

HARRY GREEN - WSG CHAIRMAN 1978 TO 1987

For those of us with a long involvement in the Wader Study Group, it will be hard not to associate it immediately with Harry Green as Chairman. Harry has provided the level-headed guidance necessary to see the Group through its second major phase of existence. This was the transition from a British-based group which had achieved remarkable success in stimulating wader studies by bird-ringers to an international association involved in a wide range of wader studies. The fact that this was attempted only following the demands from international wader workers did not, of course, remove all the practical problems.

Harry Green's involvement in wader studies is of long-standing. After initiation in the Wash Wader Ringing Group, he was one of the founders of the Celtic Wader Research Group, which developed studies mainly in Wales and the Severn Estuary. In 1972 and 1974, he organised the highly successful expeditions to NE Greenland. Harry joined the WSG editing team early in 1978, but my attempts to pass the whole job over to him were foiled by Clive Minton's departure from Britain to Australia later that year. Harry was asked to take over from Clive as Chairman, initially on an acting basis until the AGM in 1979. (Nick Davidson had to be enticed into the editing role in 1981 before I could eventually escape from that in 1982.)

During Harry's period of office as Chairman, WSG has adopted a constitution; started the highly successful series of annual international conferences; and formed a New World Section. The Bulletin has gone from strength to strength. Old-timers will recall the Bulletin acquiring covers(!); various innovations such as the Introductory Statistics series, which eventually appeared in translation in several other publications; the start of the colour-ringing register (which has caused much pain but the situation is far better as a result of its existence than before its creation); and the introduction of computers to handle Bulletin production. Probably the most striking development over the last 9 years has been the proliferation of WSG projects. Late in 1978 Harry, William Dick (then Co-ordinator) and I decided that WSG ought to take some new initiatives in this field, and the two spring migration projects (the first formal WSG projects) were born. It is a little frightening to see what has developed from this almost casual decision!

Throughout this time, Harry's guiding hand has been invaluable, matching realism with

enthusiasm, preventing us from taking on too much but never inhibiting WSG's ability to react quickly and without bureaucracy to urgent needs or opportunities. Professional biologists frequently forget Harry's amateur status - until of course he reminds them of the need to keep amateur interests in mind. This combination of skills is all too rare. Consequently, Harry's fellow officers have long prevailed upon him to remain as Chairman.

Eventually, however, the conflicting demands on limited spare time have forced Harry to insist on retiring from this role. Many readers will know of some of Harry's other roles in research and conservation. He is Chairman of the Worcestershire Nature Conservation Trust, and of the Research & Survey Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology as well as the BTO's first Chairman of Council.

With these involvements, it is clear that Harry will remain closely in touch with WSG matters. Indeed, I am pleased to report that he has told me that he remains on call to help - although he added that now he has slightly more right to refuse our more unreasonable requests. In particular, I hope that we shall see more of Harry's writing enlivening the Bulletin. If your editor is successful, there may well be some elsewhere in this issue. If not, browsers will be well rewarded in back-issues including the notable random thoughts on sanderling at a brass band concert in 1975.

Thanks Harry. You are a hard act to follow.

Mike Pienkowski

