

## THE SOCIETY

### *Membership*

At the end of 1983 adult membership was 620, counting each of 98 family memberships as two. There were 17 junior members (excluding juniors in family memberships) and 15 member societies.

### *Council*

Council met five times. J. H. Collier-Wright was elected Chairman. A suggestion by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation that the definitive reports of the Corporation's Archaeological Unit should be published as a series of monographs under the aegis of *Records of Buckinghamshire* was considered and accepted. These will be sold separately from the *Records* and it is expected that they will be offered to members of the Society at a favourable pre-publication price.

### *The Historic Buildings Trust for Buckinghamshire*

This Trust, initially funded by a grant of £100,000 from the County Council as announced at last year's Annual General Meeting, was duly set up in March. The Society has one seat on the governing board and Council nominated the President, Elliott Viney, F.S.A.

*Cicely Baker Prize for Historical Research* Council was disappointed by a lower response than expected in 1982 to the launch of this Prize Competition. The Hon. Archivist and the other four judges made some changes to the conditions and timetable for entries and a vigorous effort was made to publicise the second competition. The measures succeeded and the number of candidates in 1983 was double that of 1982. The prize in the first competition was won by Mrs. Mary Farnell. The result of the second competition will be announced at the Society's Annual General Meeting in 1985.

### *County Museum Archaeological Group*

The CMAG, with which the Society is closely associated, has had perhaps the busiest year in its energetic history. Excavation of the pottery kilns on the route of the M25 referred to in last year's report continued under appalling conditions into 1983. In addition a number of small sites on the route, mostly prehistoric, have been identified and some quite spectacular finds made including a complete Mesolithic tranchet axe at Iver. In the Misborne Valley another Mesolithic site provided sequences of flints and evidence of on-site knapping that may prove to be of more than local importance. Rescue excavations on the line of the Amersham by-pass showed Roman occupation from the second to the fourth centuries and the most extensive evidence to date of Roman iron smelting in the Chilterns. An excavation at Missenden Abbey, where extensions are being built, provided new evidence of the location and nature of the conventual church.

The Group meets at the Museum every Tuesday, during both day and evening, and mobilises as necessary for field walking and excavations.

### *Outings*

Six outings were organised and all were well attended:

*21st May.* Northamptonshire. Drayton House, Burghley House.

*11th June:* Berks & Oxon. Ewelme Church & Almshouses, Dorchester Abbey, Allnutt's Hospital at Goring Heath, Basildon Park.

*16th July:* Herefordshire. Hereford Cathedral, Kentchurch Court, Abbey Dore and Kilpeck Churches.

*13th August.* Perambulation of the bounds of Whaddon Chase, led by Dr. Michael Reed.

*10th September:* Suffolk. Lavenham Guildhall and Church, Ickworth House.

*15th October:* Bucks Churches. Denham, Iver, Langley Marish, Upton, Stoke Poges, Fulmer, High Wycombe, West Wycombe.

This year's programme marks the thirtieth consecutive year in which Elliott Viney has organised these outings, which have given so much pleasure to so many members.

#### Listed Buildings

The Society aims to concern itself with development proposals "of county-wide importance" and attempts to detect such cases by scrutiny of the lists of planning applications regularly issued by District Councils. This means that hundreds of applications for listed building consent are examined, a small proportion investigated on the ground and a smaller proportion still taken up with the planning authorities. Intelligence from members, both individuals and societies, is enormously helpful in the daunting task of estimating relative importance.

New cases which we have taken up in 1983 include the group of Victorian buildings centred on the *Wesley Church in Priory Rd., High Wycombe*, a group very much of its period and of some importance in the non-

conformist history of the County. The proposed development aimed to demolish part of the group and to overshadow the rest with a five storey office block. We joined with the High Wycombe Society in opposing this and consent was refused. Another case concerned the superb *tithe barn at Edlesborough* and the adjoining moated island on which it is thought that the Priory once stood. We have very strongly urged that the island should be left undisturbed and have commented on some of the proposals for converting the barn into office suites. Consent here too was refused but the door left open for revised proposals. A third proposal was in respect of a 15/16th century Grade II\* building, *the old sugar refinery in Fenny Stratford* which it is proposed to convert to office use. It has been untenanted for some time and the proposal was welcome to prevent further deterioration. Planning consent was given but the applicant has appealed against one condition attached to the consent, requiring priority to be given to rehabilitation of the main building before other works are carried out. We have been closely associated with the Bletchley Archaeological and Historical Society in this case and both societies have expressed their support of the planning authority in the appeal.

## NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

During 1983, with its exceptionally hot Summer months, the members of the Natural History Section enjoyed a full programme of six meetings at the County Museum in Aylesbury and six field visits:

*1st January:* The annual film show at Aylesbury Grammar School arranged by Mrs. Susan Cowdy, M.B.E., and Mr. Arthur Mount, on behalf of BBONT.

*29th January:* A talk by Mr. R. Neil 'About Bees'.

*26th February:* Superb slides of 'Butterflies and Moths of the Thames Valley!' accompanied a lecture by Mr. Paul Morrison.

*19th March:* Dr. Chris Smith gave a most interesting lecture on 'Natural History & Ecology in the Chilterns'.

*16th April:* After the A.G.M., Mr. Alan Goodger entertained us with excellent colour slides and a talk on 'Nature Photography'.

*20th May:* The field visits began this year with a most unusual and exciting 'Badger Watch' led by Mr. Victor Scott.

*25th June:* A study of the Grasses on the Kimble Reserves with Mr. Roy Maycock made another very successful outing, some 22 species being named.

*23rd July:* Mr. Aubrey Woodward took a party to Dry Sandford Pit and Cothill Fen

Reserves, Oxon. The Fen was the most outstanding area as, apart from the vascular plants listed below, the sight of Scarlet Tiger Moths flitting above the Phragmites was really spectacular. Research of international significance on this moth has been carried out here for many years by Prof. E. B. Ford of Oxford University.

Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*)  
Wild Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*)  
Bog Pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*)  
Meadow Thistle (*Cirsium dissectum*)  
Fragrant Orchid (Larger Scented Orchid)  
(*Gymnadeniia densiflora*)  
Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*)  
Greater Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Lotus uliginosus*)  
Early Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*)  
Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*)  
Long-stalked Yellow Sedge (*Carex lepidocarpa*)  
Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*)  
Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirta*)  
Carnation Grass (Glaucous Sedge) (*Carex flacca*)  
Common Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*)  
*Common Butterwort* (*Pinguicula vulgaris*)  
*Marsh Arrow-Grass* (*Triglochin palustris*)  
*Lousewort* (*Pedicularis sylvatica*)  
*Marsh Lousewort* (*Red Rattle*) (*Pedicularis palustris*)

#### Phragmites australis

Slender Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Lotus tenuis*)

*6th August:* Another most interesting and rewarding outing, this time to the Pitstone Fen Nature Reserve, led by Mr. Graham M. Atkins.

*24th September:* Miss Jill Royston, B.Sc., took members on a Snail Survey at Dancers End Reserve. Species identified:

*Monacha cantiana* (*Kentish Snail*)

*Cepaea nemoralis* (*Brown-lipped Snail*)

*Hygromia hispida* (*Hairy or Bristly Snail*)

*Hygromia striolata* (*Strawberry Snail*)

*Vallonia excentrica*

*Ceciloides acicula* (*Agate Snail*)

*Cochlicopa lubrica* (*Moss Snail*)

*Pomatias elegans* (*Round-mouthed Snail*)

*Marpesa laminata* (*Doorknocker Snail*)

*Discus rotundatus*

*Helicogona lapicida* (*Lapidary Snail*)

*Vitrina pellucida* (*Pellucid Glass Snail*)

*Helix aspersa* (*Garden Snail*)

*8th October:* A successful Fungus Foray led by Mr. Victor Scott at Stockgrove Country Park, Beds., some 32 species being identified.

*12th November:* Dr. Paul A. Selden gave a stimulating lecture on 'Fossils of the Chilterns'

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(as at 31st December 1983)

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