



## FOREWORD

# Masting Behavior

A statistic that I find remarkable about the IOS is the extraordinarily high level of Conference attendance amongst our members, an amazing 64% if one compares the California 2018 attendance to our 2019 membership total. I can't imagine that any other international society can rival this level of participation, but I must confess that the statistic I have quoted is skewed. The widely perceived importance of the Conferences has its downside: we have members who join only for a Conference, letting their subscriptions lapse in the following year, provoking a corresponding two-year dip in membership numbers. If I may make a somewhat stretched analogy, the Society imitates our favourite tree by exhibiting masting behaviour: for two years the roots and various wide-spreading branches of oak activity quietly gather strength in order to cascade the many fruits of their endeavors around us in the third year. I like to think that it is the quality of the Journal, and in particular the richness and variety of the Proceedings, which encourages researchers in so many fields of oak activity to present at our Conferences. The more presentations there are the greater the subsequent breadth, interest and importance of the publication, and the greater its dissemination: a virtuous circle. Your Board is at present taking steps to ensure that the Journal's articles can be more easily accessed by the academic community.

But of course the Society is by no means just about Conferences and academic research. The Journal has a vital significance in that it is the linkage to the Society for absolutely all of our membership, whether they choose to participate in other activities or not. Arriving by post, it cannot be ignored! We have an excellent website and an equally excellent newsletter, but a proportion of our members never visit the former. Though some still receive the latter by post, those who accept the e-version (and thank you to those who do for keeping our costs down!) can seemingly forget to read it. And although the Conference-year-only members will unfortunately not get to see it, this particular issue of the Journal ranges geographically right across the Northern Hemisphere before then crossing into the Southern. Its subject matter is equally broad and varied: you will find a review in the Introduction.

A quality Journal is of course expensive to produce, and to lessen the potential

financial effect of our fluctuating membership your Board has changed the way in which it is distributed to new members. Now a joining member receives the copy for the year following that of his/her joining, and in this way we avoid having to guess what the print run should be by basing it instead on the actual membership at the end of the previous year. However, even this economy has its potential downside, in that Conference attendees no longer have an incentive to join for a second year to receive their copy of the Proceedings.

An idea first mooted during the Members' Meeting at the 2018 Conference by Mark Krautmann and given immediate support from the floor gained great momentum and led to the establishment of the Oak Conservation and Research Committee (OCRC), energetically chaired by Tim Boland. The first action of this exciting new venture was to implement a survey to help define its objectives. This brought not only a refreshingly high participation compared to other surveys we have carried out in the past, but also the most gratifying response: it showed clearly our members' altruistic concerns about oaks and oak landscapes not just in their own backyards but on a global scale. The survey was followed by an appeal letter which you all have received, and I can say already (writing in early January) that you have responded magnificently, which will enable the Fund to make a considerable footprint in the oak world! I won't steal the thunder of the OCRC: they will refine the objectives and then allocate resources, keeping you fully informed.

I have written elsewhere that the above venture will of course be self-financing from direct contributions and once running will not in any way fund or be funded by the IOS, although administration and guidance will be provided from those within the Society. But whilst on the subject of finance, the Society itself depends almost exclusively on member subscriptions and on the generosity of our donors, and as with any such group we carefully monitor our budget. I am enormously grateful to you all, members and donors, for keeping the faith. Our donors of course give immense and vital support, but I also want to say a special thank you to those who have chosen to subscribe at the Supporting Member level: yes, you really make a difference! And to our membership at large – please continue to encourage your friends with an interest in oaks or trees in general to join us.

My thanks to you all.

**Shaun Haddock**  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun', with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.