

THE SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP. This now stands at 612, a drop of 5% in the past year. Of this number 93 are husbands or wives of members paying the reduced subscription and seven are Junior members. In addition there are thirteen Affiliated Societies. Eight members live overseas.

During the year Sir John Guillum Scott resigned as a Vice-President on leaving the county. In December Sir Harry Verney died; he was the senior member of the Society having been elected in 1908.

COUNCIL met on five occasions during the year under the chairmanship of Mr. Brian Pullen.

REDUNDANT CHURCHES. It appears that Foscott (despite opposition from the Society) and Grove will be converted to dwellings. Fleet Marston, Hartwell, and Pitstone are in the hands of the Redundant Churches Board and are under repair. Hardmead, Great Woolstone and Walton are likely to be declared redundant soon; the latter may be taken over by the Open University. The font from Grove has been transferred to Llantrisant, Anglesey and the Grenville brass at Foscott to Maids Moreton.

CONSERVATION. Up to 31st March 1974 the Society dealt direct with the County Planning department on all matters of scheduled buildings. Under the re-organisation of local government, district councils become the primary planning authority. Satisfactory relations have been developed with four of the five District Councils in the county and over one hundred cases have been dealt with during the year covering such varied buildings as Railway Cottages at New Bradwell, Great Linford Alms-houses, Grove Farm at Widmer, an 18th-century dated wall at Frieth, Little Missenden church, Gayhurst House and 68 High Street, Newport Pagnell. No serious losses have to be reported.

ARCHAEOLOGY. The newly formed Libraries and Museums Sub-Committee of the Education Committee of the County Council (on which the Society nominates three members) has agreed in principle to the formation of a County Archaeological Unit but in the present financial crisis it is unlikely to see the light of day for some time to come.

OUTINGS. These have continued to be popular amongst members. Visits in 1974 were as follows:

- 27th April *Bucks.* Missenden Abbey, Hampden House and Great Hampden church.
- 25th May *Warwickshire.* The town of Warwick, Coventry Cathedral and Arbury Hall.
- 22nd June *Surrey.* The town of Guildford, Loseley House and Clandon Park.
- 27th July *Oxfordshire.* Minster Lovell and Swinbrook churches, Chastleton House, Ditchley Park and Rousham House.
- 10th Aug. *Hampshire.* Hinton Ampner House, Pamber Priory and Stratfield Saye.
- 7th Sept. *Bucks Churches.* Iver, Langley Marish, Horton, Upton, Hitcham and Burnham. Tea at Nashdom.

NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

In 1974 a very successful weekend course entitled "Roadside Verges" was held at Missenden Abbey in June. During the year there were six outings to places within the county and five lectures at the County Museum in Aylesbury; these are listed below—

- 19th January Members' afternoon. Displays, talks and slides.
16th February Andalucian flowers, an illustrated talk given by Mr. Victor Scott.
16th March Indicator plants—why plants grow where they do. A talk given by Miss Molly Hyde.
28th April Outing to Velvet Lawn, Ellesborough. Led by Mr. Aubrey Woodward.
29th June Joint meeting with BBONT to Park Wood, Bradenham.
28th July A walk in Wendover Forest, led by Miss Dorothy Eyre.
18th August A walk along the canal starting from Marsworth Reservoir, led by Mr. Aubrey Woodward.
28th September Fungus Foray at Stockgrove Country Park, led by Mr. Victor Scott.
26th October An illustrated talk on butterflies given by Dr. Edwards.
23rd November Some distribution problems in Bucks flora. A talk by Mr. Peter Knipe.
14th December Birds of the British Isles. Illustrated talk by Mr. Victor Scott.

With the building of new roads, a new city and many new housing estates the shape of the county, and consequently the wild life within it, has changed rapidly in the last few years. The awareness of the need to record and, where possible, to conserve the countryside has become of first importance to the Natural History Societies whose members work voluntarily and with such dedication. It seems appropriate therefore to list below the names of these societies for present and future reference.

Amersham and District Ornithological Society.

This society was formed in 1973 and quickly grew to such large proportions that it had to be divided into two sections, one for adults the other for juniors. The exact area covered is undefined but field outings sometimes extend into Hertfordshire. In addition to periodic broadsheets a bulletin is issued three or four times a year.

Aylesbury Grammar School Ornithological Society.

The Society, which dates from 1971, is not open for public membership. Bird-watching visits are made to outside areas but for the last two years the society has been mainly concerned with a survey of birds seen in the school area; a report on the survey has been sent to the R.S.P.B. and local societies. An extension to the school is now being built and will probably make a noticeable and interesting difference to future reports.

The society's annual report goes into the school magazine.

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust.

The Trust was founded in 1959 and is the conservation organisation for these three counties. At the present time there are twenty-four Nature Reserves in Buckinghamshire which are maintained mainly by members' subscriptions and from donations. Part of the work of the Trust is recording and research work "for the advancement of knowledge in the natural sciences".

There is an annual report and a separate report on the BBONT Nature Reserves; a bulletin is issued three times a year.

British Naturalists' Association.

The association was founded in 1905, the High Wycombe branch in 1939. It covers no specific area of Buckinghamshire but most of the field meetings are arranged within reach of High Wycombe and records are sent for inclusion in "Country-side", the associations' journal which is issued three times a year.

Buckinghamshire Environmental Education Society.

This is an open society but mainly intended for teachers. Its purpose is to encourage environmental education in schools. Members, drawn from all parts of the county, meet once a month; special projects are undertaken.

A journal is issued once a year.

Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, Natural History Section.

This section of the Archaeological Society began in 1947 and covers all aspects of Natural History within the county. Meetings are held monthly.

Bucks Geological Group.

This is a small but growing group which began in 1972. There are monthly meetings which consist of field outings both local and in nearby counties; there are lectures during the winter. At present there is no bulletin.

Chesham and District Natural History Society.

This society has been in existence for eleven years and is a vigorous and active society contributing much to recording in the area. Activities are generally within a five-mile radius of Chesham. A newsletter is issued quarterly.

Middle Thames Natural History Society.

This society founded in 1947, covers all aspects of wildlife. Bird records are kept for the whole of Buckinghamshire and for Berkshire east of the River Loddon; flower records are kept for the whole county.

A news bulletin is issued twice yearly and the annual report, containing extensive wildlife records, in the autumn. A special bird bulletin is issued monthly.

Milton Keynes Natural History Society.

This society covers north Buckinghamshire and the site of the new city of Milton Keynes. As development of the countryside proceeded much recording was done and full reports were made. One of the most interesting developments has been the man-made balancing lakes—covering about 1,300 acres—at Willen to relieve the flood area of the Ouse valley. Since these lakes were put into use in September 1974 a spectacular number and variety of birds have been recorded on them.

The society issues a monthly and an annual report which includes records of all wild life of the area.

The Stowe Natural History Society.

The society has been in existence since about 1925 and was reformed in 1965. Twenty acres of school grounds have been set aside as a nature reserve, the chief function of which is to educate the boys in nature conservation.

An annual report is produced in May.

Eton College, which was part of Buckinghamshire, has a Natural History Society but in April 1974 Eton became part of Berkshire and therefore does not now come within the scope of this list.

Names and addresses of secretaries of these societies can be found in most local public libraries or in the County Museum in Aylesbury.

The following report has been received from Mr. Aubrey Woodward:

The first half of 1974 was unusually dry with little snow or frost but with strong winds; throughout the second half of the year the weather became increasingly wet with winds frequently reaching gale force. Owing to cool spring weather primroses, cowslips and bluebells bloomed well and lasted longer than usual; primrose-cowslip hybrids were observed at Wotton Underwood. In one of the well-known railway cuttings at Wotton the number of Green-winged Orchis (*Orchis morio*) had increased from the usual dozen or so to well over 150. Twayblade (*Listera ovata*), Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) and Common Spotted Orchis (*Orchis fuchsii*) were all badly bruised by continuous winds. It was a very good year for Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) which were abundant in some places.

The remarkable feature of the autumn and winter weather was the mildness, flowers not usually seen after October were in bloom till December. Cow parsley and hog weed were seen in some numbers on roadsides at Christmas; aconities and snowdrops were also flowering in some woods at this time.

Some interesting flowers were noted during the summer:

<i>Allium vineale</i> Crow Garlic	Ludgershall Station.
<i>Linaria repens</i> Pale Toadflax	Chearsley.
<i>Lycopsis arvensis</i> Bugloss	Stone.
<i>Cichorium intybus</i> Chicory	Wotton and Bishopstone.
<i>Valerianella locusta</i> Lamb's Lettuce	Wotton and Ludgershall.
<i>Saxifraga granulata</i> Meadow Saxifrage	Stone
<i>Genista tinctoria</i> Dyer's Greenweed	Grendon Underwood.
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> Procumbent Yellow Sorrel	Hartwell.
<i>Impatiens capensis</i> Orange Balsam	Eythrope.
<i>Medicago arabica</i> Spotted Medick	Stone.
<i>Impatiens parviflora</i> Small Balsam	Stone.
<i>Digitaria sanguinalis</i> Crab-grass	Stone.
<i>Solanum chenopoides</i> Green Nightshade	Gardens at Aston Abbots.
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i> Alkanet	Fine clumps in roadside spinney between Aston Abbots and Cublington.

<i>Allium ursinum</i> Ramsons	Spinney in Aston Abbots (rare locally).
<i>Calystegia sepium</i> Bellbine	Ledburn, roadside.
<i>Datura stramonium</i> Thorn Apple	Stone.
<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i> Henbit	Stone.
<i>Lamium hybridum</i> Cut-leaved Dead-nettle	Stone.
<i>Byrus communis</i> Pear.	Lower Hartwell.
<i>Euonymus japonicus</i> Japanese Spindle	Hartwell, naturalised in hedgerow.
<i>Ranunculus arvensis</i> Corn Crowfoot	Stone.
<i>Ophrys insectifera</i> Fly Orchid	Park Wood
<i>Hypericum androsamum</i> Tutsan	Park Wood

Janet Easton

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

(as at 31st December, 1974)

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