

THE SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1959 meeting was held at the Museum on 4th July. In the afternoon members were shown Nether Winchendon House by Mr. J. G. Spencer Bernard who has carried out extensive repairs and renovation since he inherited the house a few years ago. These are fully dealt with in three articles in *Country Life* (Vol. CXXVII, Nos. 3295-7, 28th April, 5th and 12th May, 1960).

OUTINGS

In addition to the visit to Nether Winchendon, two other outings were made in 1959. On 14th July a privilege visit was paid to Waddesdon Manor, opened to the public in the previous week. A record attendance of nearly 150—over a quarter of the membership—testified to the interest shown in the superb contents of the mansion. Parties were conducted round by Mr. Philip James (the Curator) and his staff.

On 25th July a full day's expedition was made to Avebury, Wiltshire. Some 60 members came by coach and private car. The Monument was viewed in the morning, when Mr. Head gave a brief introductory talk; after a picnic lunch the Museum, the church and Avebury Manor, the home of Sir Francis Knowles, were visited. This was a full and successful day.

In 1958 Broughton Castle was seen by a small party of members on 13th September, when members were taken round by Lord Saye and Sele.

All these visits were blessed with perfect weather which greatly added to their enjoyment.

LECTURES

Mr. Hume and Mr. Clarke arranged full programmes of lectures during the winters of 1958-9 and 1959-60, most of which were well attended.

The Natural History Section has continued to draw a large attendance at its numerous outings and talks. Mrs. Grimmitt remains Hon. Secretary of the section, which is now an important and increasing activity of the Society.

OBITUARY

Since the last issue of the *Records* notification has been received of the deaths of the following members: Mr. L. A. Bradbury, Mr. A. Crouch, Mrs. A. Lehmann, Mr. K. A. Nathan, Mr. R. W. Scoley, Lady De L'Isle and Dudley, Colonel H. Bruce Dresser, Dr. E. L. Elliott, Miss Isabel Fry and Mr. Percy High.

DR. A. MORLEY DAVIES, who died early in 1959, was a member for many years and served on the Council after the war. He contributed several articles to the *Records*. Ancient Hundreds, IX, 104; Eleventh-century Bucks., X, 69; Abefeld and Ackhamstead, XV, 166; The Hundreds of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, XV, 231.

COUNTY MUSEUM COMMITTEE

This has continued to function smoothly. Staff has been increased during the year and considerable repairs and maintenance have been carried out. On 31st December Mr. T. A. Hume, the Curator since Mr. Sansome's resignation in 1954, left to take up the post of Curator of the Liverpool Museum. Mr. Hume played a most important part in developing the Museum during this period, which covered the change of status in 1957 when the County Council took over responsibility for maintaining the Museum.

Apart from his energy as a Curator, he endeared himself to all members who met him; his knowledge, advice and help were never sought in vain. In particular he developed excellent "public relations" with the Press and general public which helped the Museum attendance, brought welcome publicity to the numerous special exhibitions he organised, and stimulated general interest in the Museum's and the Society's work, which resulted not only in many accessions but also in early warning of demolitions, new roadworks and so forth, which were often of considerable value. All members will wish him well in his new and most responsible post. His successor, Mr. C. N. Gowing, M.A., A.M.A., comes to Aylesbury from the Curtis Museum, Alton and Willis Museum, Basingstoke.

G. Shepherd, the Caretaker, died suddenly in 1959; his friendly presence will be missed by many members. W. Kearns was appointed to succeed him in July.

NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

DURING 1958-9 the Natural History Section had nineteen meetings. These consisted of four lectures and fifteen outdoor gatherings. The attendance varied between 12 and 44. Four events were in conjunction with the Herts. Natural History Society. We are on the happiest terms with our neighbouring societies.

Mr. Philip Street, a writer on zoological subjects, is a member of our committee and gave us an illustrated lecture on marine biology and also conducted a party round Whipsnade which he knows intimately, having published a successful book on the subject. Mr. H. V. Thompson, who is an authority on pest control and who had recently visited Australia, gave a lively talk on Australian wild animals.

In July, 1958, Sir Edward Salisbury led a party on a very windy day through the woods above Halton, where members were delighted to find species of orchid still in flower, including the Musk orchid. On 28th June last Sir Edward once more took a party on the hill behind Whiteleaf Cross. The pyramid, the fragrant and the bird's-nest orchid were found. There were excellent examples of woodland chalk flora beside the open downland. Sir Edward's vast knowledge and his good humour and enthusiasm make these outings very popular. In October, by kind permission of Col. Tetley, a

fungus foray was held in his woods, Mr. Badcock, of the Forestry Research Station, Princes Risborough, leading the party. Tea at Boswells turned this outing into a social occasion. Seventy different specimens were found, some of them rare. Mr. Badcock gave members excellent help in identification, and I think enjoyed himself as much as the members.

Also in October the Earl of Buckinghamshire conducted a party round his estate, showing his young plantations and explaining his forestry methods. This event was also exceedingly popular.

Three of our committee members, Mr. G. Glover, Mr. V. J. Scott and Mr. Turney, led successful expeditions. Mr. Glover conducted members in late July to a field where orchids were flowering in abundance, and in August an expedition of general natural history interest at Arnold's Sand Pits in the Heath and Reach area was led by Mr. Scott. Mr. Turney led an expedition to the Chess Valley.

Lady Barlow and Mrs. Cowdy have led the various bird outings. In February, 1959, at Hartops End Reservoir there was a marvellous view of more than a dozen waxwings and a goosander. On 26th April *Anemone Pulsatilla* was found near Ivinghoe Beacon and on the same day herons were seen nesting at Hartops End.

Mrs. Cowdy, who now represents Buckinghamshire on the R.S.P.B. and is on the Council of the Bardsey Island Bird Preservation Trust, gave a lecture on 21st February on the Birds of Bardsey Island. One of Mrs. Cowdy's accomplishments is her ability to imitate bird calls. These are always appreciated. Mrs. Cowdy reports that waxwings were feeding on the berries at the side of Tring Hill, quite oblivious of traffic only a few feet away; also at Whitsun an osprey was on view at Wilstone Reservoir.

An innovation was the showing of the film *Highland Birds*, made by the R.S.P.B., at the Grammar School, Aylesbury, on 29th January. This was the foggiest night of the winter. However, 200 people came and enjoyed this delightful film. Mr. Tidmarsh, the Headmaster of the Grammar School, gave every assistance, for which we are very grateful. This success led to the film being shown again in the New Hall at Wendover, which also drew a large audience and confirmed the committee's opinion that there is a public for this type of film. This spring Mr. Richard Fitter called a meeting in this museum of representatives of all the Natural History Societies connected with the Chiltern Hills. It is hoped to co-operate with information on the flora and wild life of the area.

One of the most successful events of the year is the Natural History Week-end Course at Missenden Abbey in May. In 1959 it was in conjunction with the Middle Thames Society. The subject was Birds and Plants of the Shore, and the course was fully booked directly it was announced, and many applicants were turned away it is hoped that in the future two week-ends can be arranged.

J.M.G.

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(as at 31st December, 1959)

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