

THE SOCIETY

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The Society has had another busy and interesting year. Membership of the Society remains steady. At 31st December 2002 we had 460 members, plus 24 affiliated societies; of the 460, two were juniors, 15 were life members, 137 were family members and 306 were ordinary members. This is a slight increase on the previous two years, but well below high points like 1979 when the Society had a recorded membership of 683. There is always a need to attract new members into the Society, to replace members lost through death or relocation, but also to bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to our work. To this end a small committee has been working on a new design for the membership leaflet which we hope to produce in the coming year. However word of mouth and recommendation from a friend are still the most successful way of increasing membership, and our modest subscription makes this a bargain.

The Society's Council met four times during 2002, in January, March, June and September at the Museum. Council members were: Edward Legg (Chairman), George Lamb (Vice-Chairman), Maureen Brown (Hon. Secretary from July), Brian Davis (Hon. Treasurer), Diana Gulland (Hon. Archivist and Librarian), Prof. John Clarke (Hon. Editor of Records), Mike Palmer (Hon. Secretary Natural History Section), Fergus Laing (Hon. Newsletter Editor), Dr. A.J.C. Balfour, Roger Bettridge, Mike Davis, Mike Farley, Sarah Gray, Julian Hunt, Sandy Kidd, Helen Jones, Gary Marshall, Dr. David Thorpe, and Prof. Bill Mead, President of the Society. The death in August of Elliott Viney, a former Secretary and President of the Society, was marked by a minute's silence at the September Council meeting. His position as our representative on the Historic Buildings Trust has been taken by Dr Ian Toplis. Fergus Laing informed

Council at the end of the year that he would be moving away from the County, and so would no longer be able to edit the Newsletter.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society took place on 13 April 2002 at the Museum, and was attended by some 80 members. The President Prof. Mead remarked on the excellence of the new edition of Records, and thanked everyone who had contributed articles. After the meeting members enjoyed a buffet organised by Mike Farley.

In July the Society ran a stall at the Bucks Family History Society Fair. It was a very successful event attended by hundreds of people throughout the day, with representatives there from fellow societies all over the country. There was a lot of interest in our publications, and as well as a good number of sales we also gained three new members. The Fair helps publicise the Society to a wide range of people, and a large number of our free old newsletters and membership leaflets were also taken away.

At the end of August many members joined Paul Everson from English Heritage, for a guided walk round the archaeological remains at Quarrendon. This was a follow-on from a talk he gave us the previous winter, and he was able to show us on the ground what we had only seen as slides and diagrams before.

October brought another Bucks Local History Fair and Conference, organised by Dr. David Thorpe and his team, and held this time in Aylesbury. This has become an established date in county year for all of us interested in the history of our towns and villages, and their surrounding parishes. As ever, it was well attended with many local societies running stalls, showing the amazing variety of research and publications produced throughout the County.

Lecture Series 2002

- 19 January The Bucks Diary of Pehr Kalm.
Prof. W. R. Mead, President of
the Society.
- 16 February Archaeology and the Restoration
of Stowe Gardens. Gary Marshall.
- 23 March The Wolverton Tramway.
Bill Griffiths.
- 9 November Ancient Trackways and Saxon
Burials under the Aston Clinton
Bypass. Robert Masefield.
- 14 December Roald Dahl in Buckinghamshire.
David Erskine.

Outings 2002

- 25 May Coughton Court
Baddesley Clinton
Packwood House
- 22 June Eton & Windsor
- 20 July Sandham Memorial
Chapel, Basildon
Park.
- 31 August Quarrendon Walk.
(Paul Everson).
- 21 September Church Crawl

*Maureen Brown
Hon. Secretary*

THE LIBRARY

ADDITIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY 2002

- AKELEY HISTORY GROUP. Akeley past times. Akeley, Achelei sometimes Oakeley cum Stockholt. A history of the village. 2001.
- ANDREW, M. Buckinghamshire privies. 1998.
- BEAZLEY, R. Wanderings among Chiltern hills and elsewhere. (A book of poetry dedicated to W.Clarke, Manor Farm, Bledlow). 1872.
- BELL, J. Overlapping leaves. Five centuries of life in Buckingham as seen through the windows of one house. (The Vicarage). 1993.
- BRIMSON, P. Buckingham at war. 2001.
- BROWN, M. & MASTERS, J. The Bassetts: Leighton Buzzard's first family: Quakers, drapers, bankers. 1989. Leighton Buzzard & Linslade with Heath & Reach, Eggington, Stanbridge & Billington. (Britain in old photographs). 1998.
- BROWN, M., and others. The old pubs of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade. 1994.
- BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL. Calendar to the Sessions Records. Volume VIII 1730-33. Addenda 1663-1720. n.d.
- BYNG, A. H. & STEPHENS, S. M. eds. The autobiography of an English gamekeeper, John Wilkins, of Stanstead, Essex. (Wilkins worked at Tring, Chilton, Chesham and Aston Clinton). 1892.
- CARTER, S. St. Andrew's: the story of a bookshop 1957-1997. (Great Missenden). 1997.
- CASSIDY, L. 50 years: etchings of High Wycombe. 1999.
- CRITCHLEY, D. The story of the church at Addington. 2000. The story of the church in Winslow. 2001.
- DANIEL, C. St. J. H. Sundials. (Includes Dinton church sundial). Reprint 2000.
- DICKSON, A. Country of the Thames. (Chapters 3 and 5 cover Buckinghamshire villages). 1948.
- EUREKA PARTNERSHIP. The Bowyer Charity School, Denham, Bucks: Admissions and discharges 1721-1839. 2001. Buckingham and Brackley Methodist Circuit: Buckinghamshire baptisms 1850-1900. 2001. The people of Lathbury. 2001. The people of West Wycombe. 2002. Wycombe Union. Workhouse baptisms 1853-1900. 2001.
- FOXELL, C. Memories of the Met & GC Joint Line (The Met & GC Joint Committee Line from Harrow to Quainton Road) (Metropolitan and Great Central). 2002.
- FULLER, M. & AMBROSE, F. eds. Pilgrims' tales. (Stories told at the Pilgrims Bottle pub in Milton Keynes). 2001.
- GIBBS, R. Worthies of Buckinghamshire and men of note of that county. (Charles W. Rafferty's copy. Unnumbered pages at beginning used as a scrap book with a review of this book; obituaries of Robert Gibbs and John Rolfe. An extra copy of part 1 includes a postcard, dated 1889 from Robert Gibbs to Mr. Rafferty). 1888.
- GILLIATT, P. A safe pair of hands: Bishop Shaw and the Diocese of Oxford. 2001.
- HALL, D. Turning the plough: Midland open fields: landscape character and proposals for management. (Includes Bucks). 2001.
- HALL, M. Waddesdon Manor: the heritage of a Rothschild house. 2002.
- HOSIE, R. ed. Book of British birds. 3rd ed. with amendments. 1998.
- HOWLETT, S. In the shadow of the Chilterns: a Howlett family history 1662-1972. 2002.
- HURD, M. Immortal hour: the life and period of Rutland Boughton. (Aylesbury born Composer of a symphonic suite 'The Chilterns'). 1962.
- KAIN, R.J.P. & BAIGENT, E. The Cadastral map in the service of the state: a history of property mapping. 1992.
- LANGLEY, T. The history and antiquities of the Hundred of Desborough, and Deanery of Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire; including the borough towns of Wycombe and Marlow, and sixteen parishes. 1797.
- LEGG, E. The watch and clockmakers of Kettering. 2001.
- LONDON TRANSPORT. Country walks (second series). (Includes the Chilterns and the Vale of Aylesbury). 3rd revised ed. 1939.

- LUPTON, H. The history of Thame and its hamlets: including the Abbey of Thame, Prebend, Free School, etc. 1860.
- PALMER, S. Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. Paintings by Palmer, description by G.E.Mitton. 1920.
- REED, A. J. The MET & GC Joint Line: an observer's notes 1948–1968. Revised ed. 2001.
- RETURN OF OWNERS OF LAND, ENGLAND AND WALES. (Exclusive of the Metropolis). (Known as the modern Domesday). 2 volumes. 1875.
- RITCHIE, L. Windsor Castle and environs; including Eton College. 1848.
- SCOTT-FOX, C. Cyril Fox archaeologist extraordinary. (Excavator of Bulstrode Camp, Bucks). 2002.
- SMITH, J. B. Farebrother: a property business over two hundred years 1799–1999. (Includes details of the 1922 sale of Stowe). 1999.
- STANNARD, M. The way to school: a history of schools of Leighton Buzzard & Linslade. 1990.
- 'THE STAR' RAMBLER. The Star rambles (new series). North of the Thames. Twenty-five selected routes from N. W. to N. E. Oxon., Bucks., Herts., and Essex. (Includes the Chilterns). 1930s.
- SUMMERS, W.H. Memories of Jordans and the Chalfonts, and the early Friends in the Chiltern Hundreds (Quakers). 1895.
- THORLEY, J. Stone parish church St. John the Baptist: monumental inscriptions and memorials. 2000.
- THORPE, D. Buckinghamshire in 1851: the evidence of the population census. Bucks Papers No. 2, 2002.
- VINEY, E. Literary Bucks: a talk read at the Claydon Lectures 1988. This edition dedicated to Ralph Verney. 2001.
- WARTH, M. Wings over Wing. The story of a World War II Bomber Training Unit. 2001.
- WILLIS, P. Charles Bridgeman and the English landscape garden. Reprinted with supplementary plates and a catalogue of additional documents, drawings and attributions. 2002.
- WOODLEY, L. The last patrol: policemen killed on duty while serving in the Thames Valley. 2001.

In addition to the books listed above 52 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 2002

12th January: 'Dragonflies of Buckinghamshire'. Since making the original booking, Jeremy Hall has moved to Norfolk; however, Alan Nelson, in his capacity as the new county recorder for dragonflies, kindly offered to present the talk. The standard of photography was extremely high, matched only by the knowledge of the speaker. Alan introduced this small Order of insects (only 5,500 species globally) before running through those members of the 42 British species likely to be seen in Bucks. Useful tips on where and when to look for them (including their *exuviae* – the cast larval skins from emerging adults found on pond-edge vegetation) before outlining his plans for a county atlas and the need for records and sightings from members.

2nd February: Winter Bird Watch at College Lake. Warden Graham Atkins led 18 members around this BBOWT reserve. A large number of species were observed, including lapwing, golden plover, redshank, tufted duck, wigeon and a sparrowhawk

2nd March. 'The Swifts of Haddenham'. Peter Gulland gave a sequel to his earlier talk to the Section about his continuing study of swifts which visit his village each summer. Hours of discreet observation are needed to "prove" each year's occupation of the village's established nest sites, and to spot new ones, in order to monitor changes in the adult swift population and to record how village's airspace is loosely parcelled into hunting territories around each group of nests sites. The study is complicated by the arrival of groups of non-breeding swifts from mid-June onwards; through binoculars these fast-moving youngsters look just like adults and can only be separated from breeders by their distinctive behaviour. Peter explained how these different groups weave together to create the familiar scene above our heads as Swifts chase over the rooftops, sometimes emitting that high-pitched scream which is one of the defining sounds of summer

6th April: The Annual General Meeting was fol-

lowed by a presentation by Marcus Olozulu, the Bucks Wildlife Sites Project Officer. Eighteen members were introduced to this important project aimed at safeguarding the County's wildlife. Marcus described how the Bucks Biodiversity Action Plan had identified species and habitats under threat within the County and that it was now his job to try and locate areas where these could be found with a view to affording greater protection. This work, under the auspices of the Bucks Nature Conservation Forum and hosted by the County Council, entailed liaison with a wide range of landowners, followed by extensive field work. Once identified, such sites would not receive the statutory protection afforded to SSSIs and official nature reserves. Instead, landowners receive advice on how best to manage the sites for wildlife, an approach that Marcus suggested allowed far more sites to be protected. The talk not only provided reassurance that positive steps were being taken to conserve our natural heritage, but also provided an enjoyable visual tour around a range of Bucks locations and habitats.

17th May: A Friday evening visit to Calvert Reserve to listen for Nightingales. Despite the early evening rain, four members explored the BBOWT reserve in the hope of hearing the song of the male. Unfortunately the unremitting drizzle meant that their endeavours were sadly unrewarded.

1st June: Pilch Fields. Roy Maycock led twenty-three BAS and BBOWT members on a botanical tour of this rare example of an ancient meadow. While we were just too late for the Cowslips and just too early for the Bee Orchids, the Green Winged Orchids were in full bloom. Small green fronds of the Adder's-tongue Fern were also to be seen if looked for; however, there was no sign of the elusive Moonwort once seen here by Roy in the mid 1990s. Another rarity, *Carex distans*, however, was present. Pilch Fields is now probably one of only half-a-dozen sites where this species can now be found in the County. Roy's knowledge, an

opportunity to meet BBOWT members and the fine weather combined to make this a very enjoyable and worthwhile trip.

13th July: A joint meeting with the Bucks Invertebrate Group to Finmere Woods. Unfortunately no members were able to make this morning meeting. The Bucks Invertebrate Group, however, reported finding a soldier beetle, Shaded Broadbar Moth, a Speckled Bush Cricket nymph and a number of hoverfly species.

28th September: Weston Underwood. Michael Oates took ten members back around 170 million years to a former tidal inlet once sited a mile or so northwest of present day Weston Underwood. Today, the site is being quarried for Forest Marble limestone used for building. This would have originally been grey but once weathered becomes a golden yellow. A number of brackish-water fossils including *Liostrea* spp (oysters) and *Obovothyris* spp (brachiopods) were found. After an hour or so scrambling around the rocks, we were invited up to the farmer's house to see some of the splendid fossils he had found over the years at this site. These included a large specimen of *Pinna lanceolata* (bivalve), a submerged fossil of *Pholadomya* (bivalve), an *Asteracanthus* (fish) tooth and a nautiloid. Another locally formed collection included his wife's extensive wall display of horseshoes.

6th October: Fungus foray to Dancers End. Owing to the exceptionally dry weather over the past weeks, only half-a-dozen species were found. However, this was a very enjoyable meeting with Victor Scott's usual entertaining commentary. The outing began with a Chiffchaff singing. Owing to the general rise in temperatures, some of these birds are even overwintering in this country. A Pale Tussock Moth caterpillar provided further interest and members were pleased to see the gateway which has been erected at the Reserve. 'in memory of Evelyn Watkins (1922–2000) G.P., nature lover and volunteer warden' and a keen member of the Natural History Section. Thanks also to Tony

Balfour for inviting us back for tea.

3rd November: 'The Natural History of My Garden'. Barbara North, with the aid of slides, gave the twenty members present a virtual tour of her half acre garden at Cadmore End (between Stokenchurch and Marlow). As the garden backs on to woodland it has always attracted wildlife, however, with Barbara's touches of natural planting and the conversion of the former swimming pool into a sizable pond the garden is now teeming with wildlife. Barbara obviously enjoyed reaping the rewards of her garden regime by photographing all comers from the Roe and Fallow Deers to Tree Creepers and Tawny Owls, and down to a range of dragonflies and spiders.

7th December: 'Bats in Buckinghamshire'. In a change of venue twenty members gathered in Butlers Cross Parish Hall to listen to Matthew Dodds of the North Bucks Bat Group describe the range of bat species found both in the U.K., and more specifically in Buckinghamshire. In addition to the superb slides, Matthew also brought along a convalescing Pippistrelle. Due to recent events the issue of bats and rabies was also discussed. Within Britain only the Daubenton's bats have been found to carry the *European Bat Lyssavirus 2* strain of rabies, which is different to the classical form of the disease. Recorded incidence is low with only two cases recorded in the last 15 years (1996 and 2002) despite regular testing by the Veterinary Laboratories of around 200 Daubenton's every year. Ordinarily, bats will not bite people, the main risk coming from handling injured bats. To this effect, the Bat Conservation Trust recommend that any one finding such a bat should avoid handling and call their nearest bat worker. Further information can be found on The Bat Conservation Trust website, or via the North Bucks Bat Group.

Mike Palmer
Hon. Secretary