

THE SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The meeting in 1960 was held at the Museum on 2nd July. The Rev. Gordon Savage, Archdeacon of Buckingham, was elected a Vice-President; later in the year he was consecrated Bishop of Buckingham. His predecessor, now Bishop Hay, also continues as a Vice-President.

Mr. G. R. Elvey and Mr. C. N. Gowing, the new Curator, were elected to the Council. All other officers were re-elected.

LECTURES

Mr. Clarke continued to organise a series of Saturday afternoon lectures. Seven were held in 1960.

OUTINGS

Only two outings were arranged, both in October. The first, on the 8th, was to Amersham and Chenies Churches. The Drake Chapel was specially opened at Amersham and made a suitable appetizer for the Bedford Chapel at Chenies later in the morning; not even the absence of lighting on a particularly wet, dark day could detract from the magnificence of this unique series of monuments, ranging from 1556 to 1956.

Two weeks later, on the 25th, a special coach left Slough, picking up members on its way north. A visit was paid to Wing church before continuing to Fenny Stratford where, in the parish church at midday, a short service was held by the Vicar, the Rev. Kenneth Wright, to commemorate the bicentenary of the death of Browne Willis. The latter's memorial slab had just been restored under Mr. Rouse's supervision and at the Society's expense as our contribution to the bicentenary.

After an excellent lunch at the "Swan Revived" at Newport Pagnell, the party moved on to Chicheley Hall, former home of the Chester family, now occupied by Earl Beatty. This splendid brick house, remarkably unaltered and in fine condition, made a great impression. By an odd coincidence, the issue of *Country Life* which appeared that day contained an important letter from Mrs. Joan Tanner on the architect of Chicheley, hitherto considered to be Thomas Archer; it is hoped that Mrs. Tanner will contribute to the next issue of the *Records* on this subject.

On 11th November, the Secretary represented the Society at the St. Martin's Day feast (the annual occasion when the Willis poppers are fired) at Fenny Stratford.

OBITUARY

Since the last issue of the *Records* notification has been received of the deaths of

the following members: Mr. G. M. Adams, the Rev. C. E. Last (Vicar of Great Horwood), Mr. R. W. V. Hart, Mr. L. P. Moore, Miss F. M. Ramage, Captain A. P. Ritchie and Canon E. A. Steer (Vicar of Bierton).

MR. WALTER ROSE, craftsman and author, died on 25th July, 1960, just before his 89th birthday, at his house at Haddenham, where his family had lived for over 400 years. He was trained as a carpenter and builder and his book, *The Village Carpenter*, first published in 1937, is a minor classic. Equally fascinating are the sketches of village life in the late nineteenth century, collected in his second book, *Good Neighbours* (1942). His work as a wood carver can be seen in several churches in the neighbourhood. He was a valued member of the Society for many years.

PARISH REGISTERS

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

Addington, 1558

Edgcott, 1539.

Wendover, 1626.

ERRATUM

We regret a misprint in *Records*, Volume XVI, Part 4, page 296; the line block (Fig. 3) in Mrs. Young's "Excavation of a Mound at Ascott" was reversed.

NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

THE Natural History Section had 16 fixtures in 1960, beginning on January 23 with a lecture in the museum given by Miss Phyllis Hager of the Herts Natural History Society on Island Bird Watching, illustrated with slides.

February 20 was devoted to members' contributions. These included Lady Barlow on Bledlow Cop, Mrs. S. Cowdy on The Spread of the Muntjac, Mr. P. L. Garrett on Local Birds, Mr. G. Glover on Trees and Flowers, and Mr. V. Scott on Progress in a Chalk Pit.

For the first time the Missenden Abbey authorities allowed the Society two separate weekends for Birds and Botany. This proved a great success. The Winter Bird Weekend in conjunction with the British Trust for Ornithology took place on February 26-28. The lecturers included Mr. R. W. Arthur, Warden of Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory, Kenneth Williamson, Migration Research Offices of the B.T.O., and Mr. Philip Wayre who showed films of Birds in Iceland. For the first time on an Ornithological weekend demonstrations were given on mist net ringing; over 40 species were caught, 20 species ringed, including a barn owl which was hunting in bright sunshine. Eight species of duck were seen, including a golden eye, a scaup; a large gathering of goosander were present on Marsworth reservoir, over 30 birds in all. This course had more applicants than could be accommodated.

April 24 was chosen for a trip to Kew Botanical Gardens, it was a beautiful spring day. Mr. Hubbard, the Deputy Director, gave up a Sunday afternoon to showing the choicest specimens both in the hot houses and outside. His expert knowledge and personal anecdotes on the history of the Gardens and of individual trees, were much appreciated by a large gathering of members.

May 20 to May 22 was devoted to the Botany weekend at Missenden Abbey. This was arranged by a sub-committee of our own Natural History Society. The weather was perfect and people from other areas were enchanted by our countryside. The

course started with a lecture given by Lady Barlow on Darwin as Botanist. On Saturday Miss Hyde took the party to the woods behind Boswells. The plants *Pyrola minor*, *Monotropa*, and various orchids were sources of interest. During the afternoon Mr. V. J. Scott talked about flora in alkaline and acid soils. After tea, Dr. H. J. M. Bowen, of Harwell Atomic Research Station, lectured on the effects of radiation on plants and the last lecture of the day was given by Sir Edward Salisbury on Weeds; he began by defining a weed as a plant in the wrong place. On Sunday Miss M. Hyde talked on Plants and their surroundings. The party led by Mr. V. Scott then went by coach to the Leighton Buzzard area to look at flora on acid soils. This included masses of lilies of the valley growing in a wood. During the weekend living and dried specimens were on display arranged by Miss M. Hyde and Mr. and Mrs. Scott. These attracted a lot of attention.

Mr. G. Glover led a party on June 19 to look at flora on the Icknield Way starting at Bledlow; 31 people attended. The walk was up a chalk lane to the cop where Miss M. Hyde, Mr. V. Scott and Lady Barlow demonstrated the regeneration of turf on the site of a barrow opened by Mr. Head in 1937. The encroachment remained incomplete. A pair of Redstarts with fledged young were seen among the beeches, and a wood warbler was singing near by. It was pleasant to find these two species here as they are by no means common in this country.

On July 10 Mr. and Mrs. Bannister of the Herts Natural History Society led a party including some of our members on a visit to the Dancers End Nature Reserve to look at plants. The weather was 1960 at its worst, but about a dozen people took part.

Lady Barlow and Mrs. Cowdy took a party to the Wilstone and Marsworth Reservoirs on August 21. Tufted Duck, Pochard and Mallard were seen with broods of duckling. About 12 pairs of Great Crested Grebes had bred there. In the spring the heronry at Marsworth contained about 6 nests two of which were in the reeds, an unusual feature when tall trees are the more usual sites for nests. Well-grown young were still present near the nests. A huge concourse of Sand Martins were present feeding over the water whilst on their return migration.

On September 10 Sir Edward Salisbury took a large party on to the downs in the Tring area; members of the Herts Natural History Society had been invited to join us. Sir Edward's outings are always a great success. Thirty-nine members of both Societies attended. The ecological problems of chalk downs and developing woodlands were discussed and demonstrated; the walk included an area of heath capping over the chalk with here and there a seedling oak. Noticeable remains of ancient prehistoric diggings were discussed. The two types of Rest Harrows, *Ononis repens* and *Spinosa* were explained and the chalk gentian and *germanica* were found.

On October 9 a Fungus Foray led by Mr. Derek Reid of the Herts Natural History Society went to Dancers End Nature Reserve, the weather was as on the last visit to the Reserve very bad, but over a dozen people attended.

Sea Birds Summer, a film of the Pembrokeshire Off Shore Islands, was held in the Aylesbury Grammar School on November 10. The profit from this evening was sent to the Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory and was gratefully received.

The last event of the year was devoted to a lecture given on December 3 on the problems of fauna preservation; this is an enthralling subject and Mr. Philip Street was warmly thanked by Lady Barlow and the members.

Once more we must thank Lady Barlow for her practical help, Mr. C. Gowing, the members of the Committee who do all they can to further our interests, and those members whose attendance at our gatherings are the basis of our success.

J. M. GRIMMITT

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(as at 31st December, 1960)

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