

MIDDLESEX LOCAL HISTORY COUNCIL

BY ERIC SMITH

IN 1932 the National Council for Social Service obtained a grant from the Carnegie Trust for the encouragement of the study of local history, mainly among rural communities.

Little was done, however, before the war and in 1948 it was decided to form, as a co-ordinating body, a Standing Conference for Local History, the term being interpreted in its widest sense as covering not only archaeology, but architecture, archives, costume, customs, folk-lore, genealogy, geology and all kindred subjects. Its purpose was primarily to be of service to laymen and to promote a wider interest in historical and antiquarian matters. It was not intended to compete with the more specialised activities of existing societies.

The proposal had the support of many national bodies, such as the Ministry of Works (Ancient Monuments Branch), the British Records Association, the Council for British Archaeology, the Place-Name Society, the Historical Association, the Library and Museums Associations, the Public Record Office, the Society of Antiquaries and the Victoria County History Committee, as well as the university extra-mural departments, the Middlesex County Council and a number of other county and local organisations.

The first step of the Standing Conference was to set up county committees and these have now been successfully established in fourteen counties. In February, 1951, a Steering Committee was formed to inaugurate a Middlesex Local History Council and representatives of all interested bodies within the county were appointed to this committee. A draft constitution was drawn up, based on those adopted for the councils already formed and an inaugural meeting was held at the Middlesex Guildhall on 4th October. The Lord Lieutenant of the County was in the chair and Dr. R. W. Moore, Headmaster of Harrow, gave the address. Invitations were sent to all societies concerned and to a number of individuals, including all Vice-Presidents and members of Council of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society. Well over three hundred persons attended the meeting. It was unanimously agreed that a

Council for Middlesex should be formed and that the present Steering Committee should act until the first Annual General Meeting.

The objects of the Council as set out in the draft constitution may be summarised thus: to stimulate public interest and bring together organisations and persons interested in local history; to sponsor lectures on methods of research, pool information on sources, advise research workers and, where possible, help them to publish their results; to advocate and promote the preservation of local records, antiquities and objects of historical interest and co-operate with other bodies having similar aims.