

THE SOCIETY

Membership

At the end of the year adult membership was 624, counting family members as two. There were 13 junior members (excluding minors within family memberships) and 15 member societies.

Council

Council met five times. Councillor A.H.J. Baines and J.G. Chenevix Trench were elected Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively. Mr. David Allen attended only one meeting before resigning on moving to Hampshire to take up a post in the museum service there. Council appointed Mr. P.M. Gulland to fill the vacancy until the 1983 annual general meeting.

Council spent much time on representations to the Department of the Environment on two Government consultative papers on the organisation of ancient monuments and historic buildings. Council's view was that the functions of the new commission or "agency" proposed by the Minister should be limited to the management, maintenance and commercial administration of all monuments and buildings in the care of the Secretary of State. It should be able to make grants for preservation and maintenance, but responsibility for grants for rescue excavation would remain with the Ministry. The Society urged that the relatively small and concentrated agency that it advocated would be well placed to call on local,

voluntary organisations to become involved in practical care and administration of buildings and monuments. The Government Bill was introduced in the House of Lords in November and showed little sign of response to the 300 or so reasoned comments submitted by archaeological and historical bodies and individuals.

Prize for Historical Research

In April the Society launched the Cicely Baker Prize for Historical Research. A prize of £50 was offered for an original essay related to the history of Buckinghamshire and based substantially on original research into documentary sources. By the closing date, 31st December, eight candidates had expressed serious interest.

Historic Buildings Trust

In July the President and the Hon. Secretary attended a meeting called by the County Council to discuss the formation of a Historic Buildings Trust for Buckinghamshire, to be funded initially by a £100,000 grant by the County Council. The Trust was projected as an independent body with representation on its board from the County and District Councils, from this Society and from other voluntary societies. The Society warmly supported this initiative and hoped to see the Trust operative during 1983.

Public Lecture

In association with the Bucks. Branch of the Historical Association, the Society presented a public lecture in Aylesbury in November. About 200 people heard Dr. Oliver Rackham on "The Archaeology of Woodlands".

Listed Buildings

Council continued to concern itself with threats to listed buildings of county-wide importance. *Westhorpe House*, Grade II, is a notable Georgian house near Marlow. A prospective purchaser proposed conversion to offices and put forward alterations which the Society found unsympathetic and opposed. The proposals were re-thought and the unsympathetic features largely eliminated before

consent was given. *39 High Street, High Wycombe*, Grade II*, is part of the fine southern frontage on the town's High Street. A building society proposed such extensive internal alterations that the Society, together with the High Wycombe Society, felt that the building's character and integrity were threatened and that the fine frontage would become a mere piece of scenery. The extent of the alterations was reduced, though not by as much as we should have liked. *Banner Farm, Quainton*, is in the conservation area of the native village of Dr. George Lipscomb. The Society opposed an application to develop the farmyard and buildings which would have ruined an almost perfect example of a working farm within a pre-enclosure village in the Vale of Aylesbury. The application was refused.

Outings

Six outings were arranged and all were well supported:

- 15 May: Sussex. Michelham Priory, Firle Place.
- 24 June: London. Kew Gardens and Palace, Syon House.
- 10 July: Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. Grimsthorpe Castle, Edenham Church, Deene Park.
- 7 August: Northamptonshire. Voyage on the Grand Union Canal, Cosgrove Lock, Stoke Bruerne Waterways Museum.
- 4 September: Nottinghamshire. Thrumpton Hall, Holme Pierrepont Hall, Bottesford Church.
- 9 October: Buckinghamshire Churches. Thornton, Leckhamstead, Lillingstone Lovell, Lillingstone Dayrell, Maids Moreton, Biddlesden, Water Stratford, Hillesden, Twyford.

Library and Museum Sub-Committee, Bucks. County Council

The County Council Sub-Committee has, among much else, given thought to future museum policy in the County. It set up a panel to consider the matter, to which the Society's Hon. Secretary was appointed.

NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

1982 was another active year for the Natural History Section, including six field visits and six indoor meetings. The system of voluntary wardening at the BBONT Nature Reserves at Chequers, Great Kimble, has again proved to be very successful.

2nd January: Once again, members joined with BBONT for an afternoon of Natural History films at Aylesbury Grammar School.

23rd January: Mr. David Allen spoke on 'The Victorian Fern Craze', the subject of his book published in 1969.

20th February: A most entertaining and lively lecture on 'Bardsley Island and its Choughs' by Mrs. Susan Cowdy, M.B.E.

27th March: The first outdoor meeting of this year was to the Ashridge Estate under the expert guidance of the Head Ranger, Mr. John Wilson.

17th April: The A.G.M. this season was followed by Mr. Victor Scott lecturing on 'Birds at home'.

15th May: Led by Mr. Alan Cook, we visited Weston Turville Reservoir for the Birds.

12th June: At Totternhoe Knolls, Bedfordshire, Mr. Victor Scott showed us rare flora, including Great Earthnut (*Bunium bulbocastanum*) and Cypress Spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias*).

24th July: A very interesting afternoon on Forestry with Mr. E.J. Deane on the Chequers Estate.

28th August: This meeting was to Fingest &

Turville with Miss Dorothy Eyre for the Chiltern Gentians and Autumn Lady's Tresses (*Gentiana germanica* and *Spiranthes spiralis*).

11th September: At very short notice, Mr. Roy Maycock gave us a most informative lecture on the 'Lower Plant Orders'.

30th October: On our annual 'Fungus Foray' with Mr. Victor Scott, this time at Burnham Beeches, some 37 species were identified.

4th December: A very large gathering was privileged to enjoy a lecture on 'Flower Painting' by Mr. Leslie Greenwood, F.L.S., F.R.S.A. He has received many awards from the Royal Horticultural Society and his work is known throughout the world.

Mr. Aubrey Woodward (Hon. Recording Secretary) writes:

An excellent year for butterflies — Marsh Fritillaries, Black Hairstreaks, Green, Brown & Purple Hairstreaks, White Admirals, Purple Emperors, Adonis Blues, Commas. Brown Argus and Chalkhill Blue also were much in evidence at their sites in the Chilterns.

Several reports of glow-worm sightings were received.

Botanically 1982 was quite a good year: most of the flowering plants reported in the records during the past decade are still in evidence at their habitats.

A young Bittern was seen and photographed at Hartwell Lake, staying for about a week mid-way through December.