen, Anne Jungblut and Colin Pendry for the Linnean Society. All applicants were notified of the result by end of May 2012, and the results were put on the SA website by the beginning of June.

I would like to express my thanks to the Linnean Society for its added donation of £ 6,000, its help with providing reviewers and with making the application process run smoothly.

Guidelines for reviewers were developed (see below). Guidelines for applicants were also developed and have been placed on the SA website.

### **Guidelines for reviewers:**

It is the same scoring system as last used in the 2010/11 round. Please mark the applications on a scale from 0 to 4, *where 0 = poor, 1 = below average, 2 = average, 3 = good, and 4 = excellent*. As this is a relatively simply system, it demands of the markers that you think carefully about ALL aspects of the proposal in relation to the criteria set out in the guidelines from the website. You should nominate your top five proposals by giving the top one 5 extra bonus points, second 4, third 3, fourth 2 and fifth 1 extra bonus point.

Each proposal will be marked by 3 reviewers, one from each society, and at least one

zoologist for zoological projects and one botanist for botanical projects.

## **Q&A**

The President thanked Bente and all those involved in reviewing applications.

## **Syn-Tax:**

The President highlighted that Tom Richards was no longer the chair of SynTax and that this was the final year of the initiative. She highlighted that Matthew Wills will be reviewing the successes (or not) of the initiative for the SA.

## **Q&A**

Richard Bateman asked if the research councils were going to review the success of the initiative. The President replied that they had not yet reported back.

Pete Olson asked if there was a stipulation to cite SynTax in any subsequent publications and asked if it was possible to place these on the SA website. The President agreed that this would be a good idea and asked council to action it.

**ACTION: Council**

## **8. Membership Secretary's report**

Jonathan Bennett read out the following report:

1. The membership of the Systematics Association stood at 498 members this year, a 7% increase on 2011. 61% of members are based in the UK, with a further 16% from the rest of Europe.
2. This year has seen the completion of the on-line membership application facility. Almost all new members join on-line and payment is now all electronic. Additionally, it is now possible to renew membership electronically. This has made following up members with lapsed subscriptions easier and quicker.
3. We now have email addresses for the majority of members, and this is the preferred method of communicating with members re. membership dues.
4. When members renew their membership electronically many are now opting to receive the newsletter in electronic format, and the vast majority of new members have chosen this method. We would encourage all members to opt for this to further reduce the Association's print and mailing costs.
5. Work remaining for this coming year includes contacting members who have an old standing order set at £5. The Association increased standard membership rates to £20 (£10 reduced rate) a while back but there are a significant number of members who still pay old rates.
6. I would like to thank Rupert Wilson for his extensive assistance with the website and on-line payment system Pete Olson for his continued assistance with the accounts.

## **Q&A**

Robert Scotland commented that he had been charged monthly for his membership but that this had now been rectified.

Lauren Gardiner asked why some members were still paying £5 membership and that



this was rather unfair. JoB suggested £5 was better than nothing although it is his priority to have this resolved as soon as possible. He was in a much better position to do this now that he had e-mail information for members. Pete Olson asked if we can ask for payment of arrears. JoB thought we could try but it might be better just to update payment from now. It was suggested that it could be seen as a donation of £5 for the past few years instead.

Robert Scotland asked if membership levels were similar to those 20 years ago to which JoB replied it was slightly lower (approximately 550 20 years ago) but that current membership levels are slowly increasing and that this was from generally non UK Systematists. Pete Olson highlighted the need to be a member of the Systematics Association or Linnean Society in order to apply for SRF funding.

It was suggested that membership applications be placed in welcome packs at biennials, YSF, BioSyst meetings etc. and that council identify marketing opportunities.

**Action: Council**

The President thanked Jonathan for his work in bringing membership information up to date and making this available electronically.

## **9. Newsletter Editor Report**

The president presented the following report in Ronald Jenner absence:

Since issue 33 of *The Systematist* was published late last year, I have been slow in accumulating copy. However, a sufficient amount of good quality copy has now been collected and a new issue is being put together by our new newsletter editor Jane Droop. I am very grateful that Jane is willing to take over from me. The newsletter needs a new infusion of enthusiasm, and Jane will undoubtedly be able to supply that both to the newsletter and to council meetings. In stepping down as newsletter editor I urge council members to continue to keep thinking about good copy of interest to our readers, either contributed by themselves or by colleagues, such that Jane's upcoming term in the job may be characterized by a ceaseless avalanche of exciting copy. More realistically, a steady trickle would be fantastic as well... I have enjoyed editing the newsletter very much, and I'm confident Jane will as well. Thank you and *au revoir*.

## **Q&A**

The President thanked Ronald for his commitment to the Newsletter over the past years and producing many excellent issues.

## **10. Webmaster Report**

Rupert Wilson presented the following report:

In the last year the SA website has received 8,167 unique visitors from 125 countries. Although these figures show a decline from the previous year there has been an 8.9% increase in the number of first-time visitors to the site. There was a 57/43% split between new and returning visitors with 53% of the visits arriving via search engines. The number of visits being referred to us by other sites increased to 21.5% which is encouraging; the remaining 25.5% of visits arrived directly. The top three most visited areas of the website are the home page, the SRF page and the YSF page, the latter

seeing a 5% increase in the number of page views.

New initiatives in 2012 included online registration and ticketing for the 75th Anniversary Celebrations and most recently providing a podcast of the Sir Julian Huxley Lecture given by Peter Linder. The use of social media particularly Twitter to promote events has continued and I would like to add my thanks to Ross Mounce for his help in this area.

Looking forward to 2013 it is hoped to refresh the look of the site as the current design is now looking rather dated.

### **Q&A**

Rupert Wilson also mentioned that the Presidents lecture was being recorded to be put on-line.

The President thanked Rupert for his hard work over the past year and for keeping the SA web presence up to date with the many new internet developments.

### **11. Election of Officers**

The President thanked council members standing down (Julia Day, David Hawksworth, Ellinor Michel, Jon Todd, Tim Uttridge, Gemma Bramley) for their hard work over the past 3 years.

It was agreed that the new Newsletter Editor would be Jane Droop (Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh) Proposed: PW, RJ. and that the Student Officer (2 year post) would be Ross Mounce (University of Bath) Proposed: RW, PW.

### **12. Election of Council Members**

New members brought onto council for 3 years were:

Martin Genner (University of Bristol) Proposed: JB, PW

Davide Pisani, (University of Bristol) Proposed DG, MW

Rachel Walker (NHM London) Proposed JB, Paula Rudell

Jeremy Young (University College London) Proposed EM, Dave Williams

Mark Carine (NHM London) Proposed RS, PW

Lauren Gardiner (RBGKew) Proposed: MV, BK

Sven Buerki (RBGKew) Proposed: MV, AM

Bryn Detinger (RBG) Proposed: MV, BK

### **13. Any Other Business**

No AOB.

The AGM closed at 5.55pm.