

THE SOCIETY

AGREEMENT WITH COUNTY COUNCIL

This number of the *Records* appears at what must be a turning point in our Society's long history. On 28th March, 1957, at a special meeting the Society approved a new agreement with the County Council concerning the future of the Museum, and this agreement has now been signed by the Society's Trustees. The following report, which summarises your Council's reasons in making this recommendation to members, was circulated to members in October, 1956.

"Most members will be aware that for the past five years the Museum has been maintained by a Joint Committee of the Society and the Bucks. County Council. Before that date, the Society had received a grant from the County Council towards the upkeep of the Museum, but the steadily rising costs had been making it more and more difficult for the Society to continue to run the Museum in a suitable way.

By the agreement of 1951, the Joint Committee, consisting of equal representatives of the Society and the County Council, became responsible for the upkeep. The income of the Joint Committee was derived from three sources:

- (a) Grants from the County Council and Standing Joint Committee.
- (b) Half the Society's income from members' subscriptions.
- (c) Rents for the letting of various parts of Ceely House.

For the year ending 31st March, 1956, this income totalled £1,917, made up as follows:

Grants from Bucks. County Council and Standing Joint							
Committee	...	...	...	...	...	...	£1,450
Lettings	...	...	...	...	...	...	158
Half Society's subscriptions	...	...	...	...	...	...	259
Grant from Liberty Trustees	...	...	...	...	...	...	50

From this it will be seen that the County Council has been finding more than three-quarters of the cost of running the Museum.

Ever-increasing costs of all kinds during the last few years have made it apparent that further income must be found. Negotiations for amending the present agreement began early in 1954, when the County Council offered to remit a portion of the members' subscriptions received but, in return, to have majority representation on the Joint Committee. This proposal was rejected by the Society in October, 1954, in special meeting. No progress was made in further negotiations, and in March of this year the County Council gave notice to terminate the agreement on 31st March, 1957. Unless, therefore, some alternative agreement can be reached, the full cost of approximately £2,000 per annum for running the Museum will fall on the Society alone, together with any arrangements they may have to make for payment of a curator.

As a result of prolonged negotiations during the last three months, the Council of the Society is now prepared to recommend a new agreement which, if also agreed by the County Council, would come into effect on 1st April, 1957. The following are the main heads of proposals.

(1) The Trustees of the Society would lease to the County Council the whole of the Museum premises at a nominal rent of £1 per annum, for 42 years, with an option to break on either side at 21 years.

(2) The County Council would maintain the Museum and the premises and generally meet all costs in connection with it.

(3) The County Council would also meet the interest payment on the mortgage on Cecily House, granted by the County Licensing and Compensation Committee to the Society (at present this interest is £157 10s. 6d. per annum).

(4) The Grinnell Room, or library, would be reserved for the sole use of members of the Society. The right to hold meetings, etc., in the lecture room would also be guaranteed.

(5) The Society would retain all necessary facilities to enable it to fill its legal obligations as custodian of manorial records and parish registers.

(6) The contents of the Museum remain the property of the Society, and the right to withdraw loaned exhibits would be safeguarded.

(7) The Museum would be run by a Sub-committee of the County Council, consisting of nine members, of whom five would be appointed by the County Council, three by the Society and one by the Museums Association.

The Society's Council feels that it must be recognised that the running of an up-to-date and efficient museum is beyond the powers of a private society maintained by voluntary subscriptions. In the past few years a large proportion of the Society's income, and a far higher proportion of its officers' time, has been spent on Museum matters to the detriment of the Society's other objects. They feel that the County Council is probably the only body that could possibly maintain the Museum worthily in the future and that, with proper safeguards, the proposed arrangement will ensure a prosperous future for the Museum, but will also leave the Society with its full income to devote to the other objects in its rules, such as publication of the *Records of Bucks.* and other papers, visits, lectures and exhibitions, making excavations and researches, and any other

activities which the Council is fully aware have perforce been neglected in the past ten years."

It only remains to add that long and delicate negotiations involved the Society's Officers and the County Council officials concerned in many hours of work, which were willingly given, as both sides were governed throughout by a keen desire to ensure an agreement which would guarantee, as far as that can be possible, a worthy and assured future for the Museum, which the Society has built up over the last century. It would be invidious to single out the names of those members whose labours contributed towards the satisfactory outcome.

One further point should be added. Counsel's opinion was sought during the negotiations on three occasions, and, arising from these, the Council will have to consider alterations to its rules, and it is hoped that these can be put before the next Annual General Meeting.

THE GRINNELL ROOM

Two years ago the Council decided to convert the small room immediately to the right of the entrance of Ceely House to a members' room. It decided to use for this purpose the legacy of £200 left by the late Miss A. D. Grinnell, a valued member of the Society. Work was put in hand under the direction of Mr. Jenkin, of the County Architect's Department, who, by a successful fusing of the room's traditional features with contemporary furniture and fittings, has achieved a most satisfactory result. The Society's library has been transferred there and the room is available not only for Council meetings but for the use of members during the opening hours of the Museum. The Council named it the Grinnell Room and, at the same time, decided that the ground-floor lecture room at the back of the building should in future be called the Baker Room, after the late Dr. Baker who lived at Ceely House for so many years and whose daughter is now our Honorary Archivist.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

In 1955 the meeting was held on 18th June at the Church Hall, Aylesbury; there was an attendance of fifty members. At the conclusion of the business two films were subsequently shown, *L'Evangile de la Pierre* on French Medieval sculpture and *L'Image Medievale* on medieval illuminations (in colour).

In 1956 the meeting was held on 16th June in the Baker Room and was followed by a colour film *Williamsburg Restored* which was seen by some forty members.

LECTURES AND MEETINGS

Mr. Hume and Mr. Clarke have energetically organised a greatly increased programme of lectures during the last two years. These included:

"The Work of the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey and its Relation with Local Archaeologists", by C. W. Phillips, M.A.

"Westminster Abbey—A Treasure House of Art", by Rev. Dr. Jocelyn Perkins, C.V.O., M.A., D.C.L., D.D., F.S.A.

"Darwin Today", by Dr. W. E. Swinton, F.R.S.E., F.M.A.

"North Bucks. Churches", by Mr. E. F. Instone.

"The History of the Cinema", by A. Kingsbury, Esq.

French Architecture Films, "Some Aspects of Contemporary Art", by R. Pitman, Esq.

"Bucks. Lace Making", by Mrs. A. Clark.

"Conversations with Local Craftsmen", by Mr. J. L. Mayes, F.L.A.

"French Cathedrals", by Monsieur A. Bur, L. ès L.

In September, 1955, some fifty members visited the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading and the excavations at Silchester. It is hoped to organise a larger number of such outings in future, although petrol rationing may curtail the arrangements for 1957.

OBITUARY

The Society, in common with the whole county, suffered a great loss in the death in July, 1956, of LORD COTTESLOE, who was a firm supporter of the Society, and had been not only a Vice-President for many years, but also a Trustee. The head of the Fremantle family of Swanbourne, he worthily upheld his family's tradition in serving both the county and the country in a great variety of ways. He had been Chairman of Quarter Sessions, as his father and grandfather had been before him, Vice-Chairman of the County Council, and Lord-Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum from 1923-54. A life-long Volunteer and Rifleman, he played a leading part in the formation of the Territorial Army, commanded the Bucks. Battalion, and was ever ready to help any good cause in the county to which he was so devoted. Lord Cottesloe was 94 when he died, but retained all his faculties almost to the end. He had a wonderful fund of reminiscences of local life in the 'sixties and 'seventies of the last century, and in particular of his grandfather, who was the son of one of Nelson's admirals at Trafalgar, and who had been born in 1798 and died in 1890. For his strong sense of duty, for his long years of service to the county and for his innate modesty and kindness, Lord Cottesloe will be long remembered in Buckinghamshire.

COL. GUY ROBERT CROUCH, M.C., T.D., LL.B., was born in 1890 and died in August, 1956. The only surviving son of William Crouch of Aylesbury, he succeeded his father as Clerk of the Peace and of the Bucks. County Council in 1924, from which posts he retired only a few months before his death. He served in the First World War in the Bucks. Battalion, which he commanded from 1923-27. He lived all his life in Aylesbury, and was intensely devoted to it, giving an enormous amount of his time to helping local societies and other organisations. To the Council of the Society, of which he was long a member, he held an almost unique position as counsellor and friend; to every problem he brought a meticulous legal mind, and his advice was constantly sought, freely given and almost always acted upon. The Society owes him a great debt in many ways, not least for all his work in the formation of the Joint Committee, which has guided the Museum during the past six years.

In March, 1956, occurred the death of MR. M. D. PERRINS, who had served the Society as a member of the Council for many years up to his death, and also as Programme Secretary for a time after the war. Despite ill health, Mr. Perrins seldom missed a Council meeting: he had very definite views on the Society's affairs, and these were tenaciously held and vigorously expressed; his colleagues, even when they disagreed with him, could never doubt for a moment his single-minded devotion to what he considered to be the best interests of the Society.

Other members of the Society who have died since the last issue of the *Records* include:

DR. KIRK, the Lord Bishop of Oxford

LORD VANSITTART

MRS. M. P. HERRON

MR. W. F. LOWNDES

MRS. A. L. LUND

LT.-COL. J. G. WAINWRIGHT

E.V.

THE MUNIMENT ROOM

Accessions during 1955-56 include:

Court Rolls and Books, with related manorial material. Manor of Chalfont St. Peter, 1308-1921; deposited on short loan by the Rev. Dr. P. C. Moore.

Court Books, Manor of Amersham, 1726-1934; Manor of Woodrow, 1824-1916; Manor of Weedon Hill, 1801-1935; rentals of above 1629-1816.

Court Rolls, Manor of Rectory of Amersham, 1761-1803; Manor of Coleshill, 1740-1803; drafts of rentals 1630-1807.

Grant of Arms to Richard Smith, 1508.

Executor's accounts for William Tothill, 1626-32.

Miscellaneous papers from Shardeloes, Amersham; all deposited on loan by T. Tyrwhitt-Drake, Esq.

The Society now subscribes to the Lincoln Record Society and has purchased those back volumes relating to Bucks. (i.e., nos. 6, 9, 10, 20, 23, 24, 27, 29, 33, 35, 37 and 48) in addition to those already possessed.

C. B.

PARISH REGISTERS

The registers of the following parishes, beginning in the years indicated, have been deposited with the Society for safe custody.

Grendon Underwood, 1560.

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Soulbury, 1623.

Stoke Hammond, 1538.

Stoke Mandeville, 1699.

A. V. W.

CORRIGENDA

Vol. XVI, Part 1, Plate 5B:

For "between 1459 and 1479", read "in 1459".

Page 50. Note: for "Aelfgifw", read "Aelfgifu".

NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

President: Lady Barlow

Committee: Mrs. S. Cowdy, Messrs. H. J. Evans,

G. S. Glover, T. A. Hume.

Secretary: Mrs. J. M. Grimmitt.

Interest in the Natural History Section is increasing. We are most grateful to all those who have given so much time to leading expeditions and acting on the panel of the Brains Trusts.

The Committee feels that there may be some members of the main Society who would enjoy a meeting in the Museum but would not care to go on any of the expeditions, so it is hoped to send all members an announcement of these meetings.

The following items will give an indication of the events which have taken place during the years 1954-56.

17 October, 1954. The autumn season began with a Fungus Foray in Hampden Woods. Led by Dr. W. P. K. Findlay, of the Forestry Research Station of Princes Risborough, twenty-four members attended, and a large selection of edible and poisonous fungi were found. Tea at the Hampden Arms.

23rd October. Rev. C. N. White, of Ellesborough, led a party of forty-two, explaining as much as is known about the earthworks and the ancient names for various places in the vicinity, i.e., Cymbeline's Mount, Silver Springs—Velvet Lawn, and Piccadilly. He told the story of the Dinton Hermit. The walk ended on top of Beacon Hill, where pieces of Roman pottery were found in rabbit holes. Vipers Bugloss was abundant.

20th November. Mrs. Susan Cowdy arranged for two very interesting films to be shown—*Birds on Orkney Island* and *Looking at Birds*.

4th December. A Natural History Brains Trust was held with Mr. T. A. Hume as Question Master, Lady Barlow, Miss P. Hager, Major A. G. Sladen and Mr. L. P. Garrett were on the panel. The success of this afternoon encouraged the Committee to make this an annual event.

22nd January, 1955. The first meeting of the year was a bird-watching event on Tring Reservoirs. About fifteen people attended this meeting.

12th February. Lady Barlow gave an illustrated talk at the Museum on "Herbals". Thirty members enjoyed her knowledge and erudition.

13th March. Fourteen people visited the Winter Birds and Roosts at The-Lee, walking round the nearby fields, beechwoods and park. Mrs. Susan Cowdy led the party and entertained everyone to tea. The day was fine with snow still lying. Flocks of redwing and field fare were observed. Towards dusk a hundred or so chaffinches were seen perched on tops of the bare trees preparing to roost on rhododendron, holly and laurels below. Also in the Lee Manor Gardens about ten brambling were seen behaving in the same way. This gave great pleasure, as some of the party had not seen these winter-visiting finches from Scandinavia.

30 April. A coach-load of members and their friends visited the R.H.S. Gardens at Wisley, the party being led by Miss Hobbs, the Assistant Horticulture Officer for the Bucks. County Council. Fortunately, the weather was good and the spring flowers at their best.

6th to 8th May. In conjunction with the Middle Thames Natural History Society and organised by Mrs. Susan Cowdy under the auspices of the Buckinghamshire

Education Committee, a week-end on natural history matters was arranged at Missenden Abbey. This included lectures, visits to places of natural history interest in the vicinity, and was such a success it was decided to make this an annual event.

5th June. A more unusual event took place next. Dr. Morley Davies took a large party in cars to view the Sarson and Pudding stones in the areas of Wendover, Ellesborough, The-Lee, Cholesbury and Amersham, ending with tea at "The Mill Stream".

19th June. In conjunction with the Herts. Natural History Society, members met at "The Lambert Arms", on the Oxford road, to look at the "Natural History of the Chalk Scarp". This was a very pleasant outing.

10th July. Another joint meeting, this time with the Middle Thames Natural History Society. The party met at Boswells and visited the escarpment above, then went to Cymbeline's Mount. Deadly nightshade and hound's tongue were found on the Mount. Marsh tits were singing at The Silver Springs; cirl buntings singing in the trees near Ellesborough Church; meadow pipits displaying on Beacon Hill. The expedition ended with a visit to Little Kimble Church.

24th July. A large party met at Dancers End, Tring, and led by Sir Edward Salisbury, examined the wild flowers at the Nature Reservation. Among the plants found were greater Solomon's seal, *vicia sylvatica*, *centaurea germanica*, and five orchids.

4th September. Another visit was made to see the birds on Tring Reservoirs, also the water-edge flowers and plants. It was noted that orange balsam has greatly increased in recent years.

18th September. A meeting arranged to see the birds and the shrubs growing on the escarpment off the Oxford road near "The Lambert Arms". Three kestrels seen playing, flying in circles at Beacon Hill above Lewknor. Seven stone curlew in autumn flock in stubble fields above Watlington. These birds would eventually leave to spend the winter in Spain and Africa. Some of the party stayed to hear the weird calls as dusk fell. These birds are nocturnal.

23rd October. Joint meeting with the Herts. Natural History Society; a fungus foray at Dancers End, led by Professor P. N. Gregory, on a very wet day.

19th November. Mr. G. P. Glover, who is a keen amateur photographer, showed his coloured slides of the more unusual plants which have been found on the various expeditions. A very interesting afternoon.

10th December. The second Brains Trust, which was very well attended. Mr. T. A. Hume was in the Chair, the panel consisting of Miss H. M. Miller, Major A. G. Sladen, Miss P. Hager and Mr. L. P. Garrett. Many questions were sent in which showed that the meeting had caused considerable interest.

29 January, 1956. Another visit to see the winter wild fowl. Two hundred ducks were seen on Wilstone Reservoir, mostly mallard, but tufted, pochard and teal also in evidence.

11th February. Mr. H. J. Evans organised an ornithological meeting in the Chess Valley, on which we were joined by the Herts. Natural History Society. Everyone enjoyed this outing.

4th March. An ornithological expedition to Cholesbury Common. In the late afternoon members saw a very large linnet roost. Some hundreds of these birds must have come from several miles around; they sat on bare trees overlooking a small patch of gorse before diving under cover for the night. About fifty greenfinches roost in a nearby holly hedge. Yellow hammers were also much in evidence.

25th March. A 35-seater coach took members to visit "The Severn Wild Fowl Trust" at Slimbridge. It was a beautiful sunny day without much wind, and a very happy outing.

22nd April. Miss N. M. Miller led the botanists. Green hellebore was found in profusion near Hampden. Wild daffodils in a field at The-Lee. Also aserabacca, which is a rare plant in this district, was found by a stream at Halton Turn. Miss Miller showed the party round her garden and gave everyone tea. The weather was fine and the afternoon most enjoyable.

5th May. A visit was made to the Causeway between Marsworth and Startup End to see the water fowl.

1st to 3rd June. The second Natural History week-end at Missenden Abbey under the same auspices as in 1955. Some applicants had to be refused for lack of room. Early on Saturday the enthusiasts listened to "The Dawn Chorus" of birds and ended the day listening to nightjars and nightingales. Lectures were held during the day. On Sunday one party went to watch birds and another party went by coach to the Bedfordshire-Buckinghamshire border; Mr. Scott took charge of this party. A carpet of lilies of the valley was an enchanting sight and was the highlight of the outing. Over a hundred different species of wild flowers were found. The success of these week-ends is largely due to the energy and enthusiasm of Mrs. Susan Cowdy in making the arrangements.

17th June. Joint meeting with Herts. Natural History Society. Geology and natural history of the country between Berkhamsted and Wendover.

8th July. On a very hot day a large party met at Bledlow Ridge with Sir Edward Salisbury to lead them on a botanical expedition. The following plants were found: winter green—*pyrola media*, twayblades by hundreds, pyramid orchid and bee orchid, also *trifolium medium*.

28th October. After the summer break the bird-watchers went to the Reservoirs; the success of the afternoon was Mr. Scott's find of an alien *artemesia*. This plant is probably new to Bucks. and has been identified as an *artemesia biennis* both by Kew and the Cambridge Botany School. We are very proud of this find of Mr. Scott's.

4th November. Dr. W. P. K. Findlay once more kindly consented to lead a party to look for fungi. Twenty-four went to the woods round Boswells. The afternoon ended most delightfully with tea at Boswells.

24th November. A museum meeting with illustrated talks given by Mrs. Cowdy on "My Friesland Holiday" and Mr. Scott telling the members of his finds during the summer. Mrs. Cowdy gave an enchanting account of her bird-watching on Texel Island. She had borrowed some birds from Tring Museum which gave an added interest, and she illustrated her talk with illustrations of some of the bird calls. Mr. Scott has made a study of the same piece of ground over a period, and his coloured pictures showing this were of great interest. He gave a very detailed account of the changes caused by the disappearance of the rabbit. We hope to hear something more about this area he has been watching as time goes by.

15th December. The third Brains Trust took place with Mrs. Cowdy, Miss Hager, Major Sladen and Sir Edward Salisbury. Mr. Hume was in the Chair.

Members may be interested to know that Mrs. Cowdy is the Secretary of the Middle Thames Natural History Society, and has recently been appointed the Recorder for the Birds of Buckinghamshire for the Ornithological Society.

J. M. G.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

(as at 31st December, 1956)

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SIR ALAN BARLOW, BART., F.S.A.

Vice-Presidents

SIR HENRY AUBREY-FLETCHER, BART.

CANON R. F. BALE, F.S.A.

EARL OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

G. ELAND, F.S.A.

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(County Council)

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MRS. ALISON YOUNG, F.S.A. (SCOT.)

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