

Local History Recording Scheme : Berkshire Branch.

ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT.

THIS Report of the Committee of the Berkshire Branch of the Local History Recording Scheme covers the period from January 1st to December 31st, 1934. From our Local Correspondents, up to the end of 1934, 430 approved records had been received, relating to 123 Parishes in the County, 42 having been received during the year under review. The total number of Correspondents at the end of December was 293, representing 203 Parishes, as compared with 289 Correspondents, representing 200 Parishes, at the end of 1933. We regret to report that several Correspondents have died during the year, and others have resigned owing to their having left the County. It is hoped that additional helpers will be enrolled during the coming year to fill these vacancies.

The Berkshire Branch of the Local History Recording Scheme continues to make excellent progress, and general interest in the Scheme is maintained. More active help in its work is, however, required, and the Committee appeal to all interested in local history for assistance in furthering the objects of the Scheme, as there are many districts in the County concerning which little is recorded, and in many places the traditions of the countryside are rapidly disappearing. Local Correspondents willing to undertake definite work in connection with the Scheme and who are not aware of matter to record in their own district, are requested to communicate with the Hon. Secretary, as help is needed in many lines of research which she will be glad to indicate.

During the year, work in the recording of Churchyard Inscriptions has been proceeding steadily, and sixteen lists of Monumental Inscriptions have been received. Mr. L. G. Chambers and Mr. W. H. Hallam continue their valuable work in this connection, and have each sent in complete transcriptions of the memorials in several parishes during the year, while Dr. C. J. Girling, with the assistance of Miss M. Goodey, has transcribed

the whole of the Memorials in Cholsey Church and Churchyard—some 452 in all—and has prepared a ground plan to scale showing the positions of the graves. More help is, however, required in this very important work, as there are in the County some 300 graveyards, copies of the inscriptions in only about 100 of which have been received or promised. In the meantime, the inscriptions on many tombstones are rapidly becoming obliterated, and therefore special efforts should be made to transcribe them without delay before they become indecipherable. The Committee will be glad if Correspondents who have time to devote to this work will communicate with the Hon. Secretary, who will inform them whether the memorials in any particular parish have already been transcribed, and advise them of parishes in their district where the inscriptions have not been copied. In addition to the copying of inscriptions, it is hoped that Correspondents will endeavour to obtain photographs, or other reliable illustrations, of 17th and 18th century tombstones or headstones, beautiful examples of which still exist in many of our churchyards, but which are, unfortunately, in many cases crumbling away.

An interesting feature of the year's work has been the appointment of Regional Representatives to supervise groups of parishes in the County. Mr. P. S. Spokes has kindly undertaken a North Berkshire district of some 60 parishes, and Mr. C. B. Willcocks, the parishes round Reading. The experiment has proved successful, and it is hoped to appoint additional representatives in the near future.

Valuable accessions have again been deposited under the Scheme during the year, and we are indebted to Major H. R. E. Rudkin, O.B.E., for a copy of the Wells pedigree, and to Mr. L. G. A. Collins, of Folkestone, for the Collins of Betterton pedigree, as recorded in the College of Arms.

With regard to the finances of the Scheme, there was at the end of the year a balance in hand of £2 os. 3d., compared with the balance in hand of £1 7s. 0d. at the end of the previous year.

Our thanks are again due to the Chairman, the Hon. Director, the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer for the work they have done during the past year to ensure the continued success of the Scheme.