

**PRESS RELEASE: NATURE LONDON PLAQUE UNVEILING**, October 13, 3:00 pm, 2017

One of the oldest societies in London is being honoured by the Historic Sites Committee of the London Public Library. Nature London will be recognized by the unveiling of a commemorative plaque on October 13, 2017 at 3:00 pm near the Civic Garden Complex in Springbank Park.

Originally founded in 1864 as an Entomological Society devoted to the collection and study of insects, the club, its name and its interests have evolved over the years. For much of the twentieth century the group was called the McIlwraith Ornithological Club and, later, the McIlwraith Field Naturalists. Since 2009 it has been popularly known as Nature London. Today the organization continues its commitment to the study, enjoyment and conservation of the natural world.

The plaque is being erected in Springbank Park to recognize the club's longstanding association with the area and the adjacent Thames River. This dates to well before the park's establishment in the 1870s. In the late 1800s, club members were not only collecting insects but also studying birds, plants and fossils in the park and its environs. A century ago, the group was lobbying the Public Utilities Commission to put a stop to the wanton shooting of birds within Springbank Park. It also asked the PUC to establish habitat there to encourage waterfowl, whose numbers were at an historic low due to decades of over-hunting.

Throughout the club's history, Nature London members have most frequently visited Springbank Park and the adjacent Thames in order to observe birds – recording data on species and abundance. Springbank has been the location of many club-organized field trips to introduce the public to the wonders and diversity of nature. Nature London has also kept an eye on the ecological health of the Thames River and made input to the authorities at appropriate times. For the past two decades Nature London has held its meetings at the Civic Garden Complex within the park.

The plaque honouring Nature London's 150 years is being erected near the Civic Garden Complex in Springbank Park. Fittingly, the site, which is wheelchair accessible, overlooks the Thames and the park's main path along the river. Plans are being developed for an exciting event on October 13. Elected officials and the media are to be invited. The program includes the unveiling of the plaque, greetings from dignitaries, an overview of club history, a short nature hike, displays and refreshments.

The general public and everyone interested in nature or history are warmly invited to attend this event. Mark your calendars now and reserve the date – Friday, October 13, 2017 at 3 pm. Meet at the north side of the Civic Garden Complex parking lot at 625 Springbank Drive, just west of Wonderland Road.

For more information about Nature London, go to [www.naturelondon.ca](http://www.naturelondon.ca).

For more information about the plaque-unveiling event on October 13, contact Winifred Wake at [dwake@odyssey.on.ca](mailto:dwake@odyssey.on.ca).