

# THE SOCIETY

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting in 1963 was held on 30th March. There were no changes in Officers or Council, with the exception of the resignation of Mrs. J. M. Grimmitt, who had acted as Secretary of the Natural History Section since its inception. All members will be grateful to Mrs. Grimmitt for the immense amount of work she put in to help build up the Section to its present flourishing condition. Her work has been taken on by Miss Janet Easton.

## OUTINGS

The first outing, on the afternoon of 30th March, was to the north of the county, where the churches of Gayhurst and Clifton Reynes were visited, and Tyingham House. The latter, an important work of Sir John Soane, is at present owned by the

Australia & New Zealand Bank, who are maintaining the house and formal gardens.

On 4th May, sixty members were privileged to see Easton Neston house near Towcester, Northamptonshire, by invitation of Lady Hesketh.

On 6th July, which turned out to be the wettest day of a wet summer, a coach party went to Gloucestershire, visiting the Roman villa at Chedworth on the way to Berkeley Castle in the afternoon. On the return journey a stop was made at Fairford church to see the mediæval glass.

The last outing was on 28th September, when members first went to Rycote Chapel. This at present is under repair by the Ministry of Works, but was specially opened for the occasion; unfortunately, the work was by no means far advanced, but will be impressive when completed. Later, on the invitation of Mrs. R. B. Lancaster, the members spent some time viewing the fascinating interior of Haseley Court and the fine gardens which have been created there in the last seven years. Chiselmhampton church was also seen. This is a small eighteenth-century church, with all its contemporary fittings, which has been restored recently.

#### IVINGHOE

The most important event of the year was the dig sponsored by the Society at the iron-age fort on Ivinghoe Beacon. This was the first venture of this kind by the Society for very many years, and was made possible by the generous gift of Sir Alan Barlow. It was conducted by Professor S. S. Frere and Mrs. Molly Cotton during ten days in September; the weather was good throughout and an average of twelve volunteers helped each day. On the final Saturday Professor Frere spoke on the results to an audience of seventy members; these were encouraging enough for the Council to arrange for a renewal of the work on a more extended scale in 1964. The Society is most grateful to the National Trust for their co-operation and to Mr. W. H. Leach of Ivinghoe for much practical help.

#### OBITUARY

The following members died during 1963: Lord Burnham, Mrs. L. M. Gibb, Mr. Tristram Hart, the Rev. P. Hemming, Mr. J. Lowdon, Dr. C. B. Nicholson and Miss E. Stevenson.

#### CORRECTION

There were three errors in the Natural History Section Notes in *Records*, XVII, Part 2:

Page 135—Para. 2, Line 3: for "Condy" read "Condry".

Page 136—Para. 6, Line 6: for "buried" read "berried".

Page 137—Para. 1, Line 1: for "corn" read "cone".

#### PARISH REGISTERS

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

Datchet, 1559

Oakley, 1726

Radnage, 1574

Swanbourne, 1565

A.V.W.

## NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

In May and June weekend courses were held at Missenden Abbey Educational College. The subject of the first was "Bird Behaviour" and the resident lecturer Dr.

Peter Driver. For the second course we were fortunate to have among the speakers Sir Edward Salisbury. The theme was "Man: the changing Flora and Fauna". The weekend was made especially enjoyable by the unexpectedly warm weather.

During National Nature Week Mrs. Susan Cowdy, assisted by members of our Society, organised a Nature Trail on Coombe Hill. During the three days 2,000 people, including six school parties, visited the Trail.

One of the highlights of visits made to Tring Reservoirs in April last year and again last month was the confirmation that herons were still to be found nesting there. A visit was also made in November to the Tring and Weston Turville Reservoirs.

On a pleasantly warm afternoon in May a visit to Dancer's End for a census of Sedges and Grasses was led by Sir Edward Salisbury.

In June a most enjoyable trip was made by coach to Down House, the home of Charles Darwin. After looking at the Museum some of the members visited the Orchid Bank whilst others enjoyed the garden.

Of the remaining expeditions one was made to Weedonhill Woods for butterflies and flowers. Another was an interesting day spent looking at the Tumuli and Hill Forts of the Risborough Gap, led by Mr. Hugh Lewis. Twenty-eight members attended. A geological expedition was made to Westend Hill Pit at Cheddington and was followed later in the day by a visit to Garside's Sand Pit at Leighton Buzzard. Mr. Peter Carr was the leader. Twenty members attended and were able to take home with them many examples of fossils they had found in the two pits. In October a very successful fungus foray was held.

Our members were invited to a Rural Studies Autumn Conference held at the County Farm, Stoke Mandeville. Among the speakers were Miss Beatrix Havergal, Principal of the Waterperry Horticultural Training School, and Mr. E. H. Tong, Director of Whipsnade Zoo.

During the Winter months lectures were given on "Pond Life" by Mr. Philip Street, "Timber" by Dr. Roger Smith and "Local Geology" by Dr. R. Bristow.

Of the sixteen meetings arranged during the year, seven have been in conjunction with other Societies.

A very enjoyable social evening was held at the Farmhouse School in December. For entertainment Mr. Victor Scott gave an illustrated talk on "A Journey in Macedonia" and there were also some beautiful slides of flowers shown by Mr. Glover and by Mr. Buchanan. Drawings and paintings, by Mrs. Webb, of shrews and fungi made an interesting and attractive exhibition. We were most grateful to Mrs. Clare for undertaking the arrangements for supper. We are also greatly indebted to her for the loan of a room for the winter lectures.

The following observations have been given by Mrs. Susan Cowdy—several of our members have been taking part in the investigation of beechwood flora for the Chiltern Research Group, also the botanical research continues at Bledlow Cop. A survey has been made by the British Trust for Ornithology and the Middle Thames Natural History Society on the affects of the severe winter of early 1963 on the flora and fauna. Members of our Society have also helped with records for this.

It has been found that birds in Buckinghamshire have apparently died as the result of toxic chemicals used on farms and gardens. The bodies of five owls, a magpie and a nestful of young blackbirds were sent for analysis and were found to contain traces of poisonous chemicals.

J.E.

# OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

(as at 31st December, 1963)

## *President*

LORD COTTESLOE, G.B.E., T.D.

## *Vice-Presidents*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| SIR HENRY AUBREY-FLETCHER, BT., C.V.O. | IVY, LADY PIGOTT-BROWN                 |
| CANON R. F. BALE, F.S.A.               | MRS. E. STEWART-LIBERTY                |
| BISHOP OF BUCKINGHAM                   | C. M. TRELAUNY IRVING                  |
| G. ELAND, F.S.A.                       | A. VERE WOODMAN, F.S.A.                |
| BISHOP R. M. HAY                       | COLONEL F. W. WATSON, C.B., M.C., T.D. |

## *Council*

BRIAN PULLEN (*Chairman*)

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| A. H. J. BAINES                | DR. KATHLEEN KEYNON, F.S.A.            |
| G. R. ELVEY                    | GUTHRIE MOIR ( <i>County Council</i> ) |
| C. N. GOWING, F.M.A.           | COLONEL F. W. WATSON                   |
| PROFESSOR W. F. GRIMES, F.S.A. | ( <i>County Council</i> )              |
| MRS. J. M. GRIMMITT            | K. R. WEBB                             |
| J. F. HEAD, F.S.A.             | MRS. ALISON YOUNG, F.S.A. (SCOT.)      |

## *Society's Representatives on the County Museum Committee*

|                    |             |               |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------|
| J. F. HEAD, F.S.A. | W. F. SERBY | ELLIOTT VINEY |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------|

## *Hon. Secretary*

ELLIOTT VINEY

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J. R. WORBOYS

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E. K. INGRAM

## *Asst. Hon. Archivist*

MRS. G. R. ELVEY

## *Hon. Secretary (Natural History Section)*

MISS JANET EASTON

## *Headquarters*

THE MUSEUM, CHURCH STREET, AYLESBURY  
(Tel. 2158)