

# THE SOCIETY

## REPORT FOR 1999

From the outset 1999 was to prove another year of hellos and goodbyes. At the AGM, which was held in the Chapter House of St Mary's Church, Aylesbury, on 24 April, our President, Sir Timothy Raison, welcomed a new Secretary, Lindsay James, in succession to Graham Aylett; a new Editor of *Records of Bucks*, Roger Bettridge; and three new members of Council.

On behalf of the Society, the President made presentations, in grateful recognition of their contributions to the work of the Society, to John Chenevix Trench for nineteen years of eminent service as Editor of *Records of Bucks*, and to Lorna Head, who had stepped down as Archivist the previous year, for her outstanding achievements as the Society's Librarian and Archivist.

During the year, Council welcomed two officers newly appointed by Buckinghamshire County Council: Oliver Green, Head of Museum Service, and Sandy Kidd, Senior Archaeological Officer.

Volume 40 of *Records* carried an obituary of our former Secretary, Dr Robert Hagerty, who died in May 1999, and the autumn edition of the newsletter included the text of the warm appreciation delivered by Michael Farley at Dr Hagerty's funeral.

In addition to the Outings and Lectures programmes, the Society once again joined in the fun and the hot weather at the Museum for the CBA Young Archaeologists Day in June, which had a mainly Roman theme. We had a stand at the Buckinghamshire Family History Society Open Day at Aylesbury Grammar School, also in June.

In October, Mike Farley led a group of enthusiastic and chilly members on the Society's first 'official' fieldwalk in Waddesdon. On a cold but beautiful day spent searching with our eyes, we were able to identify from finds a small Roman-period settlement.

The Treasurer and Solicitor of the William Delafield Trust visited the Library to see the new computer funded by the Trust. Work began in the Library on the creation of an electronic catalogue

of books and documents, which ultimately will assist members in their researching.

The new display boards were erected in the Museum. The boards were created with the assistance of the Museum and proved extremely popular, undoubtedly raising the Society's profile to Museum visitors.

### MEMBERSHIP

Total membership at 31 December 1999 consisted of 449 individuals, of whom 17 were life members, and 17 affiliated societies (569 and 16 respectively at the end of 1998).

The Society made a donation to the Museum for the second year running, to enable members of the Society to be allowed entry to the Museum as season-ticket holders. The Museum was provided with an up-to-date membership list to ensure that all visiting members could obtain entry.

### COUNCIL

Council met three times during 1999 under the chairmanship of Edward Legg on 13 February, 12 June and 9 October.

Matters raised for discussion included the Society's representation at the Aylesbury Vale District Council Local Plan Inquiry. The Society planned to comment on 23 policy areas, and meetings took place between Diana Gulland, Mike Farley and Graham Aylett to establish the written evidence required and the form of the representation to be made.

Decisions were made to upgrade the software used for membership records, and to underwrite the cost of booking the Civic Centre for an event in September 2000 which would draw together a number of local history societies linked by the Bucks Local History Network.

## 1999 LECTURES

- 23 Jan: *The process of enclosure in three landscapes: Buckinghamshire, Worcestershire and Yorkshire*, by Julian Hunt, Buckinghamshire Records and Local Studies Manager
- 13 Feb: *Lord Chesham and the Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa*, by Professor Ian Beckett, University of Luton
- 13 Mar: *Women in agriculture in 19th-century Buckinghamshire*, by Dr Pamela Horn, Oxford Brookes University
- 25 Sep: *The world of Flora Thompson*, by Christine Bloxham
- 13 Nov: *The quest for Thomas Hickman*, by Hugh Hanley
- 11 Dec: *Stowe House: an architectural history*, by Michael Bevington, Stowe School

## 1999 OUTINGS

- 22 May: Audley End House and Gardens and Wimpole Hall
- 26 Jun: Tour of Dunstable, led by the Penshead Archaeological Society
- 17 Jul: Stowe House and Gardens, Upton House and Farnborough Hall
- 14 Aug: Lumps and Bumps Tour, led by Diana and Peter Gulland
- 4 Sep: Town Walk of Buckingham, led by Julian Hunt
- 2 Oct: Church Crawl, led by Elliott Viney

*Lindsay James*  
*Hon. Secretary*

# THE LIBRARY

## ADDITIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY 1999

- ARCHER, J. The story of John Brazil. 1979.
- BAINES, A. Lady Elgiva, her life and times. 1999.
- BIRCH, C. Wish you were here ... Buckingham (old postcards and photographs). 1997.
- CHAPMAN, H. Village schooldays and beyond: from pupil to teacher 1906-1923. (East Claydon). 1996.
- CROYDON, David (editor). Brillennium, 1,000 years in the life of a Buckinghamshire village. (Brill). 1999.
- DICKENS, S. and others. Padbury through the ages, recollections of Padbury past and present. 1999.
- FOXELL, C. Chesham Branch album. (Metropolitan Railway). 1998.
- GREEN, M. The history of Penn Wood. 1999.
- HARVEY, P.D.A. Manorial records. Revised edition, 1999.
- HOLME, C. The trumpet in the dust, with six woodcuts by Clare Leighton. 1934.
- KENNISH, J. Datchet past. 1999.
- LEGG, Edward. Early history of Bletchley Park and its earlier owners 1235-1937. 1999.
- LEWIS, M. A town of two bridges: searching for God in Newport Pagnell. 1999.
- McCONNELL, J.D.R. Eton repointed: the new structures of an ancient foundation. 1970.
- MACKAY, A. Journeys into Buckinghamshire: a collection of ink drawings. 1998.
- MILES, D. An introduction to archaeology. 1978.
- MORLEY, K. and M. Wingrave, a Rothschild village in the Vale. 1999.
- MORRIS, J.K. History in Chiltern Woods. A guide to the identification and management of woodland archaeological features. 1999.
- PITSTONE PARISH COUNCIL. Pitstone 2000, the village from earliest times to the present. 1999.
- ROWLANDS, S. Bells and bell-ringing at St Peter's Church, Iver. 1999.
- ROWLANDS, S. A short history of Huntsmoor. 1999.
- ROWLANDS, S. From Ryche kynges to Richings: a short history of the families at Richings. 1999.
- SHERWOOD, R. The Civil War in the midlands 1642-1651. New edition, 1997.
- SNOW, B. and D. Birds and berries: a study of an ecological interaction. (Based on a study carried out in the Vale of Aylesbury). 1988.
- SOTHEBYS. Sale catalogue: Magnificent silver-gilt, objects of vertu and miniatures from the Rothschild and Rosebery collection. Mentmore 11 February 1999. (Contains a chapter on the historical background to the collection.)
- STENNING, D.F. and ANDREWS, D.D. (editors). Regional variation in timber-framed building in England and Wales down to 1550. The Proceedings of the Crossing Conference. 1998. (Contains a chapter by John Chenevix Trench on house carpentry in Bucks.)
- TAYLOR, M.J. 40 years of Amersham and District Philatelic Society. 1998.
- TOPLIS, I. and others. Recollections of nineteenth-century Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire Record Society publication No. 31. 1999.
- TURNER, C. The Parker-Knoll collection. 1954.
- WILLIAMS, A. and ARCHER, J. Buckinghamshire: a portrait in colour. 1994.
- WILLIAMSON, H.R. The flowering hawthorn. Illustrated by Clare Leighton. 1962.

In addition to the books listed above 78 pamphlets/leaflets were added to stock.

*Diana Gulland  
Hon. Librarian*

# NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

## SUMMARY OF FIELD VISITS AND LECTURES ORGANISED BY THE SECTION DURING 1999

*16 January:* The year's events began most successfully when a large audience, full of anticipation, was enthralled by Christine and Victor Scott's lecture 'Uzbekistan in Soviet Central Asia'. This was Victor's second visit to the area; his first was by invitation to join a Botanical Expedition by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Reference was made to the great change made by Krushchev with his irrigation plan. Slides of Tashkent, Samarkand and Bokhara on the famous 'Silk Route' preceded botanical slides, particularly of tulips, crocuses, wild almonds and cherries. We saw birds: rose-coloured starlings, rollers, bee-eaters and hoopoes; several of the reptiles; the rare goitered gazelle; and some descendants of Przewalski's wild horses. Victor's vast botanical/horticultural knowledge and amusing anecdotes from both travellers added even more to a very special talk.

*27 February:* Rob Strachan from the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit at Oxford University came to give us the latest news on the Water Vole Recovery Plan, accompanied by an excellent series of slides. Having visited some 3,000 sites in Britain looking for signs of water vole and their mink predators, he has a wealth of information on the habits of these attractive little mammals and the necessary requirements to restore them to the previous numbers. Rob is also a successful author and illustrates his own books on mammals.

*27 March:* 'The Earth's Natural Crystals': a 'hands-on' talk and display by Michael Henty (Open University). Dazzling crystals ranging from several kinds of quartz (amethyst, citrine, smokey and rose), garnets, cyanite, mica, salt crystals, and pyrites (poor man's gold) were shown to us. Mike gave a most entertaining talk on their formation, accompanied by amusing anecdotes and accounts of personal expeditions to Brazil.

*17 April:* A record attendance for the Annual General Meeting, followed by a well-illustrated

talk on 'Garden Birds' by Dr Sandy Macfarlane from the Bucks Bird Club. An amazing variety of birds have visited his garden in Princes Risborough. Some are attracted by natural food, such as berries, while others home in on special nut feeders, or come to the bird baths. These are kept ice-free in winter by small night lights under old dustbin lids! His survey was begun some 12 years ago and his collection of close-up views of the birds is the result of hours of patient observation.

*9 May:* A return visit to the ponds of Naphill Common with Dr Alan Showler began the Section's field visits this year. A study was made of the flora associated with three ponds: Vincent's and Daisy on Naphill, and Manning's on Downley. The elusive Star-fruit (*Damasonium alisma*) was first found in the last-mentioned pond. Members went on to Little Stocking Wood, where Meadow Clary (*Salvia pratensis*) was just coming into flower, protected from rabbits and muntjac by small wire enclosures.

*5 June:* 'Butterflies and Orchids at Dancers End': a walk led by Mick Jones, manager of this BBONT Reserve of 79 acres, plus 33 acres recently acquired. Owing to the wet unseasonable weather this year, butterflies were extremely scarce but members were rewarded with the sight of numbers of Greater Butterfly Orchids (*Platanthera chlorantha*) in bloom in grassland recently cleared of scrub. We were given interesting information on the management plans and saw a flock of Hebridean sheep in action – keeping the herbage under control by their grazing.

*3 July:* Northmoor Hill Local Nature Reserve: a walk led by Dr Jill Eyers, looking at geology and natural history. Through Northmoor Hill Woods, with its old quarry, a geology trail 'The Rock Route' has been laid out, with interpretation boards. Under Dr Eyers's expert and lively guid-

ance, we learnt much about the Buckinghamshire landscape in this area, beginning with the Cretaceous some 100 million years ago. After a close look at a Swallow Hole and its associated stream, we went up a flight of wooden steps to see a section of the old quarry face where sandy sediments of the Reading Beds could be seen overlying the chalk. The plateau surrounding the woods, called Winter Hill Terraces, was caused by the flow of an ancestor of the River Thames. A list of botanical species recorded on the site added further interest.

*7 August:* Sue Gill led a large party around Watlington Hill on an escarpment of the Chilterns owned by the National Trust. As well as a sighting of one of the introduced red kites flying high above the clouds, we enjoyed wide views over Oxfordshire on a hot summer afternoon. Many species of chalkland flora were identified, although sheets of Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*) were past their best owing to the extremely hot weather. Butterflies were plentiful and some rare examples of 'clump' planting of beech were pointed out in the woodland.

*12 September (Sunday):* 'Building Stones and History of Reading': a walk led by Dr Jill Eyers combining geology and archaeology. Reading contains a concentrated selection of historically and geologically interesting buildings from the Abbey of 1121 to the present day. The town layout (and name) is still notably Saxon and the walk took us from the Saxon town centre to the midden on the outskirts of town. Geologically, we looked at the local rocks (Taynton limestone) of 180 million years ago and saw examples of exotic stone from all parts of the world. Members agreed that they

would never look at Marks and Spencer in the same way again!

*23 October:* Victor Scott once again led our annual Fungus Foray, this time on Chorleywood Common over in Hertfordshire. Penny Cullington and members of the Bucks Fungus Group joined us for a very interesting afternoon of identification. About 60 species of fungus were found, several of which could only be accurately identified by further study at home. Although it was very wet after the fine October weather of the previous weeks, this certainly did nothing to dampen members' enthusiasm!

*6 November:* 'Butterflies of Buckinghamshire and the Millennium Atlas', by Dr Roger Kemp, biochemist, entomologist and botanist, and also butterfly recorder for the county. This was a very erudite and interesting lecture with superb colour slides, accompanied by distribution maps of butterflies and their habitats and food plants. All the species to be found in Buckinghamshire were included.

*4 December:* Maureen Southgate returned with a seasonal lecture entitled 'Manna to Mistletoe', introducing her subject of the flora of the Bible with the well-known quotation 'Consider the lilies of the field ...' This proved to be a fascinating and really lovely talk with a wealth of interesting detail – the result of much painstaking research. Slides of scenes in Israel and Egypt gave a colourful background and Maureen's botanical photography was of her usual high standard.

Angela Colmer  
Hon. Secretary