

# **The Berkshire Local History Committee.**

## **Thirty-second Annual Report.**

This Annual Report of the Berkshire Local History Committee covers the period from 1st January to 31st December, 1955.

During the year the Committee's activities have continued and the 14 records received bring the total number of approved records to 776, representing 158 parishes in the county; 12 new Correspondents were enrolled, bringing the total number of Local Correspondents to 174, representing 180 parishes.

At the present time interest in local history is more widespread than ever before; the press, the radio, television and the documentary film have all played a considerable part in bringing the importance of regional historical studies to the attention of a wide public. There is much material still available in Berkshire illustrating the past life of our towns and villages, but here, as in other counties, collectors of local material often fail to make systematic records of their findings, and thus much valuable information is lost.

This Committee has frequently drawn attention to the special need for collecting information relating to the customs, legends and traditions of Berkshire. In the past this heritage of unwritten lore was handed down from one generation to another, but now, owing to changed social conditions, these traditional elements of Berkshire folklore are in danger of being neglected and forgotten. The urgency of the matter has now been recognised and a National Survey of English Folklore is being made by the English Department of University College, London. The records dealing with folklore sent in under the Berkshire Local History Recording Scheme should be of considerable assistance in this nationwide survey, and it is hoped that Local Correspondents will redouble their efforts to collect all available information before it is too late. Photographs often add appreciably to the value of the records.

The Hon. Secretary will at all times be glad to hear from those interested in local history and folklore who will act as Local Correspondents for one or more parishes and so assist in preserving the annals of the past.

At a Summer Meeting held at Watlington House on July 16th in conjunction with the Berkshire Archaeological Society some 75 Local Correspondents and others attended. Interesting informal talks followed by discussions were given by Miss M. Maplesden, Miss E. Carleton-Williams, the Rev. A. V. Billen, Mr. T. Morland and Mr. B. Ridler; after tea, Miss D. Prebble kindly showed members round the House.

The Committee was represented by two delegates at the Annual Meeting of the Standing Conference for Local History (National Council of Social Service), held in December at Friends' House, London.

During the year 1,000 Kalamazoo record sheets were purchased at the cost of £10 15s. 3d.

With regard to finance, as shown in the Hon. Treasurer's statement, the balance in hand at the end of the year was £2 16s. 1d. Donations amounting to £1 10s. 0d. are gratefully acknowledged.

The Committee again wishes to thank the various Affiliated Societies for their continued interest and support, and also to record its appreciation of the work of its officers, and to express its gratitude to the various Local Correspondents who have sent in records during the year and in other ways have helped to further the work and aims of the Committee.