

THE SOCIETY

THE SOCIETY 2001

In many respects the Society had a successful if generally quiet year in 2001, but somewhat disturbed by a relatively large number of changes of its principal officers and the realignment of the management of the museum.

Total membership at 31st December 2001 was 455 individuals of whom 16 are life members and there are 21 affiliated societies. This compares with 457 members and 20 affiliated societies in 2000. Sadly in March, Dr Arnold Baines, a Trustee, Vice President and long-standing member of Council died. His obituary was included in the last issue of *Records of Bucks*. The Society also learned with regret of the deaths of Mr R. Glossop, Mr A. Woodward, Mr R. Lever, Mr J. Hawkins, Miss M. Hore, Mr P. S. Caudrey and Mrs E. K. Ayers.

During 2001 Council met four times. Sarah Gray and Professor John Clarke joined in June, and Edward Legg was re-elected Chairman. George Lamb became the Vice-Chairman. Lindsey James resigned as Honorary Secretary on leaving the district, although she did continue to help for some time afterwards. In general, other members of the Council stepped in to assist the remainder of her duties and particular thanks are due to Diana Gulland for handling the post. Among matters considered during the year were the 'Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past' and the 'Bernwood Ancient Hunting Forest' projects.

The AGM in May was attended by 68 members and chaired by our President, Professor W. R. Mead. In his inaugural address he dealt with the activities of the Society during his year of office, interspersing these with personal reminiscences trawled from his long association with the Society and the Museum.

In September the second Bucks Local History Fair and Conference was held, at the University of Buckingham, and was a great success. Approximately 175 people came to hear a range of excellent speakers, and view exhibitions by many local societies. The day was organised by Dr David

Thorpe, who is also working on setting up a website, in conjunction with Mr Robert Dixon of Boarstall.

The Society was also represented at the Buckinghamshire Family History Society Open Day in July at Aylesbury Grammar School, with Peter and Diana Gulland once again manning our stand.

Records of Bucks Vol 41 was available at the AGM and again the Society would like to thank all the volunteers who assisted George Lamb in its distribution, which considerably reduces our postal costs. Sadly, Roger Bettridge was forced to give up the editorship due to pressure of work. He was heavily involved in the transformation of the Record Office into the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies. The Society was fortunate, however, in obtaining the services of Professor John Clarke from Buckingham University to succeed him. Mike Farley continues to assist, particularly with archaeological matters. Diana Gulland also prepared and published the index to *Records of Bucks* Vols. 31 to 40 which was distributed free to members. Sales of the Maps book were still quite strong and there were steady sales of Monographs, offprints and microfiche.

A considerable number of changes took place at the Museum during the year following the resignation of Oliver Green. Sarah Gray took over the day-to-day administration of the Museum under Julian Hunt. Pam Russell moved to take up a new post at Wendover; Jim Inglis, the Keeper of Archaeology & Social History, moved on to become Curator of Archaeology at Bedford Museum, whilst Joanne Hodgkins became the Biodiversity Officer for the National Trust and Alexandra MacCullough was appointed Keeper of Art, Clothing and Textiles. Halton was also equipped with a new archaeological store complete with roller racking. The Family Fun Day on December 8th was well supported. George Lamb's contribution in organising Roman board games was much appreciated.

Lecture Series 2001

- 31 March The Kedermister Vault at St Mary's, Langley Marish. Julian Litten.
- 20 October Mediaeval Roof Furniture. Barbara Hurman.
- 10 November Development of the Railways in Bucks. Edward Legg.
- 1 December Investigations at Quarrendon near Aylesbury. Paul Everson of English Heritage.

Outings 2001

- May West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village and Anglesey Abbey
- June Stacey Hill Museum, Milton Keynes, and Chicheley Hall
- July Ashdown House (National Trust) and Buscot Park
- August New Amersham Walk, Julian Hunt.
- October Church Crawl. Michael Hardy

THE LIBRARY

ADDITIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY 2001

- ALEXANDER, F. High Wycombe then and now: a colouring and activity book for children... illustrated by Lorna Cassidy. 1991.
- BAILEY, M. Discovering a lost history. Bernwood Ancient Hunting Forest Project. 2001.
- BERKSHIRE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND OXFORDSHIRE. No.3 of the R.A.C. County Road Maps and Guides, 1933?
- BRUSHE, J. Holy Trinity Wolverton, Buckinghamshire. 1998?
- BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES. "A Future for our past". Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan adopted October 2000.
- CHENEVIX TRENCH, C. Portrait of a patriot: a biography of John Wilkes. 1962.
- CHENEVIX TRENCH, J., transcriber. Penn Parish register. Volume 1: 1559-1677; Volume 2: Christenings 1677-1813; marriages 1677-1753 and burials 1677-1813. 1983.
- COALES, J., compiler. Twelve generations: gleanings from the Coales family archives. 2000.
- COCKER, M. A Brat remembers. The 41st and 42nd entries of Aircraft Apprentices March 1940 to July 1943. No. 1 School of Technical Training Royal Air Force, Halton. 1989.
- COUNTRYSIDE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT. The Hartwell Estate, Buckinghamshire. Volume 1: A conservation Management Plan; Volume 2: Management plan for the enhancement of the Estate's heritage and natural environment. 2000.
- CUNNINGHAM, J. D. A history of Longwick. The parish of Longwick-cum-Ilmer comprising Horsenden, Ilmer, Longwick, Meadle and Owlswick. 2001.
- EDGOTT MILLENNIUM COMMITTEE. Memories of Edgott in the 20th century. 2000.
- EDWARDS, H. Sticks and stones. The life and times of a journeyman printer: Hertford, Dunstable, Cheltenham and Wolverton. 2001.
- EUREKA PARTNERSHIP. Leighton Buzzard Union workhouse births and deaths 1858-1900. 2001.
- EUREKA PARTNERSHIP. Olney and the hamlet of Warrington 1821 census. 2001.
- EUREKA PARTNERSHIP. Thame Registration District marriage notice book 1837-1879. 2001.
- FARLEY, M. Medmenham Abbey, Medmenham, Buckinghamshire: results from some archaeological watching briefs. 2001.
- FINMERE AND LITTLE TINGEWICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY. The millennium history of Finmere (and Little Tingewick). 2001.
- GEE, E., compiler. A glossary of building terms used in England from the Conquest to c.1550. 1984.
- GIGGINS, B.L. A brief history of Valentin Ord and Nagle's Factory in Fenny Stratford. 1981.
- GOODMAN, N. Eton College. Reprint 2000.
- GREEN, M. and others. Penn & Tylers Green. 2001.
- HANDBOOK FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE. 1903.
- HILL, M. Bradwell past and present. 1998.
- HOLBOROW, J. Fingest: stony ground. 1999.
- HUNT, J. and others. Index to probate records of the Archdeaconry Court of Buckingham 1483-1660 and the Buckinghamshire Peculiars 1420-1660. Buckinghamshire Record Society, 2001.
- JAMES, S. & MILLETT, M. Britons and Romans: advancing an archaeological agenda. 2001.
- KAYE, E. Missenden Abbey: a short history. 1992.
- KELLY, G.J. & DODDS, C.P. Granborough: celebration of the Millennium. 2000.
- LEGG, E. The Fenny Poppers. St.Martin's Day Celebrations, Fenny Stratford. 2001.
- LEGG, E. List of Inrolment Books (Q/RX//1-10). [Enclosure awards and Turnpike conveyances from the Quarter Sessions Books held in the Buckinghamshire Record Office]. 2001.
- LEWINGTON, H. A young person's guide to the history of Bierton, Broughton and Hulcott. 2000.
- MANNING, A. Deborah's diary. A fragment by

the author of 'Mary Powell'. (John Milton and Chalfont St.Giles). 1860.

MAY, G. Harewood Downs (Little Chalfont). The history of a Buckinghamshire farmhouse and of its lands which became a golf course. 1988.

MILTON KEYNES NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY. Milton Keynes, more than concrete cows, real animals and plants too. Records compiled by the Society for the years 1987-1999. 2000.

MOON, N. The Chiltern Way. A 200km walk around the Chilterns. A guide to a new circular long-distance path through Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire. 2000.

MUSPRATT, Rev. O. Penn, Buckinghamshire. The English historical source of America's birthplace. 1976.

NORRIS, J.P. The lost spring. From Whiteleaf to Oxford's spires (Chilton) . 1999.

PAYNTER, B. The grass widow and her cow. An enchanting account of country life in wartime Britain. (Lawn House, Edgcott). 1997.

PICKUP, D. Lest we forget. The men and woman commemorated on Aylesbury Town War Memorial. 2000.

POORMAN, P.K. The Royal Latin school, Buckingham. 2001.

REED, A.J. At Southcourt School (Aylesbury) in the thirties. 2001.

ROWLANDS, S. Bridgefoot: a history of Bridgefoot House (Iver). 2001.

SHEPARD-THORN, E.R. and others. Geology of the country around Leighton Buzzard. Memoir for 1:50,000 geological sheet 220 (Includes parts of Bucks.). 1994.

SMITH, C. Adstock through the ages. 2000.

SPARKES, I.G. High Wycombe: a pictorial history. 1990.

STAREY, C.J.H. & VICCARS, P.G., eds. Stokenchurch in perspective. Reprint 1992.

TRUSTEES OF THE SIR JOHN

KEDERMINSTER'S LIBRARY. Sir John Kederminster's Library, Langley Marish. 1999.

WEBB, C., compiler. National Index of Parish Registers. A guide to Anglican, Roman Catholic and Nonconformist registers before 1837, together with information on Bishop's Transcripts, modern copies and Marriage Licences. Volume 9, part 3 Buckinghamshire. 1992.

WEIDMANN, G. Behind bars in Buckingham. The story of the Old Gaol. 1998.

WOODWARD, F. Oxfordshire parks. 2001.

YOUNG ENTERPRISES SUCCESS. Southcourt School (Aylesbury) Commemorative book. 2001.

In addition to the books listed above 80 smaller items were added to stock. These ranged from church guides to newspaper cuttings and extracts from journals.

*Diana Gulland
Hon. Librarian/Archivist*

THE NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

SUMMARY OF FIELD VISITS AND LECTURES ORGANISED BY THE SECTION DURING 2001

6th January: Fungi in Bucks and Beds. Dr Derek Schafer, organiser for the Bucks Fungus Group, presented an encyclopaedic talk to nineteen members. An introduction to fungus biology was given courtesy of the button mushroom, which Derek explained, represented only the 'fruit', the perennial part of the fungus being underground in the form of thread-like hyphae. The importance of habitat was emphasised through a range of woodland fungi to the brightly coloured waxcaps found on unimproved grassland and the Scarlet Caterpillar Fungus, which only grows on dead caterpillars. The edibility of species was noted with a prime example being the Penny Bun, probably better known by its French and Italian names, Cep and Porcini respectively. Although there are far less poisonous species of fungi than there are poisonous plants, the highly dangerous Deathcap serves as a reminder to the gastronomically inclined that in addition to a few tasty species there are a number that will finish you off if your not careful.

3rd February: Winter Bird Watch at Otmoor RSPB Reserve. Twelve members were greeted by bright sunshine, a biting wind and the reserve's assistant warden, Paul Eele. A replica of Cowley car plant was built here during the Second World War as a decoy for enemy bombs, as evidenced by old shells unearthed during engineering works to create the reserve. These works comprised the creation of balancing lakes and an extensive network of ditches to provide the best conditions for both wildfowl in the winter and breeding Redshank, Snipe and Lapwing in the summer. Although the public are normally only allowed on the peripheral footpaths, members were treated to a stroll through the centre of the reserve. On reaching the flooded area at the far end it was possible to just make out Gadwall, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Wigeon and Mallard against a low westerly sun. Other species included Grey Heron, Cormorant, Mute Swan and Kestrel with a Peregrine also spotted by some. The damp conditions, however, meant that large flocks of Lapwing and Golden Plover, usually present in

the winter had moved away to less saturated ground. A flock of around thirty Fielfare, however, were observed in a hedgerow as we left.

3rd March: The Geology of Bucks – Shaping the Landscape. Around thirty members attended as Dr Jill Evers condensed 200 million years of geological history into just over an hour. Jill described the close link between the underlying geology and the landscape we see today and outlined the largely marine processes that have led to the County's combination of limestones, clays and chalk. Jill also noted that while these rocks were originally laid down in horizontal beds the movement of tectonic plates has 'crumpled' them. The most recent example of this occurred in the Tertiary era when the Eurasian and African plates collided which, in addition to raising the Alps also tilted the chalk to create the Chilterns. The important role of the Anglian Ice Age on our landscape was covered, from the shaping of valleys by glaciers to deposition of sands and gravels and the occurrence of isolated blocks of sarsen and puddingstone across the County.

7th April: The Annual General Meeting was followed by a discussion on plants in winter. Nineteen members gathered around tables to examine the assorted plant material brought along by Roy Maycock. These included a selection of tubers, corms, rhizomes, bulbs and other roots of herbaceous plants and a number of twigs from woody plants. By means of close-up examination and Roy's commentary on their anatomy and development we were able to explore the survival strategies evolved by different plants to cope with unfavourable winter conditions..

5th May: The Walk round Iffley Meadow with Ediser Russell to see the Snake's-head Fritillarys was unfortunately cancelled due to foot and mouth disease.

30th June: Victoria Patterson's Wildflower Meadows, Radnage didn't produce the anticipated show of orchids this year, however, a good turn out, fantastic weather and plenty of other things to look

at more than made up for their absence.

7th July: Priestfield Arboretum. Merelene Davis, Honorary Curator, welcomed a group of ten members to explore this tree collection at Little Kingshill. Although the rain probably put some people off it actually enhanced the appearance of some trees, notably the Giant Redwoods. Priestfield is predominantly a collection of conifers with examples of over a hundred species and varieties. These include examples of the world's tallest tree, the Coast Redwood, the biggest tree, the Giant Redwood and the oldest, the Bristle-cone Pine. In addition a number of interesting broad-leaved trees were also found including the Zelkova planted by BAS members in 1999 during our last visit.

22nd September: Dinosaur footprints were the goal of the first stop of Michael Oate's full day geological excursion. After a reasonable walk across the barren landscape of Ardley Field Quarry (thanks to Viridor Waste Ltd for access) we came across a line of very large water filled three-toed footprints in the limestone floor. They are thought to be those of *Megalosaurus*, the most common bipedal dinosaur of the mid-Jurassic. A second set of tracks, rounder, larger and deeper, were made by a much larger four-legged dinosaur, most probably a *Cetiosaur*. Lunch at the Red Lion in Islip was followed by a visit to the neighbouring churchyard to see the grave of the nineteenth century palaeontologist, William Buckland. He is credited with the first description of a recognised dinosaur fossil, albeit before the term was coined, in his '*Notice on the Megalosaurus or Great Fossil Lizard of Stonesfield*' in 1824. The final stop of the day was

to Woodeaton Quarry (thanks to Earthline Ltd for access). Here a range of bivalve and brachiopod fossils were found along with blackened rootlet remains from prehistoric mangrove swamps. How the County has changed.

6th October: Fungus foray round Aspley Heath with Victor Scott was unfortunately cancelled.

3rd November: Antarctica. The Section is enormously grateful for Louise Allcock who, at short notice after the unavoidable cancellation of Angela Colmer's 'Animals in Cave Art', presented members with a professionally delivered and beautifully illustrated talk on Antarctica.

8th December: Parasitic and Saprophytic Plants. Twelve members enjoyed Victor Scott's well-illustrated talk, which was given a festive feel through the inclusion of Mistletoe. Victor used this species to illustrate semi-parasitic plants which have specially adapted roots to extract nutrients from their host plants but retain fully functioning leaves capable of photosynthesis. These were contrasted with fully parasitic species such as broomrapes which tap into the roots of other plants and the rootless dodders which attach themselves to the stems of their host. In both cases their leaves are reduced to inconspicuous, non-functioning scales. Saprophytic plants were distinguished by virtue of obtaining nourishment from decaying, rather than living organisms, usually in the form of leaf mould through mycorrhizal associations with fungi. Examples given included the leafless Bird's-nest, Ghost and Coralroot Orchids, all of which are found in shaded habitats in which photosynthesis would be difficult.