

# THE SOCIETY

## THE SOCIETY 2006

The year started with two major projects for the Society. One was to publish as far as possible Stanley Freese's manuscript catalogue of all the Buckinghamshire watermills he had visited in the 1930s. A book was envisaged using his original photographs, and the work got off to a good start when Edward Legg volunteered to type the handwritten pages on to a computer file, sorting out as he went the many alterations and crossings out made by the original author. This mammoth task was completed, and then a team of BAS volunteers took on the work of visiting 100 watermills standing in Freese's day, to establish what remained. All this information, plus the volunteers' photographs, will be deposited with the Sites and Monuments Record (now the Historic Environment Record) held by the County Archaeological Service. Work on the book progressed throughout the year for publication in 2007.

The other great task in 2006 was to bring the importance of the site at Quarrendon to the attention of the general public. New housing developments around Aylesbury are gradually eating into the surrounding green fields, and there was concern that the listed site north of the town - with the remains of two villages and Sir Henry Lee's magnificent Tudor house and gardens - would suffer. Ideally a country park could enclose the site of the monument and act as a buffer to protect it from the housing estates. Fears were voiced that the fields where the remains of the village church still stand, and which cover the vanished house plots and Tudor gardens, could become no more than a place for dog walking and bike riding and the monuments would be eroded. As the year progressed, an ambitious plan was drawn up to open the site to the public in September as part of the nationwide Heritage Open Days. A small committee obtained permission from the owners to open the site, with free buses from the town centre for the public. Historic enactors guided people round the site, one dressed as Lady Lee; other committee members were on hand to explain the lumps and bumps. Elizabethan music was provided by a group from St

Mary's Church, Aylesbury, and by Passamezzo. Other local groups put on displays and exhibitions to entertain the visitors. Leaflets were printed and distributed with help from Aylesbury Town Council, and the Mayor was one of the first visitors to arrive. On the day all expectations were confounded when over 500 people came; many had never been to the site before or knew of its existence. The overwhelming view was that it should be conserved and properly looked after. The ensuing publicity has resulted in action from the County Council and an ongoing debate on how best to preserve, and make available to the public, this hidden treasure.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Society's membership remained fairly static during 2006. On 31 December 2006 membership numbers were: 15 life members, 302 ordinary members and 129 family members - a total of 446, one less than the year before. In addition we continue to have 27 institutional members. The year got off to a good start with nine new members recorded at the January Council meeting. A further ten had joined by April; through the summer membership applications slowed down, but the year ended with a further eight new members joining in the winter months. A number of resignations and deaths depleted our membership, and the Society was particularly saddened to hear of the death of Lady Wright, widow of one of our distinguished Vice Presidents, Sir Dennis Wright.

## COUNCIL

The Council of Bucks Archaeological Society met four times during 2006: on 14 January, 8 April, 17 June and 21 October. All meetings were held in the Museum. The 20 Council members were: Professor W.R.Mead, President of the Society; Maureen Brown, Hon. Sec.; Roger Bettridge; Professor John Clarke, Hon. Editor of Records; John Cragg; Brian Davis, Hon. Treasurer; Mike Davis, Vice-Chairman

*The Society*

of Council; Mike Farley; Dr. Richard Gem; Sarah Gray, Museum Curator; Diana Gulland, Hon. Archivist and Librarian; Michael Hardy; Julian Hunt, Hon. Newsletter Editor; Councillor Mrs. Brenda Jennings (Bucks County Council); Sandy Kidd (County Archaeological Service); George Lamb; Edward Legg, Chairman of Council; Gary Marshall (National Trust); Mike Palmer, Hon. Sec. the Natural History Section; Dr David Thorpe; Dr Kevin Quick; and Bob Zeepvat. Dr A. Balfour resigned from Council, and the Natural History Section appointed Mr Victor Scott to succeed him as Chairman.

*Lecture Series 2006*

7 January	Protecting Historic Buildings: Lynette Walker CBA
11 February	Lowndes Family in Buckinghamshire: Jennifer Moss.
4 March	Dropmore House: Michael Hardy.
4 November	Comparative statistics for towns in nineteenth-century Buckinghamshire: David Thorpe and Buckinghamshire from the Air: Mike Farley
10 December.	Watermills of Buckinghamshire: Mike Farley

*Outings 2006*

10 June	Walking tour of Gerrards Cross by Julian Hunt and David Thorpe.
8 July	Winchester, Mompesson House and Old Sarum: George Lamb
23 September	Church Crawl: Michael Hardy (see below)

In a Society founded in 1847, largely by the County clergy, it would be surprising to find any church not visited frequently on Society outings. Yet this is what Michael Hardy managed to offer for the final outing of the summer, when he led the Church Crawl on 23 September. Only one of the churches had been visited by BAS since 1889. The area chosen was North Bucks, starting with St. Swithun's, Swanbourne, a multi-period building, followed by St. Mary's, Mursley. Here the group found the monuments to Sir John and Sir Francis Fortescue, who lived at the now-vanished Elizabethan mansion at nearby Salden. The next two churches, at Whaddon and Calverton, had never been visited by BAS. Whaddon boasts a local clock mechanism dating from 1673. After lunch in Stony Stratford, the Church of St Mary and St Giles was visited, an unusual eighteenth-century rebuild after the town fire of 1742. Next came the nineteenth-century Holy Trinity, Old Wolverton, also never visited by BAS, followed by the redundant church at Thornton. This has important medieval monuments to John and Isobel Barton, and the large table tomb of Robert Ingylton with its exceptional brass. The last two churches visited were Great Horwood and Winslow, the final visit another first for BAS.

*Maureen Brown, Hon. Secretary*

# THE LIBRARY

## ADDITIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY 2006

- ALEXANDER, B. Before Domesday: Haddenham and Cuddington. 2006.
- ANNAN, N. Roxburgh of Stowe: the life of J.F.Roxburgh and his influence in the public schools. 1966.
- BAILEY, K. Economy and society in medieval Buckinghamshire: the Hundred Rolls 1254-1280 including a list of first names and surnames. Bucks Paper No.7, 2006.
- BALLANCE, S. A town called Eton. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1990.
- BERESFORD, M.W. English medieval boroughs: a hand-list. 1973.
- BOATWRIGHT, L. ed. The Buckinghamshire Eyre of 1286. Bucks Record Society, No.34, 2006.
- BUTLER, P. and others, compilers. The coming of the railway to Beaconsfield. Beaconsfield and District Historical Society Publication No.9, 2006.
- CASH, A.H. John Wilkes: the scandalous father of civil liberty. 2006.
- COLLETT-WHITE, J. How Bedfordshire voted, 1685-1735: the evidence of local poll books. (Includes Bucks). 2006.
- COOPER, F. The black poplar: history, ecology and conservation. 2006.
- CUTTING, J. History and the morris dance: a look at morris dancing from its earliest days until 1850. (Illustration 37 is of morris dancers at Stowe House in 1818). 2005.
- DAVIS, M.C.J. The landscape of Missenden Abbey. Dissertation for Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, 2004.
- EVERSON, P. Peasants, peers and graziers, the landscape of Quarrendon, Buckinghamshire. Bucks Paper No.9, 2006.
- GOARD, C.J. Social and economic change in Ickford, Buckinghamshire, 1750-1850. History Dissertation for M.A., Thames Valley University, 1994.
- GOODMAN, S. Spirit of Stoke Mandeville: the story of Sir Ludwig Guttman. 1986.
- GULLAND, P. Making the road from Princes Risborough to Thame: a nineteenth century turnpike trust at work. Bucks Paper No.5, 2006.
- HILL, M. Bletchley Park people: Churchill's geese that never cackled. 2004.
- HILL, M. Milton Keynes: a history and celebration. 2005.
- HUNT, J. and THORPE, D. Gerrards Cross: a history. 2006.
- JONES, R. and PAGE, M. Medieval villages in an English landscape: beginnings and ends. (Whittlewood Project). 2006.
- JUNIPER, R. Reflections of a country town boy (Aylesbury). 2005.
- KELLY'S Directory of Buckinghamshire 1895.
- McLAIN, R. and RICHES, P. Once upon a heath: the early history of Holmer Green. 2006.
- MAYCOCK, R. A checklist of the plants of Buckinghamshire (including Milton Keynes and Slough). 2005.
- MILLER, D. A history of Bucks County Cricket Club. 2006.
- MOIR, V. A Great Loss: Wendover men killed in World War I. 2006.
- ORDNANCE SURVEY. Reproduction maps: Buckingham, 1938; Stony Stratford and Wolverton 1898; Wolverton and New Bradwell 1880; Aylesbury 1923; Amersham 1897; High Wycombe 1897; Marlow 1897; Slough 1897.
- PROCTER, P. The Hale near Wendover: from Collet to Stratfold. 2006.
- REED, A.J. A look at Stoke Mandeville. 2006.
- ROTHSCHILD ARCHIVE Review of the year April 2005-March 2006. Includes: 'The colours of another world: the autochrome photographs of Lionel de Rothschild', by Victor Gray and 'Butler and boardrooms: Alfred de Rothschild as collector and connoisseur' by Jonathan Conlin. 2006.
- SCOTT, C.L. and others. Edgehill: the battle reinterpreted.(Civil War). 2006.
- SEABRIGHT, C.J. Aylesbury. (Images of England). 2006.
- SPENCER-SILVER, P. Pugin's builder: the life and work of George Myers. (Joseph Paxton's son-in-law involved in the building of Mentmore and

*The Library*

- alterations to Aston Clinton House), 1993.
- THORPE, D. and HUNT, J. An atlas of Gerrards Cross 1840–1940. Bucks Paper No.6, 2006.
- TIMELINE MAPS. Aylesbury and Leighton Buzzard sheet 165. Historical map 1805–1874 re-projected and re-scaled to match Ordnance Survey Landranger. 2006.
- VAN der GRAAF-LOOSLEY, M.J. Around Princes Risborough: some early history and searching the Loosley name. 1999.
- WOODHOUSE, B. Tring: a pictorial history. 1996.
- In addition to the books listed 125 smaller items were added to stock. These included articles from journals, church guides and newspaper cuttings.

*Diana Gulland  
Hon. Librarian/Archivist*

# THE NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

## SUMMARY OF FIELD VISITS AND LECTURES ORGANISED BY THE SECTION DURING 2006

*14<sup>th</sup> January. 'Birds of Bucks'.* A strong start to the year again as 25 members gathered to hear Brian Clews' account of the county's bird-life. The talk began with a look at the assorted habitats that support bird-life. Brian explained how some man-made environments mimic more natural habitats. For example, the 'rough' of Buckinghamshire's many golf courses provides nesting sites for Skylarks and Meadow Pippits and hunting grounds for Barn Owls. The long history of sand, gravel and clay extraction for building has left a large number of water bodies for waterfowl and other water-loving birds. As a result of this complex patchwork of natural and manmade habitats, over 200 species of bird are recorded from Buckinghamshire each year. With the aid of some excellent photographs, Brian ran through a selection of birds with tips on where and when to look for them and pointers for their identification. Examples included the Kingfisher, and how to distinguish it from its *queenfisher* mate; Blackcaps, a traditional summer visitor from Africa but increasingly found over-wintering; and the Waxwing, usually a winter visitor in small numbers but which arrived in large numbers (50,000 and 100,000) in 2005. Several members recounted their sightings of that year. While this year has brought few sightings, Brian advised the audience look out for them around supermarket car parks, which are often planted with a range of berry-bearing plants that attract Waxwings and a range of other birds. Numerous other species were viewed and discussed making this both a pleasurable and informative way to spend a cold winter afternoon.

*4<sup>th</sup> February. Winter bird watch at Otmoor RSPB reserve.* Enough of staying indoors, time to get back out there. Five years after our last visit, eight members returned to Otmoor to be greeted by RSPB warden, Peter Barkin, who began by describing the site. The Reserve now covers 100 acres and is managed as lowland wet grassland, flooded in winter and grazed by cattle in summer. Ditches are stocked with fish to encourage Bittern, Heron,

Little Grebe and Little Egret. While Bittern had been recorded here in 2003 and 2005, no sightings had been made here this year. Once on the reserve proper, sightings began to accumulate, including Goldcrest, Stonechats, two male Reed Buntings, Bullfinch, Greenfinch and a flock of grazing Wigeon. On a stretch of water at the far end, Teal, Snipe, Gadwell, Garganey and Tufted Duck were observed, while in the skies Lapwings, Starlings and Golden Plover provided spectacular aerial displays. On the return to the car park some members glimpsed a sight of a Sanderling as the light faded on another satisfying afternoon.

*11<sup>th</sup> March. 'A year in the life of a natural history photographer'.* 22 members were treated to a particularly fine selection of photographs, made all the more surprising by Paul's admission that these were selected from his first year (2003–2004) with a digital camera (although his skills were previously honed through use of a conventional SLR). Paul noted a number of advantages of digital cameras, including not being reliant on film speed. By far the biggest advantage, however, was the ability to take lots of pictures with no additional cost – thus allowing a choice of final images from a far larger selection. The quality of image possible was illustrated by a photograph of a Graylag Goose, in which, as Paul progressively zoomed in to the bird's eye, virtually no loss of clarity was seen. A number of tricks of the trade were also shared, including identifying a suitably located perch for photographing and then putting food below on a regular basis to get birds used to visiting. Locations ranged from his back garden in Hyde Heath to all over the British Isles. The photographs of the Black Grouse in the mists of an Aviemore dawn were particularly impressive. While spectacular images of birds featured heavily, other groups were represented including a close-up of Britain's largest fly, the Hornet Robber-fly (*Asilus crabroniformis*) along with a sequence of photographs of an Emperor Dragonfly, *Anax imperator*, emerging from its larval cases. Having more than amply

achieved his talk title, Paul ended with a short visual presentation of his recent trip to Tibet.

8<sup>th</sup> April. Annual General Meeting was followed by 'What, where, when and who: Recording wildlife'. 15 members braved the AGM to hear a talk by the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Officer, Martin Harvey, on recording local wildlife. Martin outlined the dual role of the records centre in both collecting and making available biological and geological data. He noted the importance of keeping historical data and, in particular, the value of the Museum's natural history collections. He also emphasised the need to keep data and collections up-to-date. A range of local recording schemes operating in the County were discussed including those for dragonflies, breeding birds, butterflies and moths. Members were encouraged to participate in these or to send their records direct to the environmental records centre or via Mike Palmer for the BAS Wildlife Sightings report. Martin stressed that the most important thing was to record the key data of: what species, where (including a six figure grid reference if possible), when and by whom. Any members wanting more advice or simply wishing to find out more about the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre will find a link at the BAS website. Alternatively, contact Mike Palmer at the Museum Resource Centre at Halton.

29<sup>th</sup> April. Rock and Fossil Day at the County Museum. Members of the Bucks Earth Heritage Group presented an impressive display of geological specimens from Buckinghamshire and further afield for members and visiting public to view, handle and discuss. Among the minerals, rocks and mammoth teeth was an impressive display of fossils collected by local schoolboy, Simon Penn, who only the previous year had attended the event as a visitor. Such enthusiasm is to be admired. Over 200 people visited during the day.

27<sup>th</sup> May. A botanical walk around Long Herdon Meadow. It is probable that the all-day rain led to only four members wading through the knee-high and very wet vegetation of this BBOWT-managed ancient meadowland remnant on the banks of the River Ray. Their fortitude, however, was to be richly rewarded. Guide for the day, Roy Maycock, pro-

vided a print-out of all plant species recorded there to date. Some, such as Meadowsweet, Great Burnet and Common Meadow-rue were evident all around, while Bulbous Buttercup was found in the field nearer the road. Meadow Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*), a plant of wetlands and limited distribution in Buckinghamshire was also observed along with Green-winged Orchids (*Orchis morio*). Narrow-leaved Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe silaifolia*) and Tubular Water-dropwort (*O. fistulosa*), two other rare plants of note were found after some searching. Sadly, there was no trace of the Common Cotton-grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), last recorded here by Roy in the 1970s. On the way back to the cars Mousetail (*Myosurus minimus*), a diminutive and unusual member of the Buttercup Family, was found underneath a drinking trough. Although billed as a botanical walk, Martin Harvey's presence meant that a number of interesting entomological sightings were made, including two Red Data Book species and one Nationally Scarce beetle, namely the click beetle *Paraphotistis nigricornis* (first record for Bucks), *Osphya bipunctata* (possibly second record for Bucks) and the longhorn *Anaglyptus mysticus*. The former is associated with wet meadows such as Long Herdon, the latter two are beetles of dead-wood, more usually associated with woodland habitats but perhaps breeding in mature hedgerow trees in this area. Despite the rain, a number of birds were heard including Cuckoo, Skylark and Curlew.

27<sup>th</sup> June. Bucks Wildlife Day at the County Museum. Members of the North Bucks Bat Group, Bucks Invertebrate Group, Wycombe Wildlife Group, Wycombe Rangers, Milton Keynes Natural History Society, Chesham and District Natural History Society, Chilterns Conservation Board and the Fiends of Tring Reservoir all presented stands at the Museum's fourth annual Bucks Wildlife Day. Due to problems with publicity, numbers were down on previous years, but a good time was had by all present. A notable identification among the various specimens brought in during the day was a Banded Snail (*Ceruella virgata*) with a very elongated conical shell.

September. Geological field trip to Studley Grange Quarry and Wootton Bassett mud springs near Swindon. Due to unavoidable circumstances this meeting was not able to proceed this year.

*The Natural History Section*

*7<sup>th</sup> October. Mushroom Magic at the County Museum.* The Buckinghamshire Fungus Group amassed another staggering array of freshly collected toadstools and other fungi from around the county. As always, the display was augmented during the day by a range of mystery specimens, including several Giant Puffballs, brought in by members of the public for identification. As well as the real thing, children added to the wall-mounted *Mushroom Garden* collage with a range of hand-coloured card toadstools varying from the natura-

listic to incredibly vibrant. Around 160 people attended.

*8<sup>th</sup> October. A joint fungus foray with the Buckinghamshire Fungus Group.* Unfortunately no members were able to attend this event.

*9<sup>th</sup> December. Save our bugs: Conserving beetles, bees and other invertebrates.* Due to an error in scheduling this meeting was rearranged for Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2007.