

Local History Recording Scheme.

BERKSHIRE BRANCH.

ANNUAL REPORT, 1930.

THIS seventh Annual Report of the Committee of the Berkshire Branch of the Local History Recording Scheme covers the period from January 1st to December 31st, 1930.

During the year we have suffered a heavy loss in the death of our Chairman, the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, who had devoted so many years to the study of local history, and whose wide knowledge and experience were ever at our service. We also regret to record the death of Major Laffan, who represented the Reading and District Branch of the Historical Association on our Committee since its inception, and who was always keenly interested in the Scheme.

Up to the end of last year there had been received from our Local Correspondents 326 approved records relating to 104 Parishes in the County ; this showing an increase during the year of 39 in the number of records received and 10 in the number of Parishes represented. Our Local Correspondents at the end of 1930 were 272 in number, representing 191 Parishes. Sixteen Correspondents were enrolled during the year for Parishes not hitherto represented. Berkshire is divided for record purposes into 203 Parishes, and we now have Correspondents in all but the following twelve Parishes :—Barkham, Bourton, Combe, Cranbourne, East Garston, Hatford, Longcot, Midgham, Sandleford, Stockcross, Tubney, Watchfield. A special effort is being made to obtain representatives in these Parishes in order to complete the County organisation.

With regard to the recording of Churchyard Inscriptions, very valuable work is being accomplished by several of our Local Correspondents, and, in all, the Inscriptions in 60 Churchyards have been received or promised. Twelve of such lists were sent in during the past year, and several further offers of

help have also been received during this period, but very much work still remains to be done, and additional assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Concerning old deeds, a number of which have been deposited under the Scheme : We would take this opportunity of reminding the owners of old deeds and documents that the Berkshire Branch of the Recording Scheme is always glad to receive, by gift or loan, any old deeds relating to the County. The deeds already received under the Scheme, now calendared and listed under Parishes, form a very important contribution to the sources of local history, whereas in private hands such documents are, as a rule, of little use.

With regard to the finances of the Scheme, there was, at the end of the year, a deficit of £2 4s. 11d., owing to several annual subscriptions not having been paid ; it is hoped that this deficit will shortly be made good, and that the income of the Branch will, in the future, be sufficient to meet expenses.

Such is a brief account of the work of the Berkshire Branch of the Scheme during the past year, from which you will be gratified to learn that steady progress is being maintained. A great amount of work is still, however, waiting to be done, more especially in the way of recording local customs, legends and traditions, now so rapidly disappearing, and the Committee sincerely hope that all who can will help the Scheme by recording such details of our local folk-lore without delay.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity of thanking our Hon. Secretary, Miss Swadling, for the valuable work she has done for the Scheme during the past year, which, it is gratifying to note, has resulted in an increase in the number of records received and Local Correspondents enrolled. The thanks of the Committee are also due to our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. H. T. Morley, for having very kindly again looked after the finances of the Branch, and to the Hon. Director, Mr. C. B. Willcocks, who was the originator of the Scheme and has been the moving spirit since its inception.